



இயேசு கிறிஸ்துவின் நாமத்தில் அன்பின் வாழ்த்துக்கள்

ஏறக்குறைய 7 ஆண்டுகளாக பல இடங்களிலிருந்து சேகரித்த சுமார் 200 ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன்பு வரை அச்சடிக்கப்பட்ட, ஆரோக்கிய உபதேசங்கள் அடங்கிய, கிறிஸ்தவ ஆவிக்குரிய புத்தகங்களை, பல மணி நேரம் கொடுத்து, பல இலட்சங்கள் செலவு செய்து மின் நூல்களாக (E-Books) இலவசமாக (மத்தேயு 10:8) உங்கள் கரங்களில் கொடுப்பதற்கு, அற்புதம் நீசருமான எங்களை பயன்படுத்தி உன்னத தேவனுக்கே சகல கனமும் மகிமையும் துதியும் உரித்தாவதாக. இதைப் போன்ற இன்னும் ஆயிரக்கணக்கான புத்தகங்களை தரவிறக்கம் (Download) செய்ய எங்களுடைய இணையதளத்தை சொருக்கவும்/பார்க்கவும்: www.WordOfGod.in

95 சதவீத புத்தகங்கள் அச்சில் இல்லாதவைகளும், காப்புரிமை முடிந்தவைகளும். மீதமுள்ள புத்தகங்கள், நல்ல உபதேசங்களை கொண்டிருப்பதால், முடிந்தவரை ஆசிரியரின் உரிமையோடு மின்-நூலாக, இலவசமாக வெளியிடுகிறோம். ஒருவேளை உங்களுடைய புத்தகம் இப்படி இலவசமாக மின்-நூல் (E-Book) வடிவில் வரக்கூடாது என்று நினைத்தீர்களானால், தயவு செய்து எங்களை மன்னித்துக்கொள்ளுங்கள். எங்களுடைய WhatsApp எண்ணிற்கோ, மின் அஞ்சலிலோ (Email) எங்களுக்கு தெரியப்படுத்துங்கள். உடனடியாக எங்களுடைய இணைய-தளத்திலிருந்து எடுத்துவிடுகிறோம்.

WhatsApp/SMS: +91 90 190 490 70 / +91 7676 50 5599

Email: wordofgod@wordofgod.in

Wishing you in the mighty name of Jesus Christ

We had collected several thousands of old Tamil Spiritual Books which are rich in Sound Doctrines across various places of India for 7 years. Some of them are more than 200 years old books. We have spent millions of hours and money in scanning them and converting them to E-Books. The work is still in progress. These E-books are published completely free of cost (Matt 10:8) forever. We give all the praise and glory to God for giving this wonderful opportunity to server Him. You can download thousands of similar Tamil Christian E-books from our website www.WordOfGod.in completely free of cost at any time.

95% of these E-Books are not being printed now and their copyrights are already expired. The remaining books are sent as E-Books mostly with the permission from the Authors. If you feel that your books should not be published as E-Book freely, kindly excuse and forgive us. Please let us know the book details by WhatsApp or Email we will remove them from our website.

WhatsApp/SMS: +91 90 190 490 70 / +91 7676 50 5599

Email: wordofgod@wordofgod.in

Contents

How to Use This Family Devotional Study Bible	6
What Is the Bible?	8
The Story of God's Love	11
How to Read the Bible	14
How to Study the Bible	22
How to Conduct Family Devotions and Lead Group Bible Studies	26
Preface	33
Overview	35
Alphabetical Order of Books of the Bible	40

THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis	3	1 Chronicles	347	Daniel	742
Exodus	50	2 Chronicles	374	Hosea	757
Leviticus	87	Ezra	404	Joel	767
Numbers	114	Nehemiah	415	Amos	772
Deuteronomy	149	Esther	429	Obadiah	780
Joshua	181	Job	437	Jonah	782
Judges	204	Psalms	466	Micah	785
Ruth	226	Proverbs	541	Nahum	792
1 Samuel	230	Ecclesiastes	569	Habakkuk	796
2 Samuel	258	Song of Songs	578	Zephaniah	800
1 Kings	283	Isaiah	584	Haggai	804
2 Kings	311	Jeremiah	640	Zechariah	807
A Lineup of Rulers	338	Lamentations	693	Malachi	816
		Ezekiel	700		

THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew	823	2 Thessalonians	1029
Mark	854	1 Timothy	1032
Luke	875	2 Timothy	1038
John	907	Titus	1042
Acts	932	Philemon	1045
Romans	964	Hebrews	1047
1 Corinthians	980	James	1059
2 Corinthians	994	1 Peter	1064
Galatians	1004	2 Peter	1070
Ephesians	1010	1 John	1074
Philippians	1016	2 John	1079
Colossians	1021	3 John	1081
1 Thessalonians	1025	Jude	1082
		Revelation	1084

Table of Weights & Measures	1105
Where to Find It	1107
Outline of Old Testament History	1110
Subject Guide	
Dictionary-Concordance	
Concordance	

How to Use This Family Devotional Study Bible

This Bible is a special Bible—a “study Bible.” It has three types of helps in it, enabling you to better understand God’s Word.

Helps That Show You What to Read

The Bible is composed of 66 different books. It cannot be read as one would read a regular book, beginning with page one and reading through to the end. There are certain books that are easier to read than others, and the person who is just beginning to study the Bible should start with these easier books so that he does not become discouraged.

In the article “How to Read the Bible,” page 14, you will find three sets of Bible reading courses. These courses will guide you in what to read. The first sets of courses are introductory Bible courses. There are twelve of them. Each will take you two weeks to work out, if you do a lesson per day. They will give you an excellent overview of the teachings of the Bible.

The second course guides you in reading at least one chapter from every book in the Bible. This course will take you about six months, if you do a lesson per day.

The last course will take you through every chapter and word of the Bible. It is a very extensive course. It will take about three years to finish, but it will give you an in-depth understanding of the whole of the Bible.

While the article “How to Read the Bible” tells you what passage to read, the next article, “How to Study the Bible,” gives you two sets of questions for you to ask and answer. Study plan one contains easy questions for beginners, and study plan two contains more difficult questions for the advanced Bible student.

Helps to Enable You to Understand What You Read

Using this Bible is almost like having a Bible teacher with you at all times! It is filled with explanations of difficult passages. There are three kinds of explanations in this Bible.

At the Beginning of Each Book of the Bible: Each book of the Bible starts with an “Introduction.” This article explains what is in the book and gives you a short summary of what you will find when you read the book. Please remember that these helps are *not the actual words of the Bible*. They should never be mistaken for the words that God inspired. They are words of Bible teachers and will help you understand what is in each book of the Bible.

Insights—Devotional Sections: As you read you will come across articles called “Insights.” These are articles that help you take a major truth from the Bible and apply it to your life. Once again, do not mistake these “Insights” for the actual words of the Bible; they are placed in the Bible to help you understand how to apply the truths of the Bible to your daily life.

Highlights: At the bottom of most of the pages you will find brief notes about some difficult verse or phrase. These notes will help you understand the phrase or passage better.

By using these three helps, the introductions to each book, the insights, and the highlights, you will be able to understand some of the more difficult passages of the Bible; and your reading and studying of this book will become much more enjoyable.

Helps to Enable You to Find Specific Words and Concepts in the Bible

Suppose that someone asked you what the Bible taught about love? How could you find out? This *Family Devotional Study Bible* gives you three ways to find the different passages where the concept of love is talked about (and where most other important subjects in the Bible can be found).

The Subject Guide: This is a list of the major subjects that the Bible addresses. It shows you where to turn in the Bible to find them. For instance, if you want to know what the Bible teaches about the subject of death, you look up the word *death* in the subject guide. You will find two words, *physical* and *spiritual*. The Bible distinguishes between the physical death of our bodies and the spiritual death of our souls. The subject guide lists two passages under physical death: Luke 12:13-21 warns about not being prepared for physical death and 1 Corinthians 15 tells about victory over spiritual death. The subject guide also lists two passages telling us about spiritual death. It talks about death to self, John 12:23-26, and death to sin, Romans 6:1-23. It also tells

about Christ's death by referring you to other listings in the subject guide like *Cross*, *Blood of Christ*. The subject guide concludes by directing you to an "Insight" that deals with the Bible's teaching about death.

Thus, by using the subject guide, you can find a wealth of material on major subjects, plus find direction to the notes in the study Bible on that subject.

The Dictionary-Concordance: The dictionary-concordance deals with specific words rather than broad subjects. If you find a word in the Bible that is hard to understand, look it up in the dictionary-concordance. Here you will find two things: a definition of the word and a listing of some verses where the word appears, so that you can see how it is used in different places in the Bible.

The Concordance: This Bible help shows you where to find most of the words in the Bible. For instance, if you want to know where the word *love* appears, look up the word in the concordance. You will find dozens of texts where you can find that word. A concordance is used when you want to see all the major verses in which a specific word is used and compare those verses to find out the various shades of meaning in the word.

These three helps, the subject guide, the dictionary-concordance and the concordance, will help you when you use study plan two found on page 24. In this plan you pick a word or subject from the passage that you read, locate that word or subject in other passages of the Bible, and find out what is said about it there. In this way you will build a total picture of all that the Bible says about the word.

What Is the Bible?

Many years ago a poor farmer lost his farm because of debt. He managed to live by working for other farmers, and during that time he also miraculously saved enough money to buy another little piece of ground. It was a piece of ground that had not been farmed, and it was full of weeds. But he was a confident man, a good farmer, and he felt that he could raise crops on any kind of land. When he tried to plow, however, he found out why it had never been farmed—it was filled with rocks. Believing he had made a serious mistake, he was filled with despair.

One day while walking in his new field with a friend, he stooped down and picked up a few of the many stones and handed them to his friend, saying, "See, no one can raise crops on this land. It is worthless!" The other man looked at the stones very intently and then said, "Do you know what this stone is that you have just given me? It is a precious gem in unpolished form. You did not recognize it. This land you consider worthless may be worth far more than you think!"

When the farmer learned to identify precious stones and gems, he found that the stony field he had purchased was filled with hidden treasures—the field was covered with expensive rare stones and jewels. All he had to do was learn how to recognize them, polish them, and sell them. And that he did quickly. Soon the poor farmer became a wealthy man.

The Bible you have in your hand may appear at first to be a "stony field." It is a challenging book, but it is filled with rich spiritual treasures. These spiritual treasures are truths that can bring peace, joy, power, and new purpose to your life now. But far more important, these spiritual treasures are the foundation on which God can create a new life in you that will never die. This eternal life, as the Bible calls it, is of God. "Yet to all who received him [Jesus], to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God" (John 1:12-13). As you study the Bible and learn how to discover its spiritual treasures, you will realize the beautiful meaning of this statement. This spiritual treasure is stated in other words in the Bible. "But these are written [the Bible] that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31).

Just what kinds of treasures can we find in the Bible? Examine this brief list of the major treasures:

1. Do you feel that God does not love you?

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

2. Do you feel that everything is turning out bad?

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

3. Do you feel that you can never be forgiven of your sins?

"For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he [God] removed our transgressions [sins] from us" (Psalm 103:11-12).

4. Do you feel defenseless against the evil in life?

"I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust'" (Psalm 91:2).

5. Are you poor?

"The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want" (Psalm 23:1).

6. Are you afraid to die?

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me [Jesus]. In my Father's house [heaven—life after death for Christians] are many rooms; if it were not so I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you" (John 14:1-2).

7. Do you worry?

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. . . . Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away

in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?" (Matthew 6:25-27).

This is just a sample of the thousands upon thousands of spiritual treasures or truths you can find in the Bible. The Bible is actually a library of 66 books, written by 40 authors, over a period of 1600 years! These books are divided into two parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The Old Testament

The Old Testament was written prior to the coming of Jesus Christ and tells us how God called the nation of Israel into existence. God made the Jewish people a special nation, and from this nation Jesus Christ, God's only Son, was born. The Old Testament is filled with stories of the sin of the people of Israel, of God's judgment and forgiveness, and of their final banishment into exile. Mingled with the history of Israel are the poems and songs Israel used in worship, the laws that governed the nation, and the messages of the prophets whom God sent to warn Israel about sin and judgment and to communicate his promises about deliverance and the coming of Christ. There are four types of books in the Old Testament:

Story Books

These books are filled with accounts of the creation of the world, the fall of man into sin, the flood, and the formation of Israel. With the exception of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, they are the first books you will find in the Old Testament going from Genesis to Esther.

Law Books

The books of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy are primarily books of law, containing both the civil laws that governed the nation of Israel, the religious rituals that governed worship, and the moral laws that governed relationships. They do have some stories of history mixed in along with sections of law.

Poetry Books

Five books of the Old Testament fall into this category: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs. The easiest one to read, and probably the most loved book of the Old Testament, is the book of Psalms. A poem like Psalm 23 can be understood by the smallest child and is filled with promises of God's tender care for those who love him.

Prophecy Books

The last section of books are difficult to read—the books written by the prophets (or religious teachers) of Israel. These books deal with warning about sin, impending judgments of God, promises of salvation, and predictions of Christ's coming. They begin with Isaiah and go to the end of the Old Testament.

The New Testament

The New Testament deals with the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of the world. You will find four types of books in the New Testament.

Stories About Jesus

The first four books of the New Testament are called the Gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all tell about the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Since God inspired these four men to write for different audiences and different purposes, the structure of the books are different, and each adds a unique perspective to the story of Christ's life.

Stories About the Church

The book of Acts tells us about the formation and spread of the New Testament church. It is primarily a story book, and it is easy to read.

Teaching Books

The early apostles wrote letters, called epistles, to the New Testament churches, giving them instruction in doctrine and in living the Christian life. These are books of teaching that go from Romans to Jude.

Prophecy Book

The final book of the Bible, Revelation, is a book of symbols. The final two chapters of this book, however, give us a beautiful picture of heaven and the new world that Christ will establish when he comes again. (For a short description of the contents of each book, turn to page 36.)

In the section entitled "How to Read the Bible," page 14, you will find extensive helps on how to read and understand the Bible. You will find several two-week Bible courses that you can work out to get an overview of the Bible and some of its main subjects, an extensive six-month course on the key chapters of the Bible, and a three-year course in which you read every chapter of the Bible. In addition, the article entitled "How to Study the Bible" will give you a set of questions to ask yourself about each chapter you read to help you understand its meaning. Now read the next section, "The Story of God's Love."

The Old Testament

The Old Testament is the first part of the Bible. It contains the history of the people of Israel from the time of the patriarchs to the time of the prophets. It is the story of God's love for His people and their response to His love. The Old Testament is divided into three main parts: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The Law is the first five books of the Bible, which contain the commandments and the history of the people of Israel. The Prophets are the books that contain the messages of the prophets, who were called by God to speak His word to the people. The Writings are the books that contain the wisdom literature, the psalms, and the books of the prophets.

The Old Testament is the first part of the Bible. It contains the history of the people of Israel from the time of the patriarchs to the time of the prophets. It is the story of God's love for His people and their response to His love. The Old Testament is divided into three main parts: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The Law is the first five books of the Bible, which contain the commandments and the history of the people of Israel. The Prophets are the books that contain the messages of the prophets, who were called by God to speak His word to the people. The Writings are the books that contain the wisdom literature, the psalms, and the books of the prophets.

The Old Testament is the first part of the Bible. It contains the history of the people of Israel from the time of the patriarchs to the time of the prophets. It is the story of God's love for His people and their response to His love. The Old Testament is divided into three main parts: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The Law is the first five books of the Bible, which contain the commandments and the history of the people of Israel. The Prophets are the books that contain the messages of the prophets, who were called by God to speak His word to the people. The Writings are the books that contain the wisdom literature, the psalms, and the books of the prophets.

The Old Testament is the first part of the Bible. It contains the history of the people of Israel from the time of the patriarchs to the time of the prophets. It is the story of God's love for His people and their response to His love. The Old Testament is divided into three main parts: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The Law is the first five books of the Bible, which contain the commandments and the history of the people of Israel. The Prophets are the books that contain the messages of the prophets, who were called by God to speak His word to the people. The Writings are the books that contain the wisdom literature, the psalms, and the books of the prophets.

The Old Testament is the first part of the Bible. It contains the history of the people of Israel from the time of the patriarchs to the time of the prophets. It is the story of God's love for His people and their response to His love. The Old Testament is divided into three main parts: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The Law is the first five books of the Bible, which contain the commandments and the history of the people of Israel. The Prophets are the books that contain the messages of the prophets, who were called by God to speak His word to the people. The Writings are the books that contain the wisdom literature, the psalms, and the books of the prophets.

The New Testament

The New Testament is the second part of the Bible. It contains the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the apostles, and the early church. It is the story of God's love for His people and their response to His love. The New Testament is divided into four main parts: the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, and the Revelation. The Gospels are the first four books of the New Testament, which contain the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. The Acts is the book that contains the history of the early church. The Epistles are the books that contain the letters of the apostles to the churches. The Revelation is the last book of the New Testament, which contains the prophecy of the end of the world.

The New Testament is the second part of the Bible. It contains the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the apostles, and the early church. It is the story of God's love for His people and their response to His love. The New Testament is divided into four main parts: the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, and the Revelation. The Gospels are the first four books of the New Testament, which contain the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. The Acts is the book that contains the history of the early church. The Epistles are the books that contain the letters of the apostles to the churches. The Revelation is the last book of the New Testament, which contains the prophecy of the end of the world.

The New Testament is the second part of the Bible. It contains the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the apostles, and the early church. It is the story of God's love for His people and their response to His love. The New Testament is divided into four main parts: the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, and the Revelation. The Gospels are the first four books of the New Testament, which contain the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. The Acts is the book that contains the history of the early church. The Epistles are the books that contain the letters of the apostles to the churches. The Revelation is the last book of the New Testament, which contains the prophecy of the end of the world.

The New Testament is the second part of the Bible. It contains the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the apostles, and the early church. It is the story of God's love for His people and their response to His love. The New Testament is divided into four main parts: the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, and the Revelation. The Gospels are the first four books of the New Testament, which contain the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. The Acts is the book that contains the history of the early church. The Epistles are the books that contain the letters of the apostles to the churches. The Revelation is the last book of the New Testament, which contains the prophecy of the end of the world.

The New Testament is the second part of the Bible. It contains the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the apostles, and the early church. It is the story of God's love for His people and their response to His love. The New Testament is divided into four main parts: the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, and the Revelation. The Gospels are the first four books of the New Testament, which contain the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. The Acts is the book that contains the history of the early church. The Epistles are the books that contain the letters of the apostles to the churches. The Revelation is the last book of the New Testament, which contains the prophecy of the end of the world.

The Story of God's Love

The Bible is the story of God's love. One of the most well-known passages of the Bible speaks about that love in these words: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Consider this story that not only illustrates God's love for us, but also illustrates what it means to become a Christian:

A certain father had two sons. The older son was a hard-working, faithful young man who labored in the father's fields without grumbling or complaining. The younger son was different, however. He loved to play, and as he grew older he became not only lazy but also bad. He developed bad habits of drinking. He wasted money. He became an embarrassment to his father.

One day he was weary of being told to work all the time, so he demanded of his father the inheritance that was due him. (Sometimes Jewish sons would get their inheritance before the father died.) The father gave him the money he had coming and the son left for the big city, not to wisely invest the money there but to squander the money in evil ways. He spent it on drinking and gambling and women. Within a short time he was without money—and of course without friends, for those he thought were his friends were only interested in getting his money.

A drought struck the land during this time, and there was little food and few jobs. The young son began to starve. His fine clothes became dirty, torn rags. Finally, he received a job feeding pigs for a farmer. He was so hungry that he wanted to eat the food that he fed to the pigs.

The hunger pangs in his stomach grew worse. He felt miserable. The young man came to his senses when he realized that even the servants at his father's farm were better off than he was. But he also realized that he had sinned against his father.

The Bible says, "When he came to his senses he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' So he got up and went to his father" (Luke 15:17-20).

Can you imagine how he must have felt as he set out on his trip back home? Certainly he must have felt ashamed for what he had done, for all the hurt and pain he had caused his parents. Certainly he must have been afraid. What sort of reception would he get? Would the gate be locked? Would the servants even let him in? Would his father speak to him or punish him? Would his father even let him come back home after the embarrassment that he had caused him?

As he neared his house he saw a figure standing by the gate, and he noticed that the gate was not closed but open. As he drew closer he noticed that it was his father, looking down the road in his direction. His father saw him and started to run toward him. Jesus said, "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him" (Luke 15:20).

The son began to talk. "Father, Father, I have sinned against God and against you so badly that I am not worthy to be treated as your son anymore. Would you please hire me back as a servant?"

But in his excitement it seemed that the father hardly heard the son at all. "Servants!", he shouted. "Servants, come here quickly, and bring the finest robe we have and put it on this boy. Bring sandals. And bring the family ring for his finger. Get food ready for a great feast—the greatest feast we have ever had. Look at what has happened. My boy, my precious son—he was dead; now he is alive. He has come back to me! He is here! Let us rejoice and celebrate."

So the wayward son was not punished, not reprimanded, not closed out. The gate was open, not shut. The father was overjoyed, not angry. The son was treated as a son, not as a servant, not even as a criminal.

The Meaning of This Story

This story is a dramatization of the parable of the lost son told by Jesus and found in Luke 15:11-32. Jesus often taught in parables. What did he mean by this story? Jesus was illustrating the truth that there are only two kinds of religion in the world today. One kind of religion says that we must earn our way back to God. God is an angry God, and we must appease that anger with sacrifices and rituals. We can never be fully certain that God will accept us because we never know fully what we can do to please him. This is not the religion of the Bible.

The other kind of religion, Jesus says, shows us that God, like the father in the story, is eager to have us come back. We do not have to earn our way back! God himself welcomes us back. And just as the father put a robe on his son, put sandals on his feet, and put a ring on his finger, so the heavenly Father will make us presentable to himself.

This is the most beautiful truth in the whole world! We cannot make ourselves acceptable to God by anything we do. No rituals of worship, no sacrifices, no amount of good works can ever

bring us to the point where we can return to God and say to him that he must let us back into his presence. But if we come humbly, sorry for what we have done, if we come as the son returned to his father, then Jesus says that God will have the same attitude toward us that the father had toward the son. We will be welcomed back! And God himself will wash away all our sins. He will cleanse us from everything we have done wrong. It will be as if our sins never existed! The Bible says:

He [God] will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;
he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.
For as high as the heavens are above the earth
so great is his love for those who fear [respect or reverence] him;
as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.
As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.

Psalm 103:9-13

This is the wonderful truth of the Bible. No other religion teaches this. All other religions say that we must make ourselves pleasing to God. Only true Christianity, the religion of the Bible, says that we can never make ourselves pleasing to God; but God himself will do this for us. One of the old prophets of the Bible put it in poetry when he said:

I delight greatly in the LORD;
my soul rejoices in my God.
For he has clothed me with garments of salvation
and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Isaiah 61:10

God Wants You to Come Back

The whole message of the Bible is that God so loves us that he wants us to come back to him. Just as the father stood longing, waiting for his son to return, so God longs for us to return to him.

But how can God forgive our sins? Does he just ignore them? That is not fair, is it?

No, God does not ignore our sins. Our sins are punished. But God loves us so much that he allowed his Son Jesus Christ to be punished for those sins. Remember the Bible passage at the beginning of this story? "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. . . ." Gave for what? He gave Jesus to bear the punishment for sin that we should bear. So when we return to him and confess our sins, he can forgive us because he tells us that all the sin we have committed has been paid for by the death of Christ on the cross.

Peter, one of Jesus' disciples and an important figure in the New Testament, put it this way. When many people asked what they could do to be saved, he said, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

We must do two things to come back to God:

1. *Repent.* This means that we must say that we have sinned. It means that we must admit that we cannot make ourselves pleasing to God and must throw ourselves on his mercy. We tell God that we are sorry for our sins.

2. *Be baptized.* This means that we must believe that Jesus is our Savior and publicly state that before others. This public statement begins with baptism, but it is a public confession that we must make with our mouth as well. We must be willing to be known as Christians.

What Is a Christian?

A Christian is a person to whom God has given his Holy Spirit. A new life comes into that person that will never stop, not even at the time of physical death. The Holy Spirit dwells in us, giving us peace with God, and producing fruit in our lives of love, joy, peace, gentleness, kindness and holiness.

How to Become a Christian

You can become a Christian right now. This is done by making a commitment to Christ in prayer. Pray this prayer:

Heavenly Father, I have sinned against you and against others. I confess this sin. I ask that you receive me back as your child to live with you forever. I believe that you have punished my sins in your Son Jesus and that now they have been removed from me as far as the east is from the west. Make me pleasing to you now. Put the robes of righteous-

ness on me. Give me your Holy Spirit and fill me so that you can produce peace, joy, love, kindness, gentleness and purity in my life. For I ask it in the name of Jesus Christ, my new Savior and Lord. Amen.

Growing as a Christian

Having prayed that prayer, you can have the assurance that God answers it and a new life has been started in you. This new life will not be snuffed out. "Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6). To follow Jesus, to be his disciple, means that you are hungry to know more about him. You find out more about God by studying his Word daily, personally in your family and in group Bible study. This Bible has been especially prepared to help you do that. You are now ready to read the next article, which will show you how to begin in your study of this wonderful book.

How to Read the Bible

In order to receive the maximum benefit from reading and studying the Bible, you must know what to read in the Bible. Since the Bible is a library of 66 books and has over 1,000 pages, it cannot be read as a regular book. You must know where to start. What books should you read first? Which are the easiest to understand? The three Bible reading courses that follow are designed to get you started on a regular plan for reading your Bible. But not only that, they will keep you reading, moving from simple overviews to more in-depth assignments.

Introductory Bible Reading Courses

These twelve introductory Bible reading courses have been carefully prepared to introduce you to the most well-known chapters and teachings of the Bible. Each day set aside 15-30 minutes for a time of Bible reading and prayer. A chapter a day has been selected for you. Read the chapter (it will usually take only five to ten minutes) and then answer the set of six questions found on page 23. Write the answers to the questions in a notebook.

The Bible reading programs have been arranged so that you can complete each one in two weeks. If you do all twelve of them you will gain an excellent overview of some of the favorite chapters and teachings of the Bible.

1. An Overview of the Bible

- ☐ Day 1. Genesis 1: The creation of the world.
- ☐ Day 2. Genesis 3: Sin enters the world.
- ☐ Day 3. Genesis 6:11—7:24: God's first judgment on sin.
- ☐ Day 4. Genesis 12: God brings the nation that will bring Jesus.
- ☐ Day 5. Exodus 12: God saves Israel from slavery.
- ☐ Day 6. Luke 1: The announcement of the birth of Jesus.
- ☐ Day 7. Matthew 2: The birth of Jesus.
- ☐ Day 8. Mark 1: The work of Jesus.
- ☐ Day 9. Matthew 5: Some of Jesus' teachings.
- ☐ Day 10. Mark 14: The arrest of Jesus.
- ☐ Day 11. Mark 15: The death and burial of Jesus.
- ☐ Day 12. John 20: The resurrection of Jesus.
- ☐ Day 13. Acts 2: The birth of the church.
- ☐ Day 14. Revelation 22: Jesus' second coming and a picture of heaven.

2. The Life and Teachings of Jesus According to Mark

- ☐ Day 1. Mark 1: The beginning of Jesus' ministry.
- ☐ Day 2. Mark 2: A healing, a calling, a questioning.
- ☐ Day 3. Mark 3: Jesus appoints his disciples.
- ☐ Day 4. Mark 4: Stories (parables) Jesus told.
- ☐ Day 5. Mark 5: Jesus shows that he is God.
- ☐ Day 6. Mark 6—7: Jesus continues to show that he is God.
- ☐ Day 7. Mark 8: The disciples confess that Jesus is God.
- ☐ Day 8. Mark 9—10: Jesus predicts his suffering and death.
- ☐ Day 9. Mark 11: Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.
- ☐ Day 10. Mark 12: Jesus teaches in Jerusalem.
- ☐ Day 11. Mark 13: Jesus teaches about the end of the world.
- ☐ Day 12. Mark 14: Jesus is arrested.
- ☐ Day 13. Mark 15: Jesus is crucified.
- ☐ Day 14. Mark 16: Jesus rises from the dead.

3. The Life and Teachings of Jesus in the Other Gospels

- ☐ Day 1. Luke 1: Preparing for Jesus' arrival.
- ☐ Day 2. Luke 2: The story of Jesus' birth.
- ☐ Day 3. Matthew 1: Jesus is worshiped by the Magi.
- ☐ Day 4. Mark 9: A day in the life of Jesus.
- ☐ Day 5. Matthew 5: The Sermon on the Mount.

- ☐ Day 6. Matthew 6: The Sermon on the Mount.
- ☐ Day 7. Luke 15: Parables of Jesus.
- ☐ Day 8. John 3: A conversation with Jesus.
- ☐ Day 9. John 14: Jesus' final instructions.
- ☐ Day 10. John 17: Jesus' prayer for his disciples.
- ☐ Day 11. Matthew 26: Betrayal and arrest.
- ☐ Day 12. Matthew 27: Jesus' execution on a cross.
- ☐ Day 13. John 20: Resurrection.
- ☐ Day 14. Luke 24: Jesus' appearance after resurrection.

4. The Life and Teachings of Paul

- ☐ Day 1. Acts 9: The conversion of Saul.
- ☐ Day 2. Acts 16: Paul's Macedonian call and a jailbreak.
- ☐ Day 3. Acts 17: Scenes from Paul's missionary journeys.
- ☐ Day 4. Acts 26: Paul tells his life story to a king.
- ☐ Day 5. Acts 27: Shipwreck on the way to Rome.
- ☐ Day 6. Acts 28: Paul's arrival in Rome.
- ☐ Day 7. Romans 3: Paul's theology in a nutshell.
- ☐ Day 8. Romans 7: Struggle with sin.
- ☐ Day 9. Romans 8: Life in the Spirit.
- ☐ Day 10. 1 Corinthians 13: Paul's description of love.
- ☐ Day 11. 1 Corinthians 15: Thoughts on the afterlife.
- ☐ Day 12. Galatians 5: Freedom in Christ.
- ☐ Day 13. Ephesians 3: Paul's summary of his mission.
- ☐ Day 14. Philippians 2: Imitating Christ.

5. Salvation

- ☐ Day 1. Genesis 3: The first sin creates a need.
- ☐ Day 2. Isaiah 52: Salvation prophesied.
- ☐ Day 3. Isaiah 53: The role of the suffering servant.
- ☐ Day 4. Luke 15: Three stories about God's love.
- ☐ Day 5. John 3: Jesus explains "born again."
- ☐ Day 6. John 10: The good shepherd.
- ☐ Day 7. Acts 8: Conversions spread outside the Jews.
- ☐ Day 8. Acts 26: Paul testifies of his conversion before a king.
- ☐ Day 9. Romans 3: God's provision for sin.
- ☐ Day 10. Romans 5: Peace with God.
- ☐ Day 11. Galatians 3: Unavailable through obeying the law.
- ☐ Day 12. Ephesians 2: New life in Christ.
- ☐ Day 13. 1 Peter 1: Future rewards of salvation.
- ☐ Day 14. 2 Peter 1: Making sure of salvation.

6. Prayers of the Bible

- ☐ Day 1. Genesis 18: Abraham's plea for Sodom.
- ☐ Day 2. Exodus 15: Moses' song to the Lord.
- ☐ Day 3. Exodus 33: Moses meets with God.
- ☐ Day 4. 2 Samuel 7: David's response to God's promises.
- ☐ Day 5. 1 Kings 8: Solomon's dedication of the temple.
- ☐ Day 6. 2 Chronicles 20: Jehoshaphat prays for victory.
- ☐ Day 7. Ezra 9: Ezra's prayer for the people's sins.
- ☐ Day 8. Psalm 22: A cry to God for help.
- ☐ Day 9. Psalm 104: A prayer of praise.
- ☐ Day 10. Daniel 9: Daniel's prayer for the salvation of Jerusalem.
- ☐ Day 11. Habakkuk 3: A prophet's prayer of acceptance.
- ☐ Day 12. Matthew 6: The Lord's prayer.
- ☐ Day 13. John 17: Jesus' prayer for his disciples.
- ☐ Day 14. Colossians 1: Paul's prayer of thanksgiving.

7. The Holy Spirit

- Day 1 Judges 14: Giving strength to Samson
- Day 2 1 Samuel 10: King Saul's experience
- Day 3 Matthew 3:1—4:10: Role in Jesus' baptism and temptation
- Day 4 John 14: Jesus promises the Spirit.
- Day 5 John 16: The work of the Spirit
- Day 6 Acts 2: Coming of the Spirit at Pentecost
- Day 7 Acts 10: Guidance to Peter on accepting Gentiles.
- Day 8 Romans 8: Christians' victory in the Spirit.
- Day 9 1 Corinthians 2: Wisdom from the Spirit.
- Day 10 1 Corinthians 12: Gifts of the Spirit
- Day 11 1 Corinthians 14: Gifts of tongues and prophecy.
- Day 12 Galatians 5: Life in the Spirit.
- Day 13 Ephesians 4: Unity and gifts.
- Day 14 1 John 4: Signs of the Spirit.

8. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

- Day 1 Genesis 12: God calls Abram.
- Day 2 Genesis 13: Abram and Lot choose separate land.
- Day 3 Genesis 15: God promises to bless Abram.
- Day 4 Genesis 17: The rite of circumcision is instituted.
- Day 5 Genesis 18: Abraham has three visitors
- Day 6 Genesis 19: Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed.
- Day 7 Genesis 22: Abraham is tested.
- Day 8 Genesis 24: Isaac marries Rebekah.
- Day 9 Genesis 27: Jacob gets Isaac's blessing by using deceit.
- Day 10 Genesis 28: God promises to bless Jacob.
- Day 11 Genesis 29: Jacob marries Leah, then Rachel.
- Day 12 Genesis 31: Jacob leaves Laban.
- Day 13 Genesis 32: Jacob wrestles with God.
- Day 14 Genesis 33: Jacob and Esau are reunited.

9. Moses and the Exodus

- Day 1 Exodus 2: Moses is born and raised by Pharaoh's daughter.
- Day 2 Exodus 3: Moses encounters the burning bush.
- Day 3 Exodus 4: God convinces Moses to return to Egypt.
- Day 4 Exodus 7: Moses and Aaron go before Pharaoh.
- Day 5 Exodus 12: The Israelites observe the first Passover.
- Day 6 Exodus 14: The Israelites safely cross the sea.
- Day 7 Exodus 16: God sends manna and quail for food.
- Day 8 Exodus 19: God appears to Moses on Mount Sinai.
- Day 9 Exodus 32: The Israelites worship a golden calf.
- Day 10 Numbers 14: The Israelites are afraid to enter Canaan.
- Day 11 Deuteronomy 1: Moses reviews Israelite history.
- Day 12 Deuteronomy 2: The Israelites wander in the desert for forty years.
- Day 13 Deuteronomy 4: God commands the Israelites to obey.
- Day 14 Deuteronomy 31: Joshua succeeds Moses as leader of the Israelites.

10. The Life of David

- Day 1 1 Samuel 16: David is anointed by Samuel.
- Day 2 1 Samuel 17: David fights Goliath.
- Day 3 1 Samuel 18: Saul is jealous of David.
- Day 4 1 Samuel 20: David and Jonathan pledge friendship.
- Day 5 1 Samuel 21: David eats consecrated bread at Nob.
- Day 6 1 Samuel 22: Saul kills the priests of Nob.
- Day 7 1 Samuel 24: David spares Saul's life.
- Day 8 2 Samuel 6: David brings the ark to Jerusalem.
- Day 9 2 Samuel 7: God promises to bless David.

- ☐ Day 10. 2 Samuel 11: David and Bathsheba sin.
- ☐ Day 11. 2 Samuel 12: David repents of his sin.
- ☐ Day 12. 2 Samuel 13: David has family troubles.
- ☐ Day 13. 2 Samuel 15: Absalom rebels against David.
- ☐ Day 14. 2 Samuel 18: Absalom dies and David mourns.

11. Leaders of the Old Testament

- ☐ Day 1. Judges 6: God calls Gideon to rescue his people.
- ☐ Day 2. Judges 7: Gideon conquers his fears and his enemies.
- ☐ Day 3. 1 Samuel 3: God calls the young Samuel.
- ☐ Day 4. 1 Kings 3: Solomon is given wisdom.
- ☐ Day 5. 1 Kings 19: Elijah runs for his life.
- ☐ Day 6. 2 Kings 5: Elisha heals a powerful foreign general.
- ☐ Day 7. Isaiah 6: God calls the prophet Isaiah.
- ☐ Day 8. 2 Kings 18: King Hezekiah under military siege.
- ☐ Day 9. 2 Kings 19: Isaiah speaks God's word to King Hezekiah.
- ☐ Day 10. 2 Chronicles 34: Josiah sets his nation back on course.
- ☐ Day 11. Nehemiah 2: Nehemiah courageously begins rebuilding a wall.
- ☐ Day 12. Jeremiah 38: Jeremiah, in prison, refuses to change his message.
- ☐ Day 13. Daniel 1: Daniel risks his life in captivity.
- ☐ Day 14. Daniel 5: Daniel's word to a royal orgy.

12. Social Justice

- ☐ Day 1. Exodus 3: God hears the cries of the slaves.
- ☐ Day 2. Leviticus 25: The Year of Jubilee, when economics even out.
- ☐ Day 3. Ruth 2: A poor woman finds help.
- ☐ Day 4. 1 Kings 21: Elijah speaks to a land-grabbing, murderous king.
- ☐ Day 5. Nehemiah 5: Nehemiah demands justice for the poor.
- ☐ Day 6. Isaiah 5: Woe to fun-loving materialists.
- ☐ Day 7. Isaiah 58: Worship that God appreciates.
- ☐ Day 8. Jeremiah 34: Freedom for slaves.
- ☐ Day 9. Amos 2: Sins against God by his own people.
- ☐ Day 10. Amos 6: Woe to the complacent.
- ☐ Day 11. Micah 6: What the Lord requires.
- ☐ Day 12. Luke 3: John the Baptist tells how to prepare for Jesus.
- ☐ Day 13. Matthew 6: Jesus speaks on material things.
- ☐ Day 14. James 2: Favoring the rich, showing compassion for the poor.

Every Book of the Bible

After you have completed the first reading program, you should be ready to begin this next course. It will guide you in reading at least one important chapter from each of the 66 books of the Bible. This course includes 186 of the 1,189 chapters in the Bible. Many well-known parts of the Bible are not represented, and from some books (Leviticus, for example) you will read only a single chapter. These 186 chapters have been selected because they are understandable to the average reader without the need of explanation from a teacher. When read together they will provide you with an excellent foundation for understanding the Bible.

GENESIS ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 15 ☐ 19 ☐ 22 ☐ 27 ☐ 28 ☐ 37 ☐ 41 ☐ 45

EXODUS ☐ 3 ☐ 10-11 ☐ 14 ☐ 20 ☐ 32

LEVITICUS ☐ 26

NUMBERS ☐ 11 ☐ 14

DEUTERONOMY ☐ 4 ☐ 8 ☐ 28

JOSHUA ☐ 2 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 24

JUDGES ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 16

RUTH ☐ 1

1 SAMUEL ☐ 3 ☐ 16 ☐ 17 ☐ 20

2 SAMUEL ☐ 6 ☐ 11 ☐ 12
 1 KINGS ☐ 3 ☐ 8 ☐ 17 ☐ 18
 2 KINGS ☐ 5 ☐ 17 ☐ 22
 1 CHRONICLES ☐ 17
 2 CHRONICLES ☐ 20 ☐ 30 ☐ 32
 EZRA ☐ 3
 NEHEMIAH ☐ 2 ☐ 8
 ESTHER ☐ 4
 JOB ☐ 1-2 ☐ 38 ☐ 42
 PSALMS ☐ 9 ☐ 23 ☐ 27 ☐ 51 ☐ 84 ☐ 103 ☐ 139
 PROVERBS ☐ 4 ☐ 10 ☐ The proverbs listed in "Verbal Dynamite" (page 573)
 ECCLESIASTES ☐ 3
 SONG OF SONGS ☐ 2
 ISAIAH ☐ 6 ☐ 25 ☐ 40 ☐ 52 ☐ 53 ☐ 55
 JEREMIAH ☐ 2 ☐ 15 ☐ 31 ☐ 38
 LAMENTATIONS ☐ 3
 EZEKIEL ☐ 1 ☐ 2-3 ☐ 4 ☐ 37
 DANIEL ☐ 1 ☐ 3 ☐ 5 ☐ 6
 HOSEA ☐ 2-3 ☐ 11
 JOEL ☐ 2
 AMOS ☐ 4
 OBADIAH ☐ Obadiah
 JONAH ☐ 3-4
 MICAH ☐ 6
 NAHUM ☐ 1
 HABAKKUK ☐ 1
 ZEPHANIAH ☐ 3
 HAGGAI ☐ 1
 ZECHARIAH ☐ 8
 MALACHI ☐ 3
 MATTHEW ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 13 ☐ 19 ☐ 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28
 MARK ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15-16
 LUKE ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 10 ☐ 12 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 18 ☐ 24
 JOHN ☐ 3 ☐ 6 ☐ 10 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17 ☐ 20
 ACTS ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 5 ☐ 9 ☐ 16 ☐ 17 ☐ 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28
 ROMANS ☐ 3 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 12
 1 CORINTHIANS ☐ 13 ☐ 15
 2 CORINTHIANS ☐ 4 ☐ 12
 GALATIANS ☐ 3
 EPHESIANS ☐ 2 ☐ 3
 PHILIPPIANS ☐ 2
 COLOSSIANS ☐ 1
 1 THESSALONIANS ☐ 3-4
 2 THESSALONIANS ☐ 2
 1 TIMOTHY ☐ 1
 2 TIMOTHY ☐ 2
 TITUS ☐ 2
 PHILEMON ☐ Philemon

HEBREWS ☐ 2 ☐ 11 ☐ 12
 JAMES ☐ 1
 1 PETER ☐ 1
 2 PETER ☐ 1
 1 JOHN ☐ 3
 2 and 3 JOHN ☐ 2, 3 John
 JUDE ☐ Jude
 REVELATION ☐ 1 ☐ 12 ☐ 21

Every Chapter of the Bible

This final reading program will take you completely through the Bible, reading every word. It will take you three years to complete it, doing a chapter a day. It has been arranged so that you alternate readings between the Old Testament and the New Testament, reading through both as you move along.

GENESIS ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10-11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17
☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28 ☐ 29 ☐ 30 ☐ 31 ☐ 32 ☐ 33
☐ 34 ☐ 35 ☐ 36 ☐ 37 ☐ 37 ☐ 39 ☐ 40 ☐ 41 ☐ 42 ☐ 43 ☐ 44 ☐ 45 ☐ 46 ☐ 47 ☐ 48 ☐ 49
☐ 50

MATTHEW ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9

EXODUS ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10-11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17
☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28 ☐ 29 ☐ 30 ☐ 31 ☐ 32 ☐ 33
☐ 34 ☐ 35 ☐ 36 ☐ 37 ☐ 38 ☐ 39 ☐ 40

MATTHEW ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20

LEVITICUS ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11-12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14

MATTHEW ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28

LEVITICUS ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26 ☐ 27

MARK ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8

NUMBERS ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17
☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28 ☐ 29 ☐ 30 ☐ 31 ☐ 32 ☐ 33
☐ 34 ☐ 35 ☐ 36

MARK ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15-16

DEUTERONOMY ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15
☐ 16 ☐ 17

LUKE ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8

DEUTERONOMY ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28 ☐ 29 ☐ 30 ☐ 31
☐ 32 ☐ 33 ☐ 34

LUKE ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16

JOSHUA ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12-13 ☐ 14-15 ☐ 16-17 ☐ 18
☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24

LUKE ☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24

JUDGES ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17
☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21

JOHN ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

RUTH ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

1 SAMUEL ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15

JOHN ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14

1 SAMUEL ☐ 16 ☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28 ☐ 29 ☐ 30
☐ 31

JOHN ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21

2 SAMUEL ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16

☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24

ACTS ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

1 KINGS ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4-5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11

ACTS ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14

1 KINGS ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22

ACTS ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21

2 KINGS ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17
☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25

ACTS ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28

1 CHRONICLES ☐ 1-9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14

ROMANS ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8

1 CHRONICLES ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23-27 ☐ 28 ☐ 29

ROMANS ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12-13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15-16

2 CHRONICLES ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15
☐ 16-17 ☐ 18

1 CORINTHIANS ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4-5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8-9

2 CHRONICLES ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26-27 ☐ 28 ☐ 29 ☐ 30 ☐ 31 ☐ 32
☐ 33 ☐ 34 ☐ 35 ☐ 36

1 CORINTHIANS ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16

EZRA ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

NEHEMIAH ☐ 1 ☐ 2-3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13

2 CORINTHIANS ☐ 1 ☐ 2-3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8-9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12-13

ESTHER ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6-7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9-10

JOB ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17 ☐ 18
☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21

GALATIANS ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5-6

JOB ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25-26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28 ☐ 29 ☐ 30 ☐ 31 ☐ 32 ☐ 33 ☐ 34 ☐ 35 ☐ 36 ☐ 37
☐ 38 ☐ 39 ☐ 40 ☐ 41 ☐ 42

EPHESIANS ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6

PSALMS ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11-12 ☐ 13-14 ☐ 15-16 ☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19
☐ 20-21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23-24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28-29 ☐ 30 ☐ 31 ☐ 32 ☐ 33 ☐ 34 ☐ 35 ☐ 36 ☐ 37
☐ 38 ☐ 39 ☐ 40

PHILIPPIANS ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

PSALMS ☐ 41 ☐ 42-43 ☐ 44 ☐ 45 ☐ 46-47 ☐ 48 ☐ 49 ☐ 50 ☐ 51 ☐ 52 ☐ 53-54 ☐ 55 ☐ 56 ☐ 57
☐ 58 ☐ 59 ☐ 60-61 ☐ 62 ☐ 63-64 ☐ 65 ☐ 66 ☐ 67 ☐ 68 ☐ 69 ☐ 70 ☐ 71 ☐ 72 ☐ 73 ☐ 74
☐ 75 ☐ 76 ☐ 77 ☐ 78 ☐ 79 ☐ 80

COLOSSIANS ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

PSALMS ☐ 81 ☐ 82 ☐ 83 ☐ 84 ☐ 85 ☐ 86 ☐ 87 ☐ 88 ☐ 89 ☐ 90 ☐ 91 ☐ 92-93 ☐ 94 ☐ 95 ☐ 96
☐ 97 ☐ 98-99 ☐ 100-101 ☐ 102 ☐ 103 ☐ 104 ☐ 105 ☐ 106 ☐ 107 ☐ 108 ☐ 109 ☐ 110-111
☐ 112-113 ☐ 114 ☐ 115 ☐ 116-117 ☐ 118 ☐ 119:1-48 ☐ 119:49-96 ☐ 119:97-144 ☐ 119:145-176
☐ 120-121

1 THESSALONIANS ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-4 ☐ 5

2 THESSALONIANS ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3

PSALMS ☐ 122-123 ☐ 124-125 ☐ 126-128 ☐ 129-130 ☐ 131-132 ☐ 133-134 ☐ 135 ☐ 136 ☐ 137-138
☐ 139 ☐ 140 ☐ 141-142 ☐ 143 ☐ 144 ☐ 145 ☐ 146 ☐ 147 ☐ 148 ☐ 149-150

PROVERBS ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16
☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28 ☐ 29 ☐ 30 ☐ 31

1 TIMOTHY ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6

ECCLESIASTES ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12

SONG OF SONGS ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8

2 TIMOTHY ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

ISAIAH ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4-5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17
☐ 18 ☐ 19-20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28 ☐ 29 ☐ 30 ☐ 31 ☐ 32 ☐ 33 ☐ 34
☐ 35 ☐ 36

How to Study the Bible

After having determined what you will read, you must next know how to read it to gain the maximum benefit from it for your personal life. When a person mines and polishes precious stones, he works with tools: a shovel, perhaps, and a polishing wheel. When you mine the spiritual treasures of the Bible you also need tools—these tools are questions.

You will find two sets of questions on the next pages called "Study Plan One" and "Study Plan Two." The first study plan is the easiest to use and will help you reflect on the *total* chapter or passage that you read. The second plan will help you find a single word or concept in the chapter and will guide you in studying that word or concept in other places in the Bible.

Study Plan One

On the next page you will find six questions that you should ask after reading a chapter in the Bible. You may wish to study the Bible with other members of your family. This is called family Bible study or family devotions. Set aside some regular time when you are all together at home and follow this procedure.

1. Each person should have a notebook, a pencil, and if possible their own Bible.
2. Read the passage or chapter out loud. Ask each person to read one verse. As you read a chapter you will notice numbers. These numbers are called verses. If you want to talk about a certain part of the chapter, ask the people in the group to look at the number or verse that contains the thought you are considering. When reading out loud, each person should read the material that follows one number—then the next person may take a turn.
3. After the passage is read, pray. Each person should offer a short prayer for God's direction, or one or two may pray for the whole family.
4. One person should be appointed to ask the questions. This person becomes the "group leader" for the study period. This person should not talk all the time. The purpose of the group leader is to get others in the family to participate and talk and to keep the conversation on the answers to the questions. (Each person who leads a group should read the article, "How to Conduct Family Devotions and Lead Group Bible Studies," found on page 26.)
5. Each person should be encouraged to answer question one: "What do you like in the passage?" All members of the family should write down the answers in their notebook. When everyone has answered, the group leader should briefly review the answers that were given.
6. Next, the group leader should ask question two. Some of the family members may not have found anything in the story they did not like. Therefore, only those who found something should answer this question. Perhaps the story tells about some sin that someone committed or some fear someone had. There may be many things you do not like. List them, as the family members suggest them, in your notebook.
7. Now ask question three and make a list of the things you do not understand. If you cannot answer them or figure them out together, you may wish to ask your pastor or Bible teacher for the answers.
8. The fourth question is very important. If the chapter is a story, you may wish to have the family act the story out. (They may read their parts from the Bible.) Or you may wish to have one of the family members retell the story from memory. Or perhaps you may wish to recreate the story as a family, asking each person to add a little.

If the chapter was a teaching (not a story), you should summarize what was taught by first of all agreeing on one sentence that states the teaching and then adding different thoughts to that statement as they appear in the chapter. For instance, if you were reading Psalm 23, you might wish to make the sentence the same as verse one of the psalm. "The LORD is my shepherd." That sentence summarizes all the psalm teaches. Then state the different thoughts added to the idea that the Lord is our shepherd, such as:

I shall not want.

I shall be cared for.

I shall walk through the valley of death and not be afraid.

9. Each passage in the Bible reveals something about the nature of God. Ask the members of your family to make a list of the truths they learned about God in the study. Each should write them down in the notebook.

10. Finally, apply the lesson by asking the family members what they should do as a result of studying this chapter. Is there some service, such as trusting or giving or worshiping, that they should give to God? What does the chapter teach about the way they should treat other members of the family, friends, and neighbors?

11. Conclude with a time of prayer. Start with thanking God for who he is, for his gifts. Then confess your sins to him. Next, place your needs before him. And finally conclude by thanking him for taking care of all your needs.

Study Plan One

1. What do you like in the passage?

2. What don't you like in the passage?

3. Is there anything you don't understand?

4. Summarize the passage or outline it.

5. What does this passage tell you about God?

6. What does this passage tell you to do?

Study Plan Two

The purpose of the second study plan is to help you isolate one word or concept from the passage and study that concept or word in depth. This plan can be used in family devotions, in a group Bible study or in private devotions.

1. Start with prayer for God's guidance.
2. Read the assigned chapter of the Bible.
3. When you pick a verse to study, try to pick one of the important or key verses. What verse appeals to you the most? What sentence did you like best?
4. After you have picked one verse, then pick a word or concept in that verse that is an important word and one that you would like to learn more about. For instance, look at John 3:16. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." You might wish to pick the word *love* from this verse as the word you want to study.
5. The next step is to list all the things that the verse says about the word *love*.
 - God is the one who loves.
 - God loves the world.
 - God loves the world so much he gave his only Son.
 - God loves me and offers me eternal life if I believe in his Son.
6. You are now ready for a very interesting part of Bible study. In the back of this Bible are three sections. You will find the word *love* in each section.
 - First of all look up the word *love* in the subject guide. There you will find an outline of a few important teachings about love, along with chapters where these teachings appear. You may wish to read these chapters or passages and make notes about what they teach concerning love. Note: Not all words will appear in the subject guide.
 - Next, look up the word *love* in the Bible dictionary in the back of this Bible. Here you will find a definition of the word that you may want to write out in your notebook and a list of some of the verses where the word *love* is found.
 - If you want still more information about what other passages in the Bible teach about love, you may want to look in the concordance in the back of the Bible under the word *love*. Here you will find a listing of most of the passages where the word *love* appears. Select some of them and write down what they say about love.
7. You are now ready to apply the treasure to your life by asking yourself question five. If you were to answer it on the basis of your study of John 3:16, you might write:
 - God: This study of love teaches me that God loves me so much that he sacrificed his only Son so that I would not have to be punished for sin. There is no greater love than that.
 - Promises: If God has loved me so much that he gave his only Son for me, then I need not worry about anything in the future.
 - What should I do? I should accept this love of God by believing that Jesus is my Savior.
 - What should I not do? I should not ignore God's love to me.
8. As with study plan one, close your study with prayer.

Study Plan Two

1. Pick one verse to study from the passage you read.

2. From this verse, pick one word or concept you'd like to study.

3. List everything the passage says about your word or concept.

4. Look up the word in a Bible dictionary or concordance. List a few of the other verses where it is found and state what is taught there.

5. Now apply your spiritual treasure to your life. What new truths did you find about:

God.

God's promises to you.

What you should do.

What you should not do.

How to Conduct Family Devotions and Lead Group Bible Studies

Samuel wanted to start a Bible study group in his home, so he invited his neighbors to meet with him. Since Samuel had been to Bible school, he knew a lot about the Bible. He prepared for the lessons and did most of the talking. Since his neighbors had never studied the Bible, they did not say much during the Bible study meetings. Samuel was able to teach them many things. The neighbors were fascinated by what Samuel had to say, and many of them became Christians.

David, however, had not gone to Bible school. He too wanted to start a Bible study group in his neighborhood. Since he had not been to Bible school, he felt that he could not teach as Samuel did. Instead of talking all the time, David had the members of the group answer Bible study questions. (He used the two sets of questions that appear in "How to Study the Bible.") David tried to do as little talking as possible. He did not read the chapter as Samuel did, but rather had each person in the group read a verse out loud until the chapter was read. He then asked each person to state what they liked best about the chapter. After that he asked them to tell each other what they didn't like about the chapter. Then each person had an opportunity to list all the things they did not understand. Sometimes, if the chapter was a story, David would have the group act the story out. At other times, he would have one person retell the story and the others add the parts that were forgotten. If the chapter was not a story, David would ask for volunteers to summarize the chapter. Even the most shy person in David's group began to ask and answer questions.

Samuel and David illustrate the two ways a Bible study group can be led. Samuel is a Bible teacher, and David is a group leader. To be a Bible teacher requires special education, but anyone who follows the principles of this little course can be a group leader and can lead family devotions or group Bible study. It does not require any special education. A group leader encourages everyone to answer the questions, keeps the group talking about the questions, and steers them away from subjects that do not fit the Bible study.

If you wish to organize a Bible study group in your neighborhood or set up family devotions in your home, then work out this little course. It will teach you how to be a good group leader. Read the questions and fill in the blanks. The answers to the questions are below the line. Cover them up with a sheet of paper and look at them only after you have filled in the blanks.

-
1. A group leader gives guidance to the group he leads. He encourages everyone in the group to participate. A group leader encourages everyone in the group to _____ and gives _____ to the group.

Answers: participate
guidance

-
2. A group leader encourages _____ by everyone in the group when he has each person read a verse out loud from the chapter that is being studied.

Answer: participation

-
3. A group leader also encourages _____ by every member of the group when he asks each person to answer the question, "What did you like best about this chapter?"

Answer: participation

4. When a group leader does all the reading of scripture, *dominating the discussion and leaving* he is no longer a group leader but a _____

Answer: Bible teacher

5. Anyone can be a _____, but only those who have had special Bible training should attempt to be a _____

Answers: group leader
Bible teacher

6. When the leader does all the speaking, it means that the members have no chance to _____ participate. When this happens the leader has become a _____

Answers: Bible teacher
group leader

7. Each class member should participate in reading a verse as the chapter is read. Each class member should also be encouraged to give an answer to every question. This is good _____ leadership.

Answer: group

8. Selecting the first introductory Bible course ("How to Read the Bible," page 16) as the first study material and showing the class how to use the first set of questions in studying the chapters is a good example of a group leader giving _____ to the group

Answer: guidance

9. If a Jehovah's Witness or member of some other group reads from their scriptures or literature, it may mean that the leader is not giving proper _____ to the group

Answer: guidance

10. Patience is required when leading a Bible study in family devotions or for unbelievers. Some members of the family or the class will want to do all the talking, others will not participate at all. A good practice to be followed by the group leader is _____

Answer: patience

11. When the group leader asks a question, members of the group may be very slow to answer. The leader may be too quick to tell the answer before members can think about the question. The leader must be _____ and wait for the members to respond.

Answer: patient

12. If shy members of the class do not respond, the group leader should help them by encouraging them to participate in the reading of the verses and by asking them by name to answer questions one and two in the first set of questions. A good _____ encourages _____ members to participate.

Answers: group leader
all

13. A group leader gives good _____ to his group when he suggests that they study the second introduction Bible reading course, The Life and Teachings of Jesus According to Mark, after they have completed the first introduction course.

Answer: guidance

14. A good leader also gives good _____ to his group when he suggests that the group begin by studying only one chapter per week in the introduction Bible reading course. At the end of each week he may select two more chapters from the course for group study and ask the members to study the remainder of the chapters privately, thus spending a total of eight weeks on the course.

Answer: guidance

15. In teaching all subsequent introduction courses the group leader shows good guidance by spending four weeks in each course. He selects _____ chapters for group discussion while members of the group work out the remaining chapters in their private devotions.

Answer: four

16. A good group leader should be sensitive to the non-Christians in the group and encourage them to become followers of Jesus Christ by believing in him and repenting of their sins. A good group leader not only is patient and gives guidance but also _____ non-Christians to become followers of Jesus.

Answer: encourages

17. The Holy Spirit also must participate if the group study is to be successful. Only the Holy Spirit is able to bring conviction and conversion. The two works of the Holy Spirit are _____ and _____.

Answers: conviction
conversion

18. Parents leading family devotions should also _____ their children to become _____ of Jesus.

Answers: encourage
followers

19. A strong leader can sometimes lead a person to change religions. This cannot be done without the help of the _____.

Answer: Holy Spirit

20. Group leaders can sow the seed of the Good News. The Holy Spirit is the only one who can bring about the harvest. Therefore, the group leader must depend on the _____ to make class members or family members followers of Jesus.

Answer: Holy Spirit

21. In leading a Bible study group or family devotions, the group leader should practice reproducible leadership. Reproducible leadership means a kind of leadership that the class members will be able to do. The leader should lead in such a way that his method of leadership can be _____ by any class member.

Answer: reproduced

22. A wise group leader will always be encouraging members of his class or his family to start their own Bible study group. The way he leads is an example for future _____.

Answer: group leaders

23. A person who wants to be the leader of a group as long as possible will not be interested in developing leaders to take his place. He will not be encouraging members to assume _____ of the group.

Answer: leadership

24. A good group leader should encourage those who show signs of leadership to assume leadership of the group as soon as the Holy Spirit has _____ and _____ them.

Answers: convicted
converted

25. It is natural for a new leader of a group to come from the _____.

Answer: group (or family)

26. When a wise group leader practices group leadership and does not try to be a Bible teacher, it is natural for members to participate as the group develops. It is also _____ for some of the members to become leaders.

Answer: natural

27. When more than one natural leader develops in a group, the original group leader should select one leader to continue with the original group and other leaders to start _____ groups.

Answer: new

28. The original group leader should encourage those who start new groups to continue to meet with the first group for at least six months, during the period in which they start the new group. This will give the original group leader six additional months to be an _____ and _____ to the new leaders.

Answers: example
encouragement

29. Using a group leader instead of a Bible teacher to start a new Bible study group means that the leader does not have to have Bible school training, a lot of experience or money. Many people are capable of beginning and _____ new groups.

Answer: leading

30. A leader who is a new Christian could lead a Bible study group, even if he has had little _____.

Answer: experience

31. Write "true" or "false" in the blanks:

_____ Only a person with special seminary or Bible school training is capable of being a group Bible study leader

_____ Anyone who has little formal training can successfully lead a Bible study group.

Answers: false
true

32. Choose one or more:

A lawyer _____

fisherman _____

doctor _____

teacher _____

farmer _____

_____ would have enough money necessary to begin and lead a Bible study group.

Answers: lawyer
fisherman
doctor
teacher
farmer

33. A leader can begin a new Bible study group even if he has little e _____
t _____ or m _____

Answers: experience
training
money

34. We have studied things a group leader should do. Now let's look at three things a group leader should *not* do. Often a leader of a Bible study group knows more about the Bible than the class members. The leader sometimes will feel proud of the advantage. He then feels that he must tell all he knows on everything talked about. This attitude is (choose one):

desirable.

undesirable.

Answer: undesirable

35. A leader who is secure in his knowledge of his relationship with God will not feel that he has to prove himself by telling _____ he _____ on every subject.

Answers: all
knows

36. It is not a sign of ignorance for the leader to be silent and listen. When a leader is silent it does not mean that he is _____

Answer: ignorant

3. A leader should not feel that on every subject he must ~~respond~~ respond ~~to~~ to ~~the~~ the ~~group~~ group.
 tell all he knows
 be an authority
 listen

Answers: tell all he knows
 be an authority

18. In a Bible study group some will attend in the beginning who want to show their intelligence by being "philosophers" or "debaters." It is a waste of time to debate with these people. These philosophers or debaters usually choose one or more:
 are genuine seekers for truth
 are seeking attention for themselves
 like to talk

Answers: are seeking attention for themselves
 like to talk

19. A philosopher or debater who has never been saved cannot understand spiritual things. The leader then should be willing to discuss which one of the following two subjects with this person?

how to be saved
 the Trinity

Answer: how to be saved

40. A philosopher will jump rapidly from subject to subject. If the leader debates all the philosopher's questions, the philosopher will become the real leader of the study time. This debating will bring to class members:

enlightenment
 confusion.

Answer: confusion

41. A Bible study group will become confused if there is _____ with philosophers.

Answer: debating

42. When one person dominates the time and does all the talking, it means that the group leader is not giving _____ leadership.

Answer: good

43. When one person talks all the time, it makes it impossible for other class members to _____

Answer: participate

44 A good group leader never permits (choose one or more):

- _____ one person
 _____ two persons
 _____ all members

to dominate the time and do all the talking.

Answers: one person
 two persons

45. We have studied three things the leader should not do when practicing good group leadership. These three rules are:

The leader should not feel that he must _____ that he _____ on every subject.

The leader must not _____ with philosophers.

The leader should not let _____ dominate the time.

Answers: tell all
 knows
 debate
 one person

Preface

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION is a completely new translation of the Holy Bible made by over a hundred scholars working directly from the best available Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts. It had its beginning in 1965 when, after several years of exploratory study by committees from the Christian Reformed Church and the National Association of Evangelicals, a group of scholars met at Palos Heights, Illinois, and concurred in the need for a new translation of the Bible in contemporary English. This group, though not made up of official church representatives, was decidedly international. Its conclusion was endorsed by a large number of leaders from many denominations who met in Chicago in 1966.

Responsibility for the new version was delegated by the Palos Heights group to a representative body of fifteen, the Committee on Bible Translation, composed for the most part of biblical scholars from colleges, universities and seminaries. In 1967 the New York Bible Society, now the International Bible Society, generously undertook the financial sponsorship of the project, an assistance that made it possible to enlist the help of many distinguished scholars. The fact that the scholars came from the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand was one factor that gave the project its international scope. That they were from many denominations, including Anglican, Assemblies of God, Baptist, Brethren, Christian Reformed, Church of Christ, evangelical, Free Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Nazarene, Presbyterian, Wesleyan and other churches—helped to safeguard the translation from sectarian bias.

How it was made helps to give the New International Version its distinctiveness. The preparation of each book was assigned to a team of scholars. Next, one of the Intermediate Editorial Committees revised the initial translation, with constant reference to the Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek. Their work then went to one of the General Editorial Committees, which checked it in detail and made another thorough revision. This revision in turn was carefully reviewed by the Committee on Bible Translation, which made further changes and then released the final version for publication. In this way the entire Bible underwent three revisions, during each of which the translation was examined for its faithfulness to the original languages and for its English style.

All this involved many thousands of hours of research and discussion regarding the meaning of the texts and the precise way of putting them into English. It may well be that no other translation has been made by a more thorough process of review and revision from committee to committee than this one.

From the beginning of the project, the Committee on Bible Translation held to certain goals for the New International Version: that it would be an accurate translation and one that would have clarity and literary quality and so prove suitable for public and private reading, teaching, preaching, memorizing and liturgical use. The Committee also sought to preserve some measure of continuity with the long tradition of translating the Scriptures into English.

In working toward these goals, the translators were united in their commitment to the authority and infallibility of the Bible as God's Word in written form. They believe that it contains the divine answer to the deepest needs of humanity; that it sheds unique light on our path in a dark world; and that it sets forth the way to our eternal well-being.

The first concern of the translators has been the accuracy of the translation and its fidelity to the thought of the biblical writers. They have weighed the significance of the lexical and grammatical details of the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts. At the same time, they have striven for more than a word-for-word translation. Because thought patterns and syntax differ from language to language, faithful communication of the meaning of the writers of the Bible demands frequent modifications in sentence structure and constant regard for the contextual meanings of words.

A sensitive feeling for style does not always accompany scholarship. Accordingly the Committee on Bible Translation submitted the developing version to a number of stylistic consultants. Two of them read every book of both Old and New Testaments twice—once before and once after the last major revision—and made invaluable suggestions. Samples of the translation were tested for clarity and ease of reading by various kinds of people—young and old, highly educated and less well educated, ministers and laymen.

Concern for clear and natural English—that the New International Version should be idiomatic but not idiosyncratic, contemporary but not dated—motivated the translators and consultants. At the same time, they tried to reflect the differing styles of the biblical writers. In view of the international use of English, the translators sought to avoid obvious Americanisms on the one hand and obvious Anglicisms on the other. A British edition reflects the comparatively few differences of significant idiom and of spelling.

As for the traditional pronouns "thou," "thee" and "thine" in reference to the Deity, the translators judged that to use these archaisms (along with the old verb forms such as "doest," "wouldest" and "hadst") would violate accuracy in translation. Neither Hebrew, Aramaic nor Greek uses special pronouns for the persons of the Godhead. A present-day translation is not enhanced by forms that in the time of the King James Version were used in everyday speech, whether referring to God or man.

For the Old Testament the standard Hebrew text, the Masoretic Text as published in the latest editions of *Biblia Hebraica*, was used throughout. The Dead Sea Scrolls contain material bearing on an earlier stage of the Hebrew text. They were consulted, as were the Samaritan Pentateuch and the ancient scribal traditions relating to textual changes. Sometimes a variant Hebrew reading in the margin of the Masoretic Text was followed instead of the text itself. Such instances, being variants within the Masoretic tradition, are not specified by footnotes. In rare cases, words in the consonantal text were divided differently from the way they appear in the Masoretic Text. Footnotes indicate this. The translators also consulted the more important early versions—the Septuagint, Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion; the Vulgate; the Syriac Peshitta, the Targums, and for the Psalms the *Juxta Hebraica* of Jerome. Readings from these versions were occasionally followed where the Masoretic Text seemed doubtful and where accepted principles of textual criticism showed that one or more of these textual witnesses appeared to provide the correct reading. Such instances are footnoted. Sometimes vowel letters and vowel signs did not, in the judgment of the translators, represent the correct vowels for the original consonantal text. Accordingly some words were read with a different set of vowels. These instances are usually not indicated by footnotes.

The Greek text used in translating the New Testament was an eclectic one. No other piece of ancient literature has such an abundance of manuscript witnesses as does the New Testament. Where existing manuscripts differ, the translators made their choice of readings according to accepted principles of New Testament textual criticism. Footnotes call attention to places where there was uncertainty about what the original text was. The best current printed texts of the Greek New Testament were used.

There is a sense in which the work of translation is never wholly finished. This applies to all great literature and uniquely so to the Bible. In 1973 the New Testament in the New International Version was published. Since then, suggestions for corrections and revisions have been received from various sources. The Committee on Bible Translation carefully considered the suggestions and adopted a number of them. These were incorporated in the first printing of the entire Bible in 1978. Additional revisions were made by the Committee on Bible Translation in 1983 and appear in printings after that date.

As in other ancient documents, the precise meaning of the biblical texts is sometimes uncertain. This is more often the case with the Hebrew and Aramaic texts than with the Greek text. Although archaeological and linguistic discoveries in this century aid in understanding difficult passages, some uncertainties remain. The more significant of these have been called to the reader's attention in the footnotes.

In regard to the divine name YHWH, commonly referred to as the Tetragrammaton, the translators adopted the device used in most English versions of rendering that name as "LORD" in capital letters to distinguish it from *Adonai*, another Hebrew word rendered "Lord," for which small letters are used. Wherever the two names stand together in the Old Testament as a compound name of God, they are rendered "Sovereign LORD."

Because for most readers today the phrases "the LORD of hosts" and "God of hosts" have little meaning, this version renders them "the LORD Almighty" and "God Almighty." These renderings convey the sense of the Hebrew, namely, "he who is sovereign over all the 'hosts' (powers) in heaven and on earth, especially over the 'hosts' (armies) of Israel." For readers unacquainted with Hebrew this does not make clear the distinction between *Sabaoth* ("hosts" or "Almighty") and *Shaddai* (which can also be translated "Almighty"), but the latter occurs infrequently and is always footnoted. When *Adonai* and YHWH *Sabaoth* occur together, they are rendered "the Lord, the LORD Almighty."

As for other proper nouns, the familiar spellings of the King James Version are generally retained. Names traditionally spelled with "ch," except where it is final, are usually spelled in this translation with "k" or "c," since the biblical languages do not have the sound that "ch" frequently indicates in English—for example, in *chant*. For well-known names such as Zechariah, however, the traditional spelling has been retained. Variation in the spelling of names in the

original languages has usually not been indicated. Where a person or place has two or more different names in the Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek texts, the more familiar one has generally been used with footnotes where needed.

To achieve clarity the translators sometimes supplied words not in the original texts but required by the context. If there was uncertainty about such material, it is enclosed in brackets. Also for the sake of clarity or style, nouns, including some proper nouns, are sometimes substituted for pronouns, and vice versa. And though the Hebrew writers often shifted back and forth between first, second and third personal pronouns without change of antecedent, this translation often makes them uniform, in accordance with English style and without the use of footnotes.

Poetical passages are printed as poetry, that is, with indentation of lines and with separate stanzas. These are generally designed to reflect the structure of Hebrew poetry. This poetry is normally characterized by parallelism in balanced lines. Most of the poetry in the Bible is in the Old Testament, and scholars differ regarding the scansion of Hebrew lines. The translators determined the stanza divisions for the most part by analysis of the subject matter. The stanzas therefore serve as poetic paragraphs.

As an aid to the reader, sectional headings are inserted in most of the books. They are not to be regarded as part of the NIV text, are not for oral reading, and are not intended to dictate the interpretation of the sections they head.

The footnotes in this version are of several kinds, most of which need no explanation. Those giving alternative translations begin with "Or" and generally introduce the alternative with the last word preceding it in the text, except when it is a single-word alternative; in poetry quoted in a footnote a slant mark indicates a line division. Footnotes introduced by "Or" do not have uniform significance. In some cases two possible translations were considered to have about equal validity. In other cases, though the translators were convinced that the translation in the text was correct, they judged that another interpretation was possible and of sufficient importance to be represented in a footnote.

In the New Testament, footnotes that refer to uncertainty regarding the original text are introduced by "Some manuscripts" or similar expressions. In the Old Testament, evidence for the reading chosen is given first and evidence for the alternative is added after a semicolon (for example, Septuagint; Hebrew *father*). In such notes the term "Hebrew" refers to the Masoretic Text.

It should be noted that minerals, flora and fauna, architectural details, articles of clothing and jewelry, musical instruments and other articles cannot always be identified with precision. Also measures of capacity in the biblical period are particularly uncertain (see the table of weights and measures following the text).

Like all translations of the Bible, made as they are by imperfect man, this one undoubtedly falls short of its goals. Yet we are grateful to God for the extent to which he has enabled us to realize these goals and for the strength he has given us and our colleagues to complete our task. We offer this version of the Bible to him in whose name and for whose glory it has been made. We pray that it will lead many into a better understanding of the Holy Scriptures and a fuller knowledge of Jesus Christ the incarnate Word, of whom the Scriptures so faithfully testify.

The Committee on Bible Translation

June 1978
(Revised August 1983)

Names of the translators and editors may be secured
from the International Bible Society
144 Tices Lane, East Brunswick, New Jersey 08816.

Overview: The Old Testament

The Five Books

The first five books of the Bible tell the origins of the Jewish race and culture.

GENESIS: The book of beginnings describes creation, the first rebellions against God, and God's choosing of Abraham and his offspring.

EXODUS: God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and led them to the Sinai Desert. There, he gave Moses the laws to govern the new nation.

LEVITICUS: God set up laws for the Israelites, mostly regarding holiness and worship.

NUMBERS: Because of their rebellion and disobedience, the Israelites had to wander in a wilderness for 40 years before entering the promised land.

DEUTERONOMY: Just before his death, Moses made three emotional farewell speeches, recapping history and warning the Israelites against further mistakes.

History Books

The next 12 books continue the history of the Israelites: they moved into the land of Canaan and established a kingdom that lasted almost 500 years.

JOSHUA: After Moses' death, Joshua commanded the armies that conquered much of the territory in the promised land.

JUDGES: The new nation fell into a series of dismal failures. God raised up leaders called "judges."

RUTH: This story of love and loyalty between two widows shines out brightly in an otherwise dark period.

1 SAMUEL: Samuel became a transition leader between the time of the judges and that of the kings. He appointed Israel's first king, Saul. After his own failure, Saul tried violently to prevent God's king-elect David from taking the throne.

2 SAMUEL: David, "a man after God's own heart," brought the nation together. But after committing adultery and murder, he was haunted by family and national crises.

1 KINGS: Solomon succeeded David, with mixed success. At his death, a civil war tore apart the nation. Successive kings were mostly bad, and the prophet Elijah had dramatic confrontations with King Ahab.

2 KINGS: This book continues the record of the rulers of the divided kingdom. None of the Northern kings followed God consistently, and so Israel was finally destroyed by an invader. The South, Judah, lasted much longer, but finally Babylon conquered Judah and deported its citizens.

1 CHRONICLES: The book opens with the most complete genealogical record in the Bible, then adds many incidents from the life of David (often the same as those in 2 Samuel).

2 CHRONICLES: Often paralleling the books of Kings, this book records the history of the rulers of Judah, emphasizing the good kings.

EZRA: After being held captive in Babylon for decades, the Jews were allowed to return to their homeland. Ezra, a priest, emerged from one of the first waves of refugees.

NEHEMIAH: Nehemiah returned from the Babylonian captivity after the temple had been rebuilt. He concentrated on restoring the protective wall around Jerusalem and joined Ezra in leading a religious revival.

ESTHER: The story is set among captive Jews in Persia. A courageous Jewish queen foiled a plan to exterminate her people.

Books of Poetry

Almost one third of the Old Testament was originally written in poetry. These books concentrate on questions about pain, God, life, and love.

JOB: The best man of his day suffered the greatest personal tragedy. The entire book deals with the question, "Why?"

PSALMS: These prayers and hymns cover the full range of human emotion. Together, they represent a personal journal of how to relate to God. Some were also used in public worship services.

PROVERBS: The proverbs offer advice on every imaginable area of life. The style of wise living described here leads to a fulfilled life.

ECCLESIASTES: A life without God, "under the sun," leads to meaninglessness and despair, says the Teacher in a strikingly modern book.

SONG OF SONGS: This beautiful poem celebrates romantic and physical love.

Books of the Prophets

During the years when kings ruled Israel and Judah, God spoke through prophets. Though some prophets did predict future events, their primary role was to call God's people back to him.

ISAIAH: The most eloquent of the prophets, Isaiah analyzed the failures of all the nations around him and pointed to a future Messiah who would bring peace.

JEREMIAH: Jeremiah led an emotionally tortured life, yet held to his stern message. He spoke to Judah in the last decades before Babylon destroyed the nation.

LAMENTATIONS: All Jeremiah's warnings about Jerusalem came true, and Lamentations records five poems of sorrow for the fallen city.

EZEKIEL: Ezekiel spoke to the Jews who were captive in Babylon. He often used dramatic stories and "enacted parables" to make his points.

DANIEL: A captive in Babylon, Daniel rose to the office of prime minister. Despite intense political pressure, he lived a model life of integrity and left highly symbolic prophecies about the future.

HOSEA: By marrying a loose-living wife, Hosea lived out his message: that Israel had committed spiritual adultery against God.

JOEL: Beginning with a recent catastrophe in Judah (a locust plague), Joel foretold God's judgment on Judah.

AMOS: A country boy, Amos preached to Israel at the height of its prosperity. His grim warnings focused on materialism.

OBADIAH: Obadiah warned Edom, a nation bordering Judah.

JONAH: Jonah reluctantly went to Nineveh and found Israel's enemies responsive to God's message.

MICAH: Micah exposed corruption in every level of society, but closed with a promise of forgiveness and restoration.

NAHUM: Long after Jonah had stirred Nineveh to repentance, Nahum foretold the mighty city's total destruction.

HABAKKUK: Habakkuk addressed his book to God, not people. In a frank dialogue with God, he discussed problems of suffering and justice.

ZEPHANIAH: Zephaniah focused on the coming day of the Lord, which would purify Judah, resulting in a remnant used to bless the entire world.

HAGGAI: After returning from the Babylonian captivity, the Jews began rebuilding the temple for God. But before long they set aside that task to work on their own homes. Haggai reminded them to put God first.

ZECHARIAH: Writing around the same time as Haggai, Zechariah also urged the Jews to work on the temple. He used a more uplifting approach, describing how the temple would point to the coming Messiah.

MALACHI: The last Old Testament prophet, Malachi faced a nation that had grown indifferent. He sought to stir them from apathy.

Overview: The New Testament

History Books

The word *gospel* means "good news." Almost half the New Testament consists of four accounts of the life of Jesus and the good news he brought to earth. Each of these four books, or Gospels, has a different focus and a different audience; taken together, they give a complete picture of Jesus' life and teaching. About a third of their pages are devoted to the events of his last week on earth, including the crucifixion and resurrection.

Acts continues the history into the period after Jesus left earth.

MATTHEW: Written to a Jewish audience, this Gospel links the Old and New Testaments. It presents Jesus as the Messiah and King promised in the Old Testament. Matthew emphasizes Jesus' authority and power.

MARK: Mark probably had pragmatic Roman readers in mind. His Gospel stresses action and gives a straightforward, blow-by-blow account of Jesus' work on earth.

LUKE: A doctor, Luke was also a fine writer. His Gospel provides many details of human interest, especially in Jesus' treatment of the poor and needy. A joyful tone characterizes Luke's book.

JOHN: John has a different, more reflective style than the other Gospels. Its author selected seven signs that point to Jesus as the Son of God and wove together everything else to underscore that point.

ACTS: Acts tells what happened to Jesus' followers after he left them. Peter and Paul soon emerged as leaders of the rapidly spreading church.

The Letters

The young church was nourished by apostles who set down their beliefs and messages in a series of letters. The first 13 such letters (Romans through Philemon) were written by the apostle Paul, who led the advance of Christianity to non-Jewish people.

Paul's Letters:

ROMANS: Written for a sophisticated audience, Romans sets forth theology in a logical, organized form.

1 CORINTHIANS: A very practical book, 1 Corinthians takes up the problems of a tumultuous church in Corinth—marriage, factions, immorality, public worship, and lawsuits.

2 CORINTHIANS: Paul wrote this follow-up letter to defend himself against a rebellion led by certain false apostles.

GALATIANS: A short version of the message of Romans, this book addresses legalism. It shows how Christ came to bring freedom, not bondage to a set of laws.

EPHESIANS: Although written in jail, this letter is Paul's most optimistic and encouraging. It tells of the advantages a believer has in Christ.

PHILIPPIANS: The church at Philippi ranked among Paul's favorites. This friendly letter stresses that joy can be found in any situation.

COLOSSIANS: Written to oppose certain cults, Colossians tells how faith in Christ is complete. Nothing needs to be added to what Christ did.

1 THESSALONIANS: Composed early in Paul's ministry, this letter gives a capsule history of one church, as well as Paul's direct advice about specific problems.

2 THESSALONIANS: Stronger in tone than his first letter to the Thessalonians, the sequel goes over the same topics, especially the church's questions about Christ's second coming.

1 TIMOTHY: As Paul neared the end of his life, he chose young men such as Timothy to carry on his work. His two letters to Timothy form a leadership manual for a young pastor.

2 TIMOTHY: Written just before Paul's death, 2 Timothy offers Paul's final words to his young assistant.

TITUS: Titus was left in Crete, a notoriously difficult place to nurture a church. Paul's letter gave practical advice on how to go about it.

PHILEMON: Paul urged Philemon, owner of runaway slave Onesimus, to forgive his slave and accept him as a brother in Christ.

Other Letters:

HEBREWS: No one knows who wrote Hebrews, but it probably first went to Christians in danger of slipping back into Judaism. It interprets the Old Testament, explaining many Jewish practices as symbols that prepared the way for Christ.

JAMES: James, a man of action, emphasized the right kind of behavior for a believer. Someone who calls himself a Christian ought to act like it, James believed, and his letter spells out the specifics.

1 PETER: Early Christians often met violent opposition, and Peter's letter comforted and encouraged Christians who were being persecuted for their faith.

2 PETER: In contrast to Peter's first letter, this one focused on problems that sprang up from the inside. It warns against false teachers.

1 JOHN: John could fill simple words—*light, love, life*—with deep meaning, and in this letter, he elegantly explains basic truths about the Christian life.

2 JOHN: Warning against false teachers, John counseled churches on how to respond to them.

3 JOHN: Balancing 2 John, this companion letter mentions the need to be hospitable to true teachers.

JUDE: Jude gave a brief but fiery exposé of heretics.

REVELATION: A book of visions and symbols, Revelation is the only New Testament book that concentrates on prophecy. It completes the story, begun in Genesis, of the cosmic battle between good and evil being waged on earth. It ends with a picture of a new heaven and new earth.

Alphabetical Order of Books of the Bible

Acts	932	Isaiah	584	Obadiah	780
Amos	112	James	1059	1 Peter	1064
1 Chronicles	347	Jeremiah	640	2 Peter	1070
2 Chronicles	374	Job	437	Philemon	1045
Colossians	1021	Joel	767	Philippians	1016
1 Corinthians	980	John	907	Proverbs	541
2 Corinthians	994	1 John	1074	Psalms	466
		2 John	1079		
Daniel	742	3 John	1081	Revelation	1084
Deuteronomy	149	Jonah	782	Romans	964
		Joshua	181	Ruth	226
Ecclesiastes	569	Jude	1082		
Ephesians	1010	Judges	204	1 Samuel	230
Esther	429			2 Samuel	258
Exodus	50	1 Kings	283	Song of Songs	578
Ezekiel	700	2 Kings	311		
Ezra	404				
		Lamentations	693	1 Thessalonians	1025
Galatians	1004	Leviticus	87	2 Thessalonians	1029
Genesis	3	Luke	875	1 Timothy	1032
				2 Timothy	1038
Habakkuk	796	Malachi	816	Titus	1042
Haggai	804	Mark	854		
Hebrews	1047	Matthew	823	Zechariah	807
Hosea	757	Micah	785	Zephaniah	800
		Nahum	792		
		Nehemiah	415		
		Numbers	114		

The Old Testament

GENESIS

INTRODUCTION

The Beginning

Everything—literally everything—begins here

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 1:1

Is the world eternal? Has it always existed?

Many people believe that nature, the sun and moon, the stars, and even human beings, never had a beginning. There is an endless, eternal cycle of birth, life, and death that constantly repeats itself. This eternal cycle never began and will never end. It always has been and always will be.

The Bible tells us something different. It teaches that there was a time when the world did not exist. Only God existed. The God of the Bible is not a force or some unknowable absolute, but he is a person. He knows and thinks; he has emotions; he loves. This God decided to reveal himself by creating the world. And with that decision the world began.

God's Good Creation

When God first created the world, he created it good. As you read through the first chapter of Genesis, notice how often the author repeats that little refrain, "And God saw that it was good." This means that not only was there no sin in what God made, but everything functioned perfectly. There were no storms, no famines; there was no destruction in the perfect world God made.

In the story of the creation of the world we see the careful, precise way in which God carried out the creation. As you read the first chapter make a list of all that he created on each of the six days. You will notice immediately how his work progressed from simple to more complex, culminating in the most wonderful creation of all, man.

The Nature of God

The first chapter of Genesis tells more than the story of creation. The name of God is mentioned thirty times in this chapter, and we can conclude that the chapter not only tells us about the origin of the world but tells us about the nature of God. It shows us that God is all-powerful, for by simply speaking or commanding, all things came into being. No human being, no matter how powerful he might be, has ever demonstrated power like this. This first chapter tells us that God is perfect. What he does has no flaw in it. We also discover in this chapter that God plans and organizes. We see his careful, step-by-step unfolding of creation in the addition of more complex creative acts each successive day. Most of all, this chapter tells us that God is not some remote, untouchable force, but he is a person. He thinks, plans, talks, loves, and cares for what he has made.

Other Beginnings

In addition to telling us about the beginning of the world and the nature of God, the book of Genesis tells us about other beginnings. It tells us about the beginning of sin; about the beginning of salvation; about the beginning of judgment; about the beginning of Israel, the nation God used to bring salvation to the human race. The book of Genesis is the foundation of all the other books of the Bible, for in it you will find the story of who we are, what sin is, what salvation is, and how God will redeem the world from judgment.

How to Read Genesis

Genesis is one of the most enjoyable Old Testament books, full of memorable stories of people and events. It is a crucial book to know, for the rest of the Bible often refers back to it.

Genesis tells the story of many beginnings—the beginning of the universe, the beginning of sin, and perhaps most important, the beginning of God's work to restore a sinful humanity.

The book breaks into two major sections. The first 11 chapters take a big view. They give the origins of human society, including the familiar stories of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah's ark, and the tower of Babel. Here, a few words carry great significance. You need to read slowly and reflectively, for what happens in a single line may echo off events for centuries to come. For instance, Adam and Eve's sin, because it was the *first* sin, became an emblem of disobedience against God.

Beginning at chapter 12, Genesis tells a different kind of story—that of a single family. The pace of the story slows to develop the personalities of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. These fathers and sons are full of human faults and oddities. Do you recognize any of their traits in people you know?

Seeing their fully human personalities, try to understand what God's plans were for them as individuals—and through them, for the restoration of a whole world marred by sin.

PLANS FOR READING GENESIS

PLAN 1: An Overview of Genesis in 14 Days

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to Genesis and chapter 1, the story of creation.
- ☐ Day 2. Read chapter 2, the story of Adam and Eve.
- ☐ Day 3. Read chapter 3, where sin enters a perfect world.
- ☐ Day 4. Read chapter 4, the story of Cain and Abel.
- ☐ Day 5. Read chapter 7, the story of Noah and the great flood.
- ☐ Day 6. Read chapter 8, the end of the great flood.
- ☐ Day 7. Read chapter 15, God's covenant with Abraham.
- ☐ Day 8. Read chapter 19, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.
- ☐ Day 9. Read chapter 22, God's testing of Abraham.
- ☐ Day 10. Read chapter 27, in which Jacob cheats his brother Esau.
- ☐ Day 11. Read chapter 28, when Jacob, fleeing Esau, dreams about God.
- ☐ Day 12. Read chapter 37, the story of Joseph sold into slavery.
- ☐ Day 13. Read chapter 41, in which Joseph is raised to the highest position in Egypt.
- ☐ Day 14. Read chapter 45, in which Joseph reveals his identity to his brothers.

PLAN 2: All of Genesis in 49 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10-11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17
- ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28 ☐ 29 ☐ 30 ☐ 31
- ☐ 32 ☐ 33 ☐ 34 ☐ 35 ☐ 36 ☐ 37 ☐ 38 ☐ 39 ☐ 40 ☐ 41 ☐ 42 ☐ 43 ☐ 44 ☐ 45
- ☐ 46 ☐ 47 ☐ 48 ☐ 49 ☐ 50

The Beginning

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²Now the earth was^a formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

³And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

⁶And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water." ⁷So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. ⁸God called the expanse "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

⁹And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good.

¹¹Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. ¹²The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. ¹³And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

¹⁴And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, ¹⁸to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

²⁰And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." ²¹So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the

earth." ²³And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

²⁴And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. ²⁵God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth,^b and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

²⁸God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

²⁹Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. ³⁰And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

³¹God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

²By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing, so on the seventh day he rested^c from all his work. ³And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Adam and Eve

⁴This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens—⁵and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth^d and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth^d and there was no man to work the ground,^e ⁶but streams^f came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground—⁷the LORD God formed the man^g from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

^aOr possibly became

^b26 Hebrew, Syriac all the wild animals

^c2 Or ceased, also in verse 3

^d5 Or and, also in verse 6

^e6 Or mist ^f7 The Hebrew for man (adam) sounds like and may be related to the Hebrew for ground (adamah); it is also the name Adam see Gen. 2:20

⁸Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. ⁹And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. ¹¹The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹²(The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin^a and onyx are also there.) ¹³The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush.^b ¹⁴The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; ¹⁷but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

¹⁸The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

¹⁹Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field.

But for Adam^c no suitable helper was found. ²¹So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs^d and closed up the place with flesh. ²²Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib^e he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

²³The man said,

"This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called 'woman,'
for she was taken out of man."

²⁴For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

²⁵The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

The Fall of Man

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Do not obey me, say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden.'"

"The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, "Do not eat that fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden," and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

"You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

"When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked, so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

⁸Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

¹⁰He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid."

¹¹And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

¹²The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

¹⁴So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this

"Cursed are you above all the livestock
and all the wild animals!"

You will crawl on your belly
and you will eat dust
all the days of your life

¹⁵And I will put enmity
between you and the woman
and between your offspring and hers,
he will crush²⁰ your head
and you will strike his heel."

¹⁶To the woman he said,

3:7 Sin and Shame

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they immediately became ashamed of their bodies and wanted to hide. Ever since, human beings have been "hiding" from each other and from God.

2:23-25 The First Marriage

Adam joyfully recognized that he and Eve belonged together. As verse 24 suggests, this suitability is the basis for all marriages. This passage was quoted by Jesus (Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:7,8) and Paul (1 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 5:31) in their comments on sex and marriage.

^a12 Or good pearls
part

^b13 Possibly southeast Mesopotamia
^c23 The Hebrew for woman sounds like the Hebrew for man

^d20 Or the man

^e15 Or seed

²¹ Or took part of the man's side
²² Or struck

²³ Or

"I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

¹To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,'

Cursed is the ground because of you, through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life

²It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field

³By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken, for dust you are and to dust you will return."

¹ Or The man ² Or Eve probably means bring or acquired ³ Or were acquired

⁴Adam^a named his wife Eve^b because she would become the mother of all the living

⁵The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them ⁶And the Lord God said "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever" ⁷So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken ⁸After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life

Cain and Abel

⁴ Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain^d She said, "With the help of the Lord I have brought forth^e a man" ⁵Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.

⁴ Or placed in front

⁵ Cain sounds like the Hebrew for brought forth

INSIGHT

Where We Came From

Above all else, Genesis says this: God did it

The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being. 2:7

What is a human being? Who are we? Ever since the beginning of the human race we have asked this question, and the answers given by the various religions of the world are quite different.

Is Man Merely Animal?

Some people believe that we are nothing more than animals, highly developed animals. We have no spirits or souls that last beyond death. This view is not common among most people, but it has arisen with the coming of modern science. This view, commonly called evolution, denies that there is a God who created all things. It teaches that everything evolved over years and years of history. Small forms of life developed first; they matured to more complex forms of life; and finally man developed as the most advanced animal on earth.

Most people believe that man is more than an animal, however. They believe that he is first of all a spirit and that this spirit lives after his body dies. The religion of Hinduism teaches that the spirit of man is really part of the great, universal force or god. Life goes on through an almost endless cycle of births and deaths. Karma, that irrevocable law, determines that what we are in this life was determined by the good or bad deeds we did in the previous life.

Created in the Likeness of God

In contrast to this, the Bible teaches that man is totally unique among all of God's creatures. We are the only beings created in the image and likeness of God. We are given the capability of being friends of God, of talking with him and communing with him as one person to another. After making all the wonderful things of the world, God finished with his greatest creative act, the creation of man and woman. And God put them in charge of everything.

Life Questions: People say they can see God reflected in stars, forests, sunsets. What about people? How can you see God's artistry in them?

Now Abel kept flocks and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the first born of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering. He did not look with favor on the offering of Cain, and his face was downcast.

Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."

Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"

"I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"

The Lord said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth."

Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is more than I can bear. Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me."

But the Lord said to him, "Not so; if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over." Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. So Cain went out from the Lord's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Cain lay with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain was then building a city, and he named it after his son Enoch. To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad was the father of Mehujael, and Mehujael was the father of Methushael, and Methushael was the father of Lamech.

Lamech married two women, one named Adah and the other Zillah. Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock. His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play the harp and

flute. Zillah also had a son, Tubal-Cain, who forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron. Tubal-Cain's sister was Naamah.

Lamech said to his wives,

"Adah and Zillah, listen to me,
wives of Lamech, hear my words:
I have killed a man for wounding me,
a young man for injuring me.
Cain is avenged seven times,
then Lamech seventy-seven times."

Adam lay with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, saying, "God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him." Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh.

At that time men began to call on the name of the Lord.

From Adam to Noah

This is the written account of Adam's line

When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them. And when they were created, he called them "man."

When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image, and he named him Seth. After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.

When Seth had lived 105 years, he became the father of Enosh. And after he became the father of Enosh, Seth lived 807 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Seth lived 912 years, and then he died.

When Enosh had lived 90 years, he became the father of Kenan. And after he became the father of Kenan, Enosh lived 815 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enosh lived 905 years, and then he died.

When Kenan had lived 70 years, he became the father of Mahalalel. And after he became the father of Mahalalel, Kenan lived 840 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Kenan lived 910 years, and then he died.

When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he became the father of Jared. And after he became the father of Jared, Mahalalel lived 830 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Mahalalel lived 895 years, and then he died.

When Jared had lived 162 years, he became the father of Enoch. And after he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Jared lived 962 years, and then he died.

When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years. Enoch walked

4:4 Improper Offerings

God preferred Abel's offering to Cain's; later in the Old Testament both animal and agricultural offerings were accepted by God. Quite possibly, Cain's problem was his attitude. Cain certainly became instantly angry with God when things did not go his way.

9 Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; Masoretic Text does not have "Let's go out to the field" 15 Septuagint
Vulgate and Syriac, Hebrew Very well 16 Nod means wandering (see verses 12 and 14). 22 Or who instructed all who work in
13 Or I will kill 125 Seth probably means granted 26 Or to proclaim 42 Hebrew adam 46 Father may mean
ancestor also in verses 7-26

with God, then he was no more, because God took him away.

²⁸When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he became the father of Lamech. ²⁹And after he became the father of Lamech, Methuselah lived 182 years and had other sons and daughters. ³⁰Altogether, Methuselah lived 969 years, and then he died.

³¹When Lamech had lived 182 years, he had a son. ³²He named him Noah^a and said, "He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the LORD has cursed." ³³After Noah was born, Lamech lived 595 years and had other sons and daughters. ³⁴Altogether, Lamech lived 777 years, and then he died.

³⁵After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham and Japheth.

The Flood

6 When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, ²the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. ³Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with^b man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years."

⁴The Nephilim were on the earth in those days and also afterward—when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.

⁵The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. ⁶The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. ⁷So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them." ⁸But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

⁹This is the account of Noah.

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.

¹⁰Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

¹¹Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. ¹²God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. ¹³So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth

is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. ¹⁴So make yourself an ark of cypress^c wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. ¹⁵This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high.^e ¹⁶Make a roof for it and finish^f the ark to within 18 inches^g of the top. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. ¹⁷I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. ¹⁸But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. ²⁰Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. ²¹You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them."

²²Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

7 The LORD then said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation. ²Take with you seven^h of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and two of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, ³and also seven of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth. ⁴Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made."

⁵And Noah did all that the LORD commanded him.

⁶Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came on the earth. ⁷And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. ⁸Pairs of clean and unclean animals, of birds and of all creatures that move along the ground, ⁹male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark, as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the earth.

¹¹In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. ¹²And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.

¹³On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark. ¹⁴They had with them every wild animal according to its kind, all livestock according to their kinds, every creature that moves along the ground according to its kind and every bird according to its kind, everything with wings. ¹⁵Pairs of all creatures that have the breath of life in them came to Noah and en-

6:2 The Sons of God

This mysterious description may refer to the "sons of Seth," the line of God's people from Adam to Noah, or it may refer to angels, often called "sons of God" in the Old Testament. However you interpret it, the point is that evil behavior increased in the world, a fact that led to punishment by a flood.

²⁹ Noah sounds like the Hebrew for comfort

^a Hebrew for this word is uncertain

^b wide and 13.5 meters high)

^c also in verse 3

³³ Or My spirit will not remain in

¹⁵ Hebrew 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide and 30 cubits high (about 140 meters long, 23 meters

¹⁶ Or Make an opening for light by finishing

¹⁶ Hebrew a cubit (about 0.5 meter)

²² Or seven

³ Or corrupt

¹⁴ The meaning of the

tered the ark. ¹⁶The animals going in were male and female of every living thing, as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD shut him in.

¹⁷For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth. ¹⁸The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. ¹⁹They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. ²⁰The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than twenty feet.^{a,b} ²¹Every living thing that moved on the earth perished—birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind. ²²Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. ²³Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out, men and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds of the air were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark.

²⁴The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days.

8 But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded. ²Now the springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens had been closed, and the rain had stopped falling from the sky. ³The water receded steadily from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the water had gone down, ⁴and on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵The waters continued to recede until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains became visible.

⁶After forty days Noah opened the window he had made in the ark ⁷and sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth. ⁸Then he sent out a dove to see if the water had receded from the surface of the ground. ⁹But the dove could find no place to set its feet because there was water over all the surface of the earth; so it returned to Noah in the ark. He reached out his hand and took the dove and brought it back to himself in the ark. ¹⁰He waited seven more days and again sent out the dove from the ark. ¹¹When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth. ¹²He waited seven more days and sent the dove out again, but this time it did not return to him.

¹³By the first day of the first month of Noah's six hundred and first year, the water had dried up from the earth. Noah then removed the covering from the ark and saw that the surface of the ground was dry. ¹⁴By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was completely dry.

¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶"Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. ¹⁷Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you—the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground—so they

can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number upon it."

¹⁸So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. ¹⁹All the animals and all the creatures that move along the ground and all the birds—everything that moves on the earth—came out of the ark, one kind after another.

²⁰Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. ²¹The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done."

²²"As long as the earth endures,
seedtime and harvest,
cold and heat,
summer and winter,
day and night
will never cease."

God's Covenant With Noah

9 Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. ²The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea, they are given into your hands. ³Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.

⁴"But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. ⁵And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man.

⁶"Whoever sheds the blood of man,
by man shall his blood be shed;
for in the image of God
has God made man.

⁷As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it."

⁸Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: ⁹"I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you ¹⁰and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth. ¹¹I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth."

9:6 Why Capital Punishment

Ironically, the reason murderers deserved the death penalty, as indicated here, was the supreme value of human life. To destroy human life is to attack the image of God, and therefore God demands an accounting.

^a20 Hebrew fifteen cubits (about 6.9 meters)

^b20 Or rose more than twenty feet, and the mountains were covered

^c21 Or man, for

¹²And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: ¹³I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, ¹⁵I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. ¹⁶Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth."

¹⁷So God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth

The Sons of Noah

¹⁸The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) ¹⁹These were the three sons of Noah, and from them came the people who were scattered over the earth

²⁰Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded^a to plant a vineyard. ²¹When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent. ²²Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father's nakedness and told his two brothers outside. ²³But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it across their shoulders, then they walked in backward and covered their father's nakedness. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father's nakedness

²⁴When Noah awoke from his wine and found out what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵he said

Cursed be Canaan!
The lowest of slaves
will he be to his brothers."

²⁶He also said

"Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem!
May Canaan be the slave of Shem.^b

²⁷May God extend the territory of Japheth;^c
may Japheth live in the tents of Shem,
and may Canaan be his^d slave."

²⁸After the flood Noah lived 350 years. ²⁹Alto-

gether, Noah lived 950 years, and then he died.

The Table of Nations

10 This is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth, Noah's sons, who themselves had sons after the flood.

The Japhethites

²The sons^e of Japheth:

Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech and Tiras.

³The sons of Gomer:

Ashkenaz, Riphath and Togarmah.

⁴The sons of Javan:

Elishah, Tarshish, the Kittim and the Rodanim.^f ⁵(From these the maritime peoples spread out into their territories by their clans within their nations, each with its own language.)

The Hamites

⁶The sons of Ham:

Cush, Mizraim,^g Put and Canaan.

⁷The sons of Cush:

Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah and Sabteca.

The sons of Raamah:

Sheba and Dedan.

⁸Cush was the father^h of Nimrod, who grew to be a mighty warrior on the earth. ⁹He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; that is why it is said, "Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the LORD." ¹⁰The first centers of his kingdom were Babylon, Erech, Akkad and Calneh, inⁱ Shinar.^j ¹¹From that land he went to Assyria, where he built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir,^k Calah^l and Resen, which is between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city.

¹³Mizraim was the father of

the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, ¹⁴Pathrusites, Casluhites (from whom the Philistines came) and Caphtorites.

¹⁵Canaan was the father of

Sidon his firstborn,^l and of the Hittites, ¹⁶Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, ¹⁷Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, ¹⁸Arvadites, Zemarites and Hamathites.

Later the Canaanite clans scattered ¹⁹and the borders of Canaan reached from Sidon toward Gerar as far as Gaza, and then toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha.

²⁰These are the sons of Ham by their clans and languages, in their territories and nations.

The Semites

²¹Sons were also born to Shem, whose older brother was^m Japheth; Shem was the ancestor of all the sons of Eber.

²²The sons of Shem:

9:12 The Reason for Rainbows

Throughout the Bible, God makes covenant agreements with the people he loves. This first recorded covenant was marked by an appropriate symbol—the rainbow. While later covenants applied specifically to the Jews, this one extended—and still extends—to every living creature.

^a20 Or soil was the first ^b26 Or be his slave ^c27 Japheth sounds like the Hebrew for extend. ^d27 Or their ^e2 Sons may mean descendants or successors or nations, also in verses 3, 4, 6, 7, 20-23, 29 and 31. ^f14 Some manuscripts of the Masoretic Text and Samaritan Pentateuch (see also Septuagint and 1 Chron. 1:7), most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text Dodanum ^g16 That is Egypt. ^h8 Father may mean ancestor or predecessor or founder, also in verses 13, 15, 24 and 26. ⁱ10 Or Erech and Akkad—all of them in ^j10 That is, Babylonia ^k11 Or Nineveh with its city squares ^l15 Or of the Sidonians, the foremost ^m21 Or Shem the older brother of

Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud and Aram.

²³The sons of Aram:

Uz, Hul, Gether and Meshech ^a

²⁴Arphaxad was the father of Shelah, and Shelah the father of Eber.

²⁵Two sons were born to Eber:

One was named Peleg, ^c because in his time the earth was divided; his brother was named Joktan

²⁶Joktan was the father of

Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah,

²⁷Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²⁸Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ²⁹Ophir, Havilah and Jobab. All these were sons of Joktan.

³⁰The region where they lived stretched from Mesha toward Sephar, in the eastern hill country.

³¹These are the sons of Shem by their clans and languages, in their territories and nations.

³²These are the clans of Noah's sons, according to their lines of descent, within their nations. From these the nations spread out over the earth after the flood

The Tower of Babel

11 Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. ²As men moved eastward, ⁴ they found a plain in Shinar^c and settled there

³They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. ⁴Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth."

⁵But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building. ⁶The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. ⁷Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."

⁸So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. ⁹That is why it was called Babel—because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

11:6 God Frustrates Human Ambition

People are ambitious—they want to succeed. Genesis portrays humans as so ambitious that they try to compete with, rather than serve, God. This was Adam and Eve's sin (3:5,22), and at Babel people were at it again, in a citywide effort. God frustrated their plans by confusing their language.

From Shem to Abram

¹⁰This is the account of Shem.

Two years after the flood, when Shem was 100 years old, he became the father of Arphaxad. ¹¹And after he became the father of Arphaxad, Shem lived 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹²When Arphaxad had lived 35 years, he became the father of Shelah. ¹³And after he became the father of Shelah, Arphaxad lived 403 years and had other sons and daughters ^d

¹⁴When Shelah had lived 30 years, he became the father of Eber. ¹⁵And after he became the father of Eber, Shelah lived 403 years and had other sons and daughters

¹⁶When Eber had lived 34 years, he became the father of Peleg. ¹⁷And after he became the father of Peleg, Eber lived 430 years and had other sons and daughters.

¹⁸When Peleg had lived 30 years, he became the father of Reu. ¹⁹And after he became the father of Reu, Peleg lived 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁰When Reu had lived 32 years, he became the father of Serug. ²¹And after he became the father of Serug, Reu lived 207 years and had other sons and daughters.

²²When Serug had lived 30 years, he became the father of Nahor. ²³And after he became the father of Nahor, Serug lived 200 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁴When Nahor had lived 29 years, he became the father of Terah. ²⁵And after he became the father of Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁶After Terah had lived 70 years, he became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran.

²⁷This is the account of Terah.

Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran. And Haran became the father of Lot. ²⁸While his father Terah was still alive, Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, in the land of his birth. ²⁹Abram and Nahor both married. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah; she was the daughter of Haran, the father of both Milcah and Iscah. ³⁰Now Sarai was barren; she had no children.

³¹Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there.

³²Terah lived 205 years, and he died in Haran.

The Call of Abram

12 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.

^{a23} See Septuagint and 1 Chron. 1:17; Hebrew *Mash*

²⁵ Peleg means division

Hebrew for confused

and note at Gen 11:24) 35 years, he became the father of Arphaxad. ¹³And after he became the father of Arphaxad, Arphaxad lived 430 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died. When Arphaxad had lived 130 years, he became the father of Shelah. And after he became the father of Shelah

Cainan lived 330 years and had other sons and daughters

^{b24} Hebrew; Septuagint father of Canaan, and Cainan was the father of

^{c2} That is, Babylon. Babel sounds like the

^{d12,13} Hebrew, Septuagint (see also Luke 3:35, 36

¹⁹ That is, Babylon. Babel sounds like the

2¹ I will make you into a great nation
and I will bless you.
I will make your name great,
and I will be a blessing
to all who curse you.
I will bless you, and all the peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.

Abram left as the LORD had told him, and
went with him. Abram was seventy-five years
old when he set out from Haran. He took his wife
Sara, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had
accumulated and the people they had acquired in
Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan,
and they arrived there.

6 Abram traveled through the land as far as the
site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that
time the Canaanites were in the land. The LORD
appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring
I will give this land." So he built an altar there to
the LORD, who had appeared to him.

7 From there he went on toward the hills east of
Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the
west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to
the LORD and called on the name of the LORD.
8 Then Abram set out and continued toward the
Negev.

Abram in Egypt

10 Now there was a famine in the land, and

INSIGHT

Abraham

God begins to rebuild

I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you . . . and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you. 12:2-3

Genesis changes dramatically at chapter 12. Leaving the big picture of many, it settles on one
lonely individual—not a great king or a wealthy landowner, but a childless nomad, Abraham.

At God's call, Abraham left civilization and spent his life wandering in the wilderness. Moving
his flocks from place to place, fighting skirmishes and pitched battles with hostile local people,
Abraham had to be strong to survive. But this hardly made him unique; lots of strong nomads
wandered the Middle East. What made this particular wanderer so important?

God's New Way of Working

Abraham was important, first of all, simply because God chose him. Shortly after the destruction
of the great flood, God picked Abraham as the foundation of a new humanity. On several
remarkable occasions God spoke directly to him, promising to make his family great in the land he
wandered. The promises were hard to believe: Abraham's wife was barren, Abraham was getting
too old to have children, he owned no land and had no prospect of any. Nonetheless, God asked
Abraham to trust him.

The second reason why Abraham matters follows from the first: when God spoke to him,
Abraham listened. He was far from perfect. Sometimes he strayed away from the path God put
him on, lying and trying to make the promises work out in his own way. Yet in the decisive
moments of life, he listened to God and obeyed. He was willing to sacrifice anything for God—
even his only son. God put his brand on Abraham, the mark of circumcision. His descendants
were to be forever known as "God's people."

Uncensored Truth

The life of Abraham is a fascinating story, true to life, full of bad moments as well as good. He
was hardly a theologian, a more comprehensive understanding of God would have to wait for
Moses. But Abraham's faith is the root of Judaism and, thus, of Christianity. In his encounters with
God we get raw, uncensored truth, not religion invented by a philosopher but religion as it really
happens when God meets man.

No wonder the New Testament cites Abraham more than 80 times, and Paul tells Christians they
are the true descendants of Abraham (Galatians 3:6-9). Abraham's life began to unfold the story of
God's long-range plans. Two thousand years later, Abraham's descendant Jesus came to fulfill the
promises made to Abraham and his descendants.

Life Questions: God asked Abraham to leave his home and family and go to a far-off foreign country.
If you were in his place, how would you have responded? Has God ever asked anything hard or risky
of you?

Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe. ¹¹As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know what a beautiful woman you are. ¹²When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me but will let you live. ¹³Say you are my sister, so that I will be treated well for your sake and my life will be spared because of you."

¹⁴When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw that she was a very beautiful woman. ¹⁵And when Pharaoh's officials saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh, and she was taken into his palace. ¹⁶He treated Abram well for her sake, and Abram acquired sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, menservants and maidservants, and camels.

¹⁷But the LORD inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Abram's wife Sarai. ¹⁸So Pharaoh summoned Abram. "What have you done to me?" he said. "Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? ¹⁹Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her to be my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go!" ²⁰Then Pharaoh gave orders about Abram to his men, and they sent him on his way, with his wife and everything he had.

Abram and Lot Separate

13 So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him. ²Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold.

³From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier ⁴and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the LORD.

⁵Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. ⁶But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together. ⁷And quarrel-

ing arose between Abram's herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time.

⁸So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers. ⁹Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left."

¹⁰Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) ¹¹So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company. ¹²Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. ¹³Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD.

¹⁴The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. ¹⁵All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. ¹⁶I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. ¹⁷Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you."

¹⁸So Abram moved his tents and went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the LORD.

Abram Rescues Lot

14 At this time Amraphel king of Shinar,^a Arioch king of Ellasar, Kedorlaomer king of Elam and Tidal king of Goum ²went to war against Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). ³All these latter kings joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (the Salt Sea). ⁴For twelve years they had been subject to Kedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

⁵In the fourteenth year, Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him went out and defeated the Rephaites in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzites in Ham, the Emmites in Shaveh Kiriathaim ⁶and the Horites in the hill country of Seir, as far as El Paran near the desert. ⁷Then they turned back and went to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and they conquered the whole territory of the Amalekites, as well as the Amorites who were living in Hazazon Tamar.

⁸Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboim and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) marched out and drew up their battle lines in the Valley of Siddim ⁹against Kedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goum, Amraphel king of Shinar and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings against five. ¹⁰Now the Valley of Siddim was full of tar pits, and when the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some of the men fell into them and the rest fled to the hills. ¹¹The four

12:13 Abraham's Half-Truth

"A lie is an attempt to deceive," according to one definition, and by that standard Abraham was lying when he claimed Sarai was his sister. Yet he was telling half the truth, for she was his half-sister (20:12). Abraham pulled this trick again years later and got caught again (chapter 20). On both occasions he had feared for his life, a situation in which half-truths are particularly appealing.

13:3 On the Road

The main trade route through Canaan passed north-to-south through Shechem, Bethel, Hebron, and Beersheba. As Abraham and his children traveled, they naturally stopped in those places. These place-names crop up again and again in the story of God's work.

^a15 Or seed; also in verse 16

^b1 That is, Babylonia; also in verse 9

^c3 That is, the Dead Sea

kings seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food; then they went away. ¹²They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions, since he was living in Sodom.

¹³One who had escaped came and reported this to Abram the Hebrew. Now Abram was living near the great trees of Mamre the Amorite, a brother of Eshcol and Aner, all of whom were allied with Abram. ¹⁴When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan. ¹⁵During the night Abram divided his men to attack them and he routed them, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. ¹⁶He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people.

¹⁷After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

¹⁸Then Melchizedek king of Salem^b brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, ¹⁹and he blessed Abram, saying,

"Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
Creator^c of heaven and earth.

²⁰And blessed be^d God Most High,
who delivered your enemies into your
hand."

Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

²¹The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people and keep the goods for yourself."

²²But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, and have taken an oath ²³that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the thong of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, 'I made Abram rich.' ²⁴I will accept nothing but what my men have eaten and the share that belongs to the men who went with me—to Aner, Eshcol and Mamre. Let them have their share."

God's Covenant With Abram

15 After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision:

"Do not be afraid, Abram
I am your shield,^e
your very great reward.^f"

²But Abram said, "O Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir."

⁴Then the word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir." ⁵He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

⁶Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

⁷He also said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it."

⁸But Abram said, "O Sovereign LORD, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?"

⁹So the LORD said to him, "Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon."

¹⁰Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half. ¹¹Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away.

¹²As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. ¹³Then the LORD said to him, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. ¹⁴But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. ¹⁵You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure."

¹⁷When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. ¹⁸On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river^h of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates— ¹⁹the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, ²⁰Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, ²¹Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites."

Hagar and Ishmael

16 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar; ²so she said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her."

Abram agreed to what Sarai said. ³So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian maidservant Hagar and

15:6 Faith Reckoned as Righteousness

God accepted Abraham not because he led a perfect life, but because of his responsiveness to God's promises. This verse was quoted three times in the New Testament to demonstrate that salvation by faith was nothing new (Romans 4:3; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23). Even in the Old Testament, God looked for faith, not moral perfection.

^a15 Or a relative, or an ally
sovereign
And

^b18 That is, Jerusalem
Or shield / your reward will be very great

^c19 Or Possessor, also in verse 22

^d20 Or And praise be to
^e22 The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain.

^f1 Or
^g18 Or

gave her to her husband to be his wife. ⁴He slept with Hagar, and she conceived.

When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress. ⁵Then Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my servant in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the LORD judge between you and me."

⁶"Your servant is in your hands," Abram said. "Do with her whatever you think best." Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.

⁷The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. ⁸And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?"

"I'm running away from my mistress Sarai," she answered.

⁹Then the angel of the LORD told her, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her." ¹⁰The angel added, "I will so increase your descendants that they will be too numerous to count."

¹¹The angel of the LORD also said to her:

"You are now with child
and you will have a son.

You shall name him Ishmael,^a
for the LORD has heard of your misery.

¹²He will be a wild donkey of a man;
his hand will be against everyone
and everyone's hand against him,
and he will live in hostility
toward^b all his brothers."

¹³She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen^c the One who sees me." ¹⁴That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi^d; it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne. ¹⁶Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.

The Covenant of Circumcision

17 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. ²I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers."

³Abram fell facedown, and God said to him,

16:2 A Substitute Wife

According to custom, a man could sleep with a servant and include her children in his household. Abraham was trying to get the children he and his wife longed for and to "help God out" in fulfilling his promise of a son. Abraham's way was not God's way, however, and Abraham's attempt led to considerable jealousy and sorrow. The same practice also led to trouble for Jacob's family (chapter 30).

⁴"As for me, this is my covenant with you. You will be the father of many nations. ⁵No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham,^e for I have made you a father of many nations. ⁶I will make you very fruitful, I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. ⁷I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. ⁸The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you, and I will be their God."

⁹Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. ¹⁰This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep. Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹²For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—those who are not your offspring. ¹³Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people, he has broken my covenant."

¹⁵God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. ¹⁶I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her."

¹⁷Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" ¹⁸And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!"

¹⁹Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac.^f I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. ²⁰And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation. ²¹But my covenant I will establish with Isaac,

17:17 Laughing at God

Abraham was a man of faith, but his faith was less than 100 percent. Here, nearing the age of 100, he laughed heartily at God's promise that he would father a son, and he demonstrated his lack of belief by suggesting God consider Ishmael as an adequate substitute. Some time later Sarah, his wife, shared in the "joke" (18:12).

^a11 Ishmael means God hears
One who sees me

^b12 Or live to the east of

^c1 Hebrew El Shaddai

^d5 Abram means exalted father

^e13 Or seen the back of

^f14 Beer Lahai Roi means well of the Living

¹⁵ Abraham means father of many

¹⁶19 Isaac

means he laughs

[illegible]

[Faint handwritten notes]

and in the same way that of the Americans and
the British. There is a lot of this. The British
and the Americans were the only ones to see the
value of the war and the British and the Americans
were the only ones to see the value of the war.

~~2. The 1990s~~

18

1. 在 1945 年 10 月 25 日，
 2. 蔣中正委員長在台北
 3. 舉行記者招待會，
 4. 宣佈台灣已重回
 5. 中華民國懷抱。

1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered. This involves understanding the context and the specific requirements of the task.

There is also a lot of work to be done in the area of the environment. We need to make sure that we are doing everything we can to protect our planet and its resources. This includes things like recycling, conserving water, and using renewable energy sources. We also need to make sure that we are not polluting our environment and that we are taking steps to clean up any messes we have made.

"If you are ever in the South" - the answer was
"Yes, in the South, I was."

Then the Lord said "I will surely return to you about the same time next year and build your house and you will dwell in it."

Now Sarah was dwelling at the entrance to the tent which was behind him. Abraham and Sarah were already old and well advanced in years, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am so old and my master is old, will I now have a son?"

Then the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did you laugh and say, Will I really have a child when I am old? His anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son."

"Sarah was afraid, so she hid and said, 'I did not laugh'."

... he said you were dead enough

Abraham Pleads for Sodom

When the men sat up to leave the hotel

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are listed below them.

2. The second part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are listed below them.

3. The third part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are listed below them.

4. The fourth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are listed below them.

5. The fifth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are listed below them.

6. The sixth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are listed below them.

7. The seventh part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are listed below them.

8. The eighth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are listed below them.

9. The ninth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are listed below them.

10. The tenth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are listed below them.

[illegible]

[The page contains faint, illegible handwriting.]

[Illegible handwritten notes]

...
...
...
...
...

[Faint, illegible handwritten notes]

[illegible]

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are listed below them.

For example, I will not do it if I find that

...that the...
...the...
...the...

He was the other way around I was the
other way

There are two main types of
the game, one which is played
with dice.

He answered: "For the sake of men I will not
destroy it."

When the Lord had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home.

Sodom and Gomorrah Destroyed

19 The two angels arrived at Babylon in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of

13. (b) $K_{eq} = 1.0$

1. 1994-1995

1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 26

Abstract

you like with them. But don't do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof."

"Get out of our way," they replied. And they said, "This fellow came here as an alien, and now he wants to play the judge! We'll treat you worse than them." They kept bringing pressure on Lot and moved forward to break down the door.

But the men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door. Then they struck the men who were at the door of the house, young and old, with blindness so that they could not find the door.

The two men said to Lot, "Do you have anyone else here—sons-in-law, sons or daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here, because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the Lord against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it."

So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were pledged to marry his daughters. He said, "Hurry and get out of this place, because the

*14 Or were married to

INSIGHT

A Catastrophe Sent from God

Sodom: a city that earned destruction

"Do you have anyone else here—sons-in-law, sons or daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here, because we are going to destroy this place." 19:12-13

Should a catastrophe be read as a punishment from God? Do floods, famines, earthquakes come because God is angry? The Bible's answer is, "Sometimes, and sometimes not." In Genesis, several catastrophes seemed to "just happen"—they were not a punishment or a warning, though God used them to advance his plans. These included several famines such as the one that brought Joseph to power (chapter 41), a war (chapter 14), a rape (chapter 34).

But a few catastrophes God took full credit for—like the one at Sodom and Gomorrah. As usual, the Bible shows little or no interest in telling us the scientific facts about the destruction.

Gang Rape

Sodom was a wretched place. The whole town saw the coming of strangers as a chance for homosexual gang rape. Sexual violence was not the town's only problem. Ezekiel 16:49 says that Sodom was "arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy." God would have let the city stand if Abraham could have located just ten righteous men. Apparently, ten such people did not exist. God's great patience finally ran out.

Years earlier, Abraham had refused to accept even a well-earned reward from the government of Sodom (14:21-24). He wanted nothing to do with such a society. But Lot had chosen the path of prosperity, the easy and successful life on the fertile plain near Sodom.

Lot had become a somebody there, one who made important decisions in the city gateway. He was so entangled with life in Sodom he hesitated to leave until it was nearly too late. When Sodom went up in smoke, his hard-earned importance disappeared too. The shock was too great for him. Unable to start over, he ended up in a cave, too drunk to know that his two daughters were having sex with him. He is the perfect example of a man who, excessively tangled in a corrupt system, cannot bear to leave it behind.

Jesus did not let his followers think of Sodom simply as "those terrible people." He warned them that God would be even harder on those who saw Jesus' miracles, but ignored them (Matthew 11:24). God's patience has a limit.

Life Questions: Are any catastrophes of our time punishments from God? How would you know?

LORD is about to destroy the city!" But his sons-in-law thought he was joking.

¹⁵With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished."

¹⁶When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the LORD was merciful to them. ¹⁷As soon as they had brought them out, one of them said, "Flee for your lives! Don't look back, and don't stop anywhere in the plain! Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!"

¹⁸But Lot said to them, "No, my lords,^a please! ¹⁹Your^b servant has found favor in your^b eyes, and you^b have shown great kindness to me in sparing my life. But I can't flee to the mountains; this disaster will overtake me, and I'll die. ²⁰Look, here is a town near enough to run to, and it is small. Let me flee to it—it is very small, isn't it? Then my life will be spared."

²¹He said to him, "Very well, I will grant this request too; I will not overthrow the town you speak of. ²²But flee there quickly, because I cannot do anything until you reach it." (That is why the town was called Zoar.^c)

²³By the time Lot reached Zoar, the sun had risen over the land. ²⁴Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah—from the LORD out of the heavens. ²⁵Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, including all those living in the cities—and also the vegetation in the land. ²⁶But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

²⁷Early the next morning Abraham got up and returned to the place where he had stood before the LORD. ²⁸He looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah, toward all the land of the plain, and he saw dense smoke rising from the land, like smoke from a furnace.

²⁹So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived.

Lot and His Daughters

³⁰Lot and his two daughters left Zoar and settled in the mountains, for he was afraid to stay in Zoar. He and his two daughters lived in a cave. ³¹One day the older daughter said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is no man around here to lie with us, as is the custom all over the earth. ³²Let's get our father to drink wine and then lie with him and preserve our family line through our father."

³³That night they got their father to drink wine, and the older daughter went in and lay with him. He was not aware of it when she lay down or when she got up.

³⁴The next day the older daughter said to the younger, "Last night I lay with my father. Let's get him to drink wine again tonight, and you go in and lie with him so we can preserve our family line through our father." ³⁵So they got their father to

drink wine that night also, and the younger daughter went and lay with him. Again he was not aware of it when she lay down or when she got up.

³⁶So both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their father. ³⁷The older daughter had a son, and she named him Moab^d; he is the father of the Moabites of today. ³⁸The younger daughter also had a son, and she named him Ben-Ammi^e; he is the father of the Ammonites of today.

Abraham and Abimelech

20 Now Abraham moved on from there into the region of the Negev and lived between Kadesh and Shur. For a while he stayed in Gerar, ²and there Abraham said of his wife Sarah, "She is my sister." Then Abimelech king of Gerar sent for Sarah and took her.

³But God came to Abimelech in a dream one night and said to him, "You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is a married woman."

⁴Now Abimelech had not gone near her, so he said, "Lord, will you destroy an innocent nation? ⁵Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister,' and didn't she also say, 'He is my brother'? I have done this with a clear conscience and clean hands."

⁶Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know you did this with a clear conscience, and so I have kept you from sinning against me. That is why I did not let you touch her. ⁷Now return the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not return her, you may be sure that you and all yours will die."

⁸Early the next morning Abimelech summoned all his officials, and when he told them all that had happened, they were very much afraid. ⁹Then Abimelech called Abraham in and said, "What have you done to us? How have I wronged you that you have brought such great guilt upon me and my kingdom? You have done things to me that should not be done." ¹⁰And Abimelech asked Abraham, "What was your reason for doing this?"

¹¹Abraham replied, "I said to myself, 'There is surely no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.' ¹²Besides, she really is my sister, the daughter of my father though not of my mother; and she became my wife. ¹³And when God had me wander from my father's household, I said to her, 'This is how you can show your love to me: Everywhere we go, say of me, "He is my brother."'"

¹⁴Then Abimelech brought sheep and cattle and male and female slaves and gave them to Abraham, and he returned Sarah his wife to him. ¹⁵And

19:37 Family Quarrels

Lot's determination to enjoy life in Sodom ended tragically here, in drunken incest. The resulting sons founded the family-nations of Moab and Ammon, which for centuries fought with their distant relatives in Israel and tempted them to sin.

^a18 Or No, Lord, or No, my lord
lot from father

^b19 The Hebrew is singular.
^c38 Ben-Ammi means son of my people

^d22 Zoar means small.

^e37 Moab sounds like the Hebrew

Abimelech said, "My land is before you; live wherever you like."

¹⁶To Sarah he said, "I am giving your brother a thousand shekels^a of silver. This is to cover the offense against you before all who are with you; you are completely vindicated."

¹⁷Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife and his slave girls so they could have children again, ¹⁸for the LORD had closed up every womb in Abimelech's household because of Abraham's wife Sarah.

The Birth of Isaac

21 Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. ²Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. ³Abraham gave the name Isaac^b to the son Sarah bore him. ⁴When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him. ⁵Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

⁶Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me." ⁷And she added, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

Hagar and Ishmael Sent Away

⁸The child grew and was weaned, and on the day Isaac was weaned Abraham held a great feast. ⁹But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking, ¹⁰and she said to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac."

¹¹The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son. ¹²But God said to him, "Do not be so distressed about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring^c will be reckoned. ¹³I will make the son of the maidservant into a nation also, because he is your offspring."

¹⁴Early the next morning Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He set them on her shoulders and then sent her off with the boy. She went on her way and wandered in the desert of Beersheba.

¹⁵When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes. ¹⁶Then she went off and sat down nearby, about a bowshot away, for she thought, "I cannot watch the boy die." And as she sat there nearby, she^d began to sob.

"God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, 'What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid. God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. ¹⁸Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation.'"

¹⁹Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well

of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink.

²⁰God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an archer. ²¹While he was living in the Desert of Paran, his mother got a wife for him from Egypt.

The Treaty at Beersheba

²²At that time Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his forces said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything you do. ²³Now swear to me here before God that you will not deal falsely with me or my children or my descendants. Show to me and the country where you are living as an alien the same kindness I have shown to you."

²⁴Abraham said, "I swear it."

²⁵Then Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well of water that Abimelech's servants had seized. ²⁶But Abimelech said, "I don't know who has done this. You did not tell me, and I heard about it only today."

²⁷So Abraham brought sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelech, and the two men made a treaty. ²⁸Abraham set apart seven ewe lambs from the flock, ²⁹and Abimelech asked Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs you have set apart by themselves?"

³⁰He replied, "Accept these seven lambs from my hand as a witness that I dug this well."

³¹So that place was called Beersheba,^e because the two men swore an oath there.

³²After the treaty had been made at Beersheba, Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his forces returned to the land of the Philistines. ³³Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there he called upon the name of the LORD, the Eternal God. ³⁴And Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines for a long time.

Abraham Tested

22 Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

²Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."

³Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. ⁴On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. ⁵He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."

⁶Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, ⁷Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?"

"Yes, my son?" Abraham replied.

"The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

^a16 That is, about 25 pounds (about 11.5 kilograms)

^b13 Isaac means he laughs

^c12 Or seed

^d16 Hebrew Septuagint the

^eand Beersheba can mean well of women or well of the oath

"Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together.

"When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar to be burned as a burnt offering. Then he reached up and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven: "Abraham, Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

"Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have

done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

Then Abraham returned to his servants and they set off together for Beersheba. And Abraham stayed in Beersheba.

Nahor's Sons

"Some time later Abraham was told, "Milcah is also a mother: she has borne sons to your brother Nahor. Buz the firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel (the father of Aram), Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Idlaph and Bethuel. Bethuel became the father of Rebecah. Milcah bore these eight sons to Abraham's brother Nahor. His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also had sons: Tebah, Gaham, Tahash and Maacah.

The Death of Sarah

23 Sarah lived to be a hundred and twenty-seven years old. She died at Kirith Arba

*13 Many manuscripts of the Masoreta Text: "Abraham Pentateuch" Septuagint and Syriac. Most manuscripts of the Masoreta Text omit "behind him." *18 Or said.

INSIGHT

Promises, Promises

God promised to give Abraham all that he longed for . . . and more

"Through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me." 22:18

Human beings haven't changed much in 4,000 years. The longing for children and the desire for land still crop up with surprising emotional power.

When God wanted Abraham's attention, he promised him land and more sons than he could count. To a Babylonian emigrant, 75 years old and childless, owning nothing but his tents and animals, the promises sounded wonderful. In fact, they sounded impossible. Yet, because God himself was making the promise, Abraham "believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness" (15:6).

For the God who had created the heavens and the earth, making good on the promises was an easy matter. But God did not make it easy for Abraham. Not until 25 years later, when he was 100, did the promise of a son come true. Then, incredibly, God told Abraham to make a human sacrifice of his little boy. It was really asking too much.

Astonishingly, Abraham followed God's orders. And God gave him back his son.

Far from Fulfilled

When Abraham died, God's promises were far from fully realized. Abraham had only that one son to cling to. His only land was a burial plot. He still lived in a tent; his only permanent structures were altars erected to worship the God who had made all those promises.

God, having promised him everything a man of that time could want, apparently wanted Abraham to think even bigger thoughts. He had slipped some words in along with the promises of offspring and land: "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (12:3). God wanted to bless not just Abraham, but the whole world. Thousands of years later, in the time of Jesus, the full meaning of those words became clear (see Galatians 3:6-9, 16-18).

Life Questions What kind of promises does God make today? What longings does he fulfill?

(that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went to mourn for Sarah and to weep over her

³Then Abraham rose from beside his dead wife and spoke to the Hittites. ⁴He said, "I am an alien and a stranger among you. Sell me some property for a burial site here so I can bury my dead."

⁵The Hittites replied to Abraham, ⁶"Sir, listen to us. You are a mighty prince among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our tombs. None of us will refuse you his tomb for burying your dead."

⁷Then Abraham rose and bowed down before the people of the land, the Hittites. ⁸He said to them, "If you are willing to let me bury my dead, then listen to me and intercede with Ephron son of Zohar on my behalf ⁹so he will sell me the cave of Machpelah, which belongs to him and is at the end of his field. Ask him to sell it to me for the full price as a burial site among you."

¹⁰Ephron the Hittite was sitting among his people and he replied to Abraham in the hearing of all the Hittites who had come to the gate of his city

¹¹"No, my lord," he said. "Listen to me, I give^b you the field, and I give^b you the cave that is in it. I give^b it to you in the presence of my people. Bury your dead."

¹²Again Abraham bowed down before the people of the land ¹³and he said to Ephron in their hearing, "Listen to me, if you will. I will pay the price of the field. Accept it from me so I can bury my dead there."

¹⁴Ephron answered Abraham, ¹⁵"Listen to me, my lord; the land is worth four hundred shekels^c of silver, but what is that between me and you? Bury your dead."

¹⁶Abraham agreed to Ephron's terms and weighed out for him the price he had named in the hearing of the Hittites: four hundred shekels of silver, according to the weight current among the merchants

¹⁷So Ephron's field in Machpelah near Mamre—both the field and the cave in it, and all the trees within the borders of the field—was deeded ¹⁸to Abraham as his property in the presence of all the Hittites who had come to the gate of the city. ¹⁹Afterward Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave in the field of Machpelah near Mamre (which is at Hebron) in the land of Canaan. ²⁰So the field and the cave in it were deeded to Abraham by the Hittites as a burial site.

23:15 Let's Make a Deal

This may be the oldest recorded business deal. The elaborate politeness sounds very much like bargaining in the Middle East today. Underneath the smooth words, shrewd negotiating is going on. The Hittites were probably reluctant to allow Abraham, an alien, to own property of any kind lest he gain a legal foothold in their country. Abraham did business with Ephron, who stood to gain financially from the sale.

Isaac and Rebekah

24 Abraham was now old and well advanced in years and the Lord had blessed him in every way. ²He said to the chief^d servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, "Put your hand under my thigh. ³I want you to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I am living, ⁴but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac."

⁵The servant asked him, "What if the woman is unwilling to come back with me to this land? Shall I then take your son back to the country you came from?"

⁶"Make sure that you do not take my son back there," Abraham said. ⁷"The Lord, the God of heaven, who brought me out of my father's household and my native land and who spoke to me and promised me on oath, saying, 'To your offspring I will give this land'—he will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there. ⁸If the woman is unwilling to come back with you, then you will be released from this oath of mine. Only do not take my son back there." ⁹So the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham and swore an oath to him concerning this matter.

¹⁰Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and left, taking with him all kinds of good things from his master. He set out for Aram Naharaim^e and made his way to the town of Nahor. ¹¹He had the camels kneel down near the well outside the town; it was toward evening, the time the women go out to draw water.

¹²Then he prayed, "O LORD, God of my master Abraham, give me success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. ¹³See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. ¹⁴May it be that when I say to a girl, 'Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too'—let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master."

¹⁵Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah, who was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor. ¹⁶The girl was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever lain with

24:3 Marrying Foreigners

From this earliest period of Jewish history, there was an emphasis on not marrying foreigners. The reason had to do with religion, not race—in many cases foreigners were distant relations. When foreigners were willing to worship Israel's God, they were welcomed (see the book of Ruth, for example).

^{a3} Or the sons of Heth, also in verses 5, 7, 10, 16, 18 and 20

^{a4} Or oldest

^{a5} Or seed

^{a10} That is, Northwest Mesopotamia

^{a11} Or sell

^{a15} That is, about 10 pounds (about 4.5 kilograms)

her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again.

¹⁷The servant hurried to meet her and said, "Please give me a little water from your jar."

¹⁸"Drink, my lord," she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink.

¹⁹After she had given him a drink, she said, "I'll draw water for your camels too, until they have finished drinking." ²⁰So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, ran back to the well to draw more water, and drew enough for all his camels. ²¹Without saying a word, the man watched her closely to learn whether or not the Lord had made his journey successful.

²²When the camels had finished drinking, the man took out a gold nose ring weighing a beka^a and two gold bracelets weighing ten shekels.^b

²³Then he asked, "Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?"

²⁴She answered him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son that Milcah bore to Nahor." ²⁵And she added, "We have plenty of straw and fodder, as well as room for you to spend the night."

²⁶Then the man bowed down and worshiped the Lord, ²⁷saying, "Praise be to the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master. As for me, the Lord has led me on the journey to the house of my master's relatives."

²⁸The girl ran and told her mother's household about these things. ²⁹Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban, and he hurried out to the man at the spring. ³⁰As soon as he had seen the nose ring, and the bracelets on his sister's arms, and had heard Rebekah tell what the man said to her, he went out to the man and found him standing by the camels near the spring. ³¹"Come, you who are blessed by the Lord," he said. "Why are you standing out here? I have prepared the house and a place for the camels."

³²So the man went to the house, and the camels were unloaded. Straw and fodder were brought for the camels, and water for him and his men to wash their feet. ³³Then food was set before him, but he said, "I will not eat until I have told you what I have to say."

"Then tell us," Laban said.

³⁴So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. ³⁵The Lord has blessed my master abundantly, and he has become wealthy. He has given him sheep and cattle, silver and gold, menservants and maid-servants, and camels and donkeys. ³⁶My master's wife Sarah has borne him a son in her old age, and he has given him everything he owns. ³⁷And my master made me swear an oath, and said, 'You must not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live, ³⁸but go to my father's family and to my own clan, and get a wife for my son.'"

³⁹"Then I asked my master, 'What if the woman will not come back with me?'"

⁴⁰"He replied, 'The Lord, before whom I have walked, will send his angel with you and make

your journey a success, so that you can get a wife for my son from my own clan and from my father's family.' ⁴¹Then, when you go to my clan, you will be released from my oath even if they refuse to give her to you—you will be released from my oath."

⁴²"When I came to the spring today, I said, 'O Lord, God of my master Abraham, if you will, please grant success to the journey on which I have come.' ⁴³See, I am standing beside this spring, if a maiden comes out to draw water and I say to her, 'Please let me drink a little water from your jar,' ⁴⁴and if she says to me, 'Drink, and I'll draw water for your camels too,' let her be the one the Lord has chosen for my master's son."

⁴⁵"Before I finished praying in my heart, Rebekah came out, with her jar on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water, and I said to her, 'Please give me a drink.'"

⁴⁶"She quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder and said, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too.' So I drank, and she watered the camels also."

⁴⁷"I asked her, 'Whose daughter are you?'"

"She said, 'The daughter of Bethuel son of Nahor, whom Milcah bore to him.'"

"Then I put the ring in her nose and the bracelets on her arms, ⁴⁸and I bowed down and worshiped the Lord. I praised the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me on the right road to get the granddaughter of my master's brother for his son. ⁴⁹Now if you will show kindness and faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so I may know which way to turn."

⁵⁰Laban and Bethuel answered, "This is from the Lord; we can say nothing to you one way or the other. ⁵¹Here is Rebekah, take her and go, and let her become the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has directed."

⁵²When Abraham's servant heard what they said, he bowed down to the ground before the Lord. ⁵³Then the servant brought out gold and silver jewelry and articles of clothing and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave costly gifts to her brother and to her mother. ⁵⁴Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night there.

When they got up the next morning, he said, "Send me on my way to my master."

⁵⁵But her brother and her mother replied, "Let the girl remain with us ten days or so, then you may go."

⁵⁶But he said to them, "Do not detain me, now that the Lord has granted success to my journey. Send me on my way so I may go to my master."

⁵⁷Then they said, "Let's call the girl and ask her about it." ⁵⁸So they called Rebekah and asked her, "Will you go with this man?"

"I will go," she said.

⁵⁹So they sent their sister Rebekah on her way, along with her nurse and Abraham's servant and his men. ⁶⁰And they blessed Rebekah and said to her,

"Our sister, may you increase to thousands upon thousands;

^a That is, about 1/5 ounce (about 5.5 grams)

^b That is, about 4 ounces (about 110 grams)

³⁶ Or his

³⁵ Or she

may your offspring possess
the gates of their enemies."

⁶¹Then Rebekah and her maids got ready and mounted their camels and went back with the man. So the servant took Rebekah and left.

⁶²Now Isaac had come from Beer Lahai Roi, for he was living in the Negev. ⁶³He went out to the field one evening to meditate,^a and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching. ⁶⁴Rebekah also looked up and saw Isaac. She got down from her camel ⁶⁵and asked the servant, "Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?"

"He is my master," the servant answered. So she took her veil and covered herself.

⁶⁶Then the servant told Isaac all he had done. ⁶⁷Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

The Death of Abraham

25 Abraham took^b another wife, whose name was Keturah. ²She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah. ³Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan; the descendants of Dedan were the Asshurites, the Letushites and the Leummities. ⁴The sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoah, Abida and Eldaah. All these were descendants of Keturah.

⁵Abraham left everything he owned to Isaac. ⁶But while he was still living, he gave gifts to the sons of his concubines and sent them away from his son Isaac to the land of the east.

⁷Altogether, Abraham lived a hundred and seventy-five years. ⁸Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years; and he was gathered to his people. ⁹His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite, ¹⁰the field Abraham had bought from the Hittites.^c There Abraham was buried with his wife Sarah. ¹¹After Abraham's death, God blessed his son Isaac, who then lived near Beer Lahai Roi.

Ishmael's Sons

¹²This is the account of Abraham's son Ishmael, whom Sarah's maidservant, Hagar the Egyptian, bore to Abraham.

¹³These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, listed in the order of their birth: Nebaioth the firstborn of Ishmael, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, ¹⁴Mishma, Dumah, Massa, ¹⁵Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphush and Kedemah. ¹⁶These were the sons of Ishmael, and these are the names of the twelve tribal rulers according to their settlements and camps. ¹⁷Altogether, Ishmael lived a hundred and thirty-seven years. He breathed his last and died, and he was gathered to his people. ¹⁸His descendants settled in the area from Havilah to Shur, near the border of Egypt, as you go toward Asshur.

And they lived in hostility toward^d all their brothers.

Jacob and Esau

¹⁹This is the account of Abraham's son Isaac.

Abraham became the father of Isaac, ²⁰and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram^e and sister of Laban the Aramean.

²¹Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren. The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. ²²The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the LORD.

²³The LORD said to her,

"Two nations are in your womb,^f
and two peoples from within you will be
separated;
one people will be stronger than the other,
and the older will serve the younger."

²⁴When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. ²⁵The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau.^g ²⁶After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob.^h Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.

²⁷The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents. ²⁸Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

²⁹Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. ³⁰He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom.ⁱ)

³¹Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright."

³²"Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?"

³³But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.

³⁴Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left.

So Esau despised his birthright.

25:33 No Sympathy for Esau

Esau's birthright, which he sold for a meal, was his inheritance as the firstborn son. He stood to be head of a large extended family and its property. Though his brother Jacob took advantage of him, the Bible gives Esau little sympathy for his role as victim: he "despised his birthright" (verse 34) by letting his hunger overwhelm his concern for things of lasting value. Because of this, he was later labeled "godless" (Hebrews 12:16).

^a63 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.
east of

^c20 That is, Northwest Mesopotamia

^e26 Jacob means he grasps the heel (figuratively, he deceives)

^f1 Or had taken

^g10 Or the sons of Heth

^h18 Or lived to the

ⁱ25 Esau may mean hairy, he was also called Edom, which means red

^j30 Edom means red

Isaac and Abimelech

26 Now there was a famine in the land—besides the earlier famine of Abraham's time—and Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines in Gerar. ²The LORD appeared to Isaac and said,

Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live. ³Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. ⁴I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring^a all nations on earth will be blessed, ⁵because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws." ⁶So Isaac stayed in Gerar.

When the men of that place asked him about his wife, he said, "She is my sister," because he was afraid to say, "She is my wife." He thought, The men of this place might kill me on account of Rebekah, because she is beautiful."

⁷When Isaac had been there a long time, Abimelech king of the Philistines looked down from a window and saw Isaac caressing his wife Rebekah. ⁸So Abimelech summoned Isaac and said, "She is really your wife! Why did you say, 'She is my sister'?"

Isaac answered him, "Because I thought I might lose my life on account of her."

⁹Then Abimelech said, "What is this you have done to us? One of the men might well have slept with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us."

¹⁰So Abimelech gave orders to all the people: Anyone who molests this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."

¹¹Isaac planted crops in that land and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the LORD blessed him. ¹²The man became rich, and his wealth continued to grow until he became very wealthy. ¹³He had so many flocks and herds and servants that the Philistines envied him. ¹⁴So all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the time of his father Abraham, the Philistines stopped up, filling them with earth.

¹⁵Then Abimelech said to Isaac, "Move away from us; you have become too powerful for us."

¹⁶So Isaac moved away from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar and settled there. Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died, and he gave them the same names his father had given them.

Isaac's servants dug in the valley and discovered a well of fresh water there. ²⁰But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen and

"The water is ours!" So he named the well "Esek" because they disputed with him. ²¹Then he dug another well, but they quarreled over it also, so he named it Sitnah.^c ²²He moved from there and dug another well, and no one quarreled over it. He named it Rehoboth,^d saying,

"Now the LORD has given us room and we will flourish in the land."

²³From there he went up to Beersheba. ²⁴That night the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham."

²⁵Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD. There he pitched his tent, and there his servants dug a well.

²⁶Meanwhile, Abimelech had come to him from Gerar, with Ahuzzath his personal adviser and Phicol the commander of his forces. ²⁷Isaac asked them, "Why have you come to me, since you were hostile to me and sent me away?"

²⁸They answered, "We saw clearly that the LORD was with you; so we said, 'There ought to be a sworn agreement between us'—between us and you. Let us make a treaty with you ²⁹that you will do us no harm, just as we did not molest you but always treated you well and sent you away in peace. And now you are blessed by the LORD."

³⁰Isaac then made a feast for them, and they ate and drank. ³¹Early the next morning the men swore an oath to each other. Then Isaac sent them on their way, and they left him in peace.

³²That day Isaac's servants came and told him about the well they had dug. They said, "We've found water!" ³³He called it Shibah,^e and to this day the name of the town has been Beersheba.

³⁴When Esau was forty years old, he married Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and also Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite. ³⁵They were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah.

Jacob Gets Isaac's Blessing

27 When Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he could no longer see, he called for Esau his older son and said to him, "My son."

"Here I am," he answered.

Isaac said, "I am now an old man and don't know the day of my death. ³Now then, get your weapons—your quiver and bow—and go out to the open country to hunt some wild game for me. ⁴Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my blessing before I die."

⁵Now Rebekah was listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau. When Esau left for the open country to hunt game and bring it back, ⁶Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "Look, I overheard your father say to your brother Esau, ⁷'Bring me some game and prepare me some tasty food to eat, so that I may give you my blessing in the presence of the LORD before I die.' ⁸Now, my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you: ⁹Go out to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, so I can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he likes it. ¹⁰Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies."

¹¹Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "But my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I'm a man with smooth skin. ¹²What if my father touches me? I

^a20 Esek means dispute

^c21 Sitnah means opposition

^d22 Rehoboth means room.

^e33 Shibah can mean

^f33 Beersheba can mean well of the oath or well of seven

A Deceitful Man in God's Family?

The Bible doesn't cover up Jacob's scheming

"He has deceived me these two times: He took my birthright, and now he's taken my blessing!"
27:36

The Bible does not mince words in describing Jacob as a grasping, greedy man. He took advantage of his twin brother's impetuosity to switch places with him in the family will (25:29-34). Later, seeing that his father still favored Esau, Jacob (with his mother) tricked the old man into blessing him in place of his brother. (A father's blessing was not merely symbolic. It had a permanent significance, like a swearing-in ceremony.)

The Tricks Backfire

Dressed up in Esau's clothes and some fresh goat skins, Jacob flatly lied to his father and took the Lord's name in vain. Isaac, trusting his nose over his ears, fell for it (27:1-40). Yet the trick backfired. Jacob had to run for his life, and he spent 20 years in exile with his uncle. Uncle Laban gave Jacob a dose of his own medicine by deceiving him and repeatedly changing his wages as head shepherd.

You might think Jacob would learn that tricks aren't nice. Yet Jacob didn't noticeably improve his ways. He made a poor husband, neglecting one of his wives and creating rivalry. He favored two sons, so that the neglected ones grew jealous to the point of murder. He certainly doesn't seem like choice material for a religious leader.

God Makes the Choice.

But God chose Jacob. He was always making those kinds of choices, sometimes with no apparent reason at all. Often he went against the time-honored practice of letting the firstborn son be number one, as he did in choosing number-two sons Abel, Jacob, and Ephraim. In fact, an inspired prophecy marked Jacob as God's choice before he was even born—before he had done a single thing to merit the choice.

So God's choice did not necessarily depend on how a person behaved. God chose the one he wanted—it was as simple as that.

Is this fair? That's what the apostle Paul asked in Romans 9. He concluded that we have no right to find fault with God's choices, knowing as little as we do compared to his infinite understanding. And while we may never understand God's choices, we should note that all the "rejected" brothers of Genesis—Cain, Canaan, Ishmael, Reuben, Esau, and Manasseh—were treated more than fairly. Their offspring multiplied into nations under God's protection.

No One Excluded

For his chosen people, God had a much greater honor. Good or bad, they would be made a channel of blessing for the whole world. He told Abraham, right from the beginning, "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (12:3). By selecting a few, God planned to extend his blessings to all. And that is how it worked out: Abraham's small, fault-ridden family grew into a sizeable, fault-ridden nation that brought forth, in the fullness of time, a faultless Jesus.

No wonder Paul wrote that we have no business questioning the wisdom of God. We may not see why he chose people like Jacob. But unquestionably, those choices worked for good—and the whole world became eligible to join the "chosen people." As Paul wrote, "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus . . . There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed" (Galatians 3:26,28-29).

Life Questions: Why do you think God chooses imperfect people like Jacob? Why did he choose you?

crease your numbers until you become a community of peoples. ⁴May he give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham, so that you may take possession of the land where you now live as an alien, the land God gave to Abraham." ⁵Then Isaac sent Jacob on his way, and he went to Paddan Aram, to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, who was the mother of Jacob and Esau.

⁶Now Esau learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had sent him to Paddan Aram to take a wife from there, and that when he blessed him he commanded him, "Do not marry a Canaanite woman," ⁷and that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had gone to Paddan Aram. ⁸Esau then realized how displeasing the Canaanite women were to his father Isaac; ⁹so he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath, the sister of Nebaioth and daughter of Ishmael son of Abraham, in addition to the wives he already had.

Jacob's Dream at Bethel

¹⁰Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. ¹¹When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. ¹²He had a dream in which he saw a stairway^a resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³There above it^b stood the LORD, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. ¹⁴Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. ¹⁵I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

¹⁶When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it." ¹⁷He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven."

¹⁸Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. ¹⁹He called that place Bethel,^c though the city used to be called Luz.

28:12 A Stairway to Heaven

God's grace: this is what Jacob found while traveling alone in the desert. Through his own greedy scheming he had won the family birthright and then, ironically, had had to run away from the family. Yet God came to him full of promises, not the reproaches he deserved. Jacob had not looked for God, but God looked for him. Jacob's vision of a stairway to heaven looked forward to Jesus, who himself is the bridge between heaven and earth (John 1:51).

²⁰Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear ²¹so that I return safely to my father's house, then the LORD^d will be my God ²²and^e this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth."

Jacob Arrives in Paddan Aram

29 Then Jacob continued on his journey and came to the land of the eastern peoples. ²There he saw a well in the field, with three flocks of sheep lying near it because the flocks were watered from that well. The stone over the mouth of the well was large. ³When all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone away from the well's mouth and water the sheep. Then they would return the stone to its place over the mouth of the well.

⁴Jacob asked the shepherds, "My brothers, where are you from?"

"We're from Haran," they replied.

⁵He said to them, "Do you know Laban, Nahor's grandson?"

"Yes, we know him," they answered.

⁶Then Jacob asked them, "Is he well?"

"Yes, he is," they said, "and here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep."

⁷"Look," he said, "the sun is still high; it is not time for the flocks to be gathered. Water the sheep and take them back to pasture."

⁸"We can't," they replied, "until all the flocks are gathered and the stone has been rolled away from the mouth of the well. Then we will water the sheep."

⁹While he was still talking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. ¹⁰When Jacob saw Rachel daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, and Laban's sheep, he went over and rolled the stone away from the mouth of the well and watered his uncle's sheep. ¹¹Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep aloud. ¹²He had told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and a son of Rebekah. So she ran and told her father.

¹³As soon as Laban heard the news about Jacob, his sister's son, he hurried to meet him. He embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his home, and there Jacob told him all these things. ¹⁴Then Laban said to him, "You are my own flesh and blood."

Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel

After Jacob had stayed with him for a whole month, ¹⁵Laban said to him, "Just because you are a relative of mine, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be."

¹⁶Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. ¹⁷Leah had weak^f eyes, but Rachel was lovely in form, and beautiful. ¹⁸Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, "I'll work for you seven

^a12 Or ladder

^b13 Or There beside him

^c19 Bethel means house of God

^d20,21 Or Since God . . . father's house, the LORD

^e21,22 Or house, and the LORD will be my God, ²²them

^f17 Or delicate

The Women of the Bible

God's plan for marriage

The man said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." 2:23

Down through the centuries women have often been maltreated and have occupied a low role in society. In countries where the dowry system is still in effect the birth of a daughter can create a dreaded financial burden for poor parents. Often a bride becomes little more than a servant to her husband. What does the Bible teach us about the role and nature of women?

Man's Companion

The book of Genesis tells us that the woman was made after Adam the man, to be a companion or friend or helper to man. The word "helper" does not mean that in any way she is inferior to, or the servant of, man. The Bible clearly shows us that the man is to care for the woman as he cares for his own body. Paul, one of the New Testament writers, puts it this way: "Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy. . . . In this same way husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church" (Ephesians 5:25-29). This command says that the first requirement of a man is to care for his wife, to love her, to treat her with kindness and tenderness. The man is to provide for the wife as he provides for his own body.

God gave a specific command to man when he created woman, a command that is often ignored by many people: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (2:24).

Caring for Each Other

In return for the care and protection given by the husband, the wife is to help the husband in every way that is lawful. She is to give herself to him, even as he gives himself to her. She is to submit to him as the authority in the home. "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything" (Ephesians 5:22-24). The role of the wife is to make the life of the husband more enjoyable, easier. He cares for her, and in return she is to care for him. She is to encourage him, defend him, lift him up in the eyes of all her relatives and friends. She is to honor his decisions and abide by them. This does not mean that she may not voice her opinion or suggest council to him. But it does mean that his decision is final. To obey her husband is no more demeaning for a wife than is obedience by the church to Christ Jesus.

In bringing man and woman together in the bonds of marriage, God was concerned to provide a stable society in which children could be raised. Marriage is an institution, and it must never be destroyed by divorce. When two people are married, they commit themselves to each other to uphold each other, care for each other, and to be best friends to each other. When they faithfully carry out these tasks, true love will flow between them and there will be much happiness in their home.

Life Questions Do you believe that marriage in your country resembles the requirements that God lays down for marriage in the Bible? How are marriages today different from biblical marriages? How are they the same?

GENESIS 29:19

years in return for your younger daughter Rachel."

¹⁹Laban said, "It's better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me." ²⁰So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.

²¹Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to lie with her."

²²So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast. ²³But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and gave her to Jacob, and Jacob lay with her. ²⁴And Laban gave his servant girl Zilpah to his daughter as her maidservant.

²⁵When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn't I? Why have you deceived me?"

²⁶Laban replied, "It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one. ²⁷Finish this daughter's bridal week, then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work."

²⁸And Jacob did so. He finished the week with Leah, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. ²⁹Laban gave his servant girl Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her maidservant. ³⁰Jacob lay with Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah. And he worked for Laban another seven years.

Jacob's Children

¹When the LORD saw that Leah was not loved, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren.

²Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben,^a for she said, "It is because the LORD has seen my misery. Surely my husband will love me now."

³She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "Because the LORD heard that I am not loved, he gave me this one too." So she named him Simeon.^b

⁴Again she conceived, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "Now at last my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." So he was named Levi.^c

⁵She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "This time I will praise the

LORD." So she named him Judah.^d Then she stopped having children.

30 When Rachel saw that she was not bearing any children, she became jealous of her sister. So she said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I'll die!"

²Jacob became angry with her and said, "Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?"

³Then she said, "Here is Bilhah, my maidservant. Sleep with her so that she can bear children for me and that through her I too can build a family."

⁴So she gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife. Jacob slept with her, and she became pregnant and bore him a son. ⁶Then Rachel said, "God has vindicated me, he has listened to my plea and given me a son." Because of this she named him Dan.^e

⁷Rachel's servant Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. ⁸Then Rachel said, "I have had a great struggle with my sister, and I have won." So she named him Naphtali.^f

⁹When Leah saw that she had stopped having children, she took her maidservant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. ¹⁰Leah's servant Zilpah bore Jacob a son. ¹¹Then Leah said, "What good fortune!"^g So she named him Gad.^h

¹²Leah's servant Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. ¹³Then Leah said, "How happy I am! The women will call me happy." So she named him Asher.ⁱ

¹⁴During wheat harvest, Reuben went out into the fields and found some mandrake plants, which he brought to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes."^j

¹⁵But she said to her, "Wasn't it enough that you took away my husband? Will you take my son's mandrakes too?"

"Very well," Rachel said, "he can sleep with you tonight in return for your son's mandrakes."

¹⁶So when Jacob came in from the fields that evening, Leah went out to meet him. "You must sleep with me," she said. "I have hired you with my son's mandrakes." So he slept with her that night.

¹⁷God listened to Leah, and she became pregnant and bore Jacob a fifth son. ¹⁸Then Leah said, "God has rewarded me for giving my maidservant to my husband." So she named him Issachar.^k

¹⁹Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. ²⁰Then Leah said, "God has presented me with a precious gift. This time my husband will treat me with honor, because I have borne him six sons." So she named him Zebulun.^l

²¹Some time later she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.

²²Then God remembered Rachel, he listened to her and opened her womb. ²³She became pregnant and gave birth to a son and said, "God has taken away my disgrace." ²⁴She named him Joseph.^m

29:25 Jacob Meets His Match

When Jacob ran into Laban, one cheat met another. Just as Jacob had taken advantage of his brother by playing on his love for food (25:33), Laban cheated Jacob by playing on his love for Rachel. Additional ironies: Jacob learned his deceit from his mother, Laban's sister. And eventually it was Laban's daughter Rachel who enabled Jacob to escape her father's cheating grasp.

^a32 Reuben sounds like the Hebrew for he has seen my misery, the name means son, a son.

^b34 Issachar sounds like and may be derived from the Hebrew for attached for praise.

^c11 Dan here means he has vindicated.

^d10 Gad can mean good fortune or a troop.

^e11 Issachar probably means honor.

^f13 Asher means happy.

^g24 Joseph means may he add.

^h8 Naphtali means my struggle.

ⁱ18 Issachar sounds like the Hebrew for reward.

^j33 Simeon probably means one who hears.

^k35 Judah sounds like and may be derived from the Hebrew.

^l21 Or A troop is coming.

^m11 Issachar

ⁿ20 Zebulun

and said, "May the LORD add to me another son."

Jacob's Flocks Increase

After Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob said to his sons, "Send me on my way so I can go back to my fatherland. I have served you, and I will be on my way. I know how much work I've done for

Laban said to him, "If I have found favor in your eyes, please stay. I have learned by divination that the LORD has blessed me because of you." Jacob added, "Name your wages, and I will pay them."

Jacob said to him, "You know how I have served you and how your livestock has fared under my care. 30The little you had before I came has increased greatly, and the LORD has blessed wherever I have been. But now, when may I get something for my own household?" "What shall I give you?" he asked.

"I will give you nothing," Jacob replied. "But if you let me do this one thing for me, I will go on tending your flocks and watching over them: 32Let me go through all your flocks today and remove from them every speckled or spotted sheep, every dark-colored lamb and every spotted or speckled goat. These will be my wages. 33And my honesty will testify for me in the future, whenever you check on the wages you have paid me. Any goat in my possession that is not speckled or spotted, or any lamb that is not dark-colored, will be considered stolen."

Laban said, "Let it be as you have said." 35That same day he removed all the male goats that were streaked or spotted, and all the speckled or spotted female goats (all that had white on them) and all the dark-colored lambs, and he placed them in the care of his sons. 36Then he set a three-day journey between himself and Jacob, while Jacob continued to tend the rest of Laban's flocks.

Laban, however, took fresh-cut branches from almond and plane trees and made white streaks on them by peeling the bark and exposing the inner wood of the branches. 38Then he placed the peeled branches in all the watering troughs so that they would be directly in front of the flocks when they came to drink. When the goats were in heat and came to drink, 39they mated in front of the branches. And they bore young that were streaked or speckled or spotted. 40Jacob separated the young of the flock by themselves, but he left the rest—the streaked and dark-colored animals that belonged to Laban. Thus he made separate flocks for himself and did not put them with Laban's animals. 41Whenever the stronger female goats were in heat, Jacob would place the peeled branches in the troughs in front of the animals so that they would mate near the branches, 42but if the goats were weak, he would not place them there. So the weak animals went to Laban and the strong ones to Jacob. 43In this way the man grew exceedingly prosperous and came to own large

flocks, and maidservants and menservants, and camels and donkeys.

Jacob Flees From Laban

31 Jacob heard that Laban's sons were saying, "Jacob has taken everything our father owned and has gained all this wealth from what belonged to our father." 2And Jacob noticed that Laban's attitude toward him was not what it had been.

3Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Go back to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you."

4So Jacob sent word to Rachel and Leah to come out to the fields where his flocks were. 5He said to them, "I see that your father's attitude toward me is not what it was before, but the God of my father has been with me. 6You know that I've worked for your father with all my strength, 7yet your father has cheated me by changing my wages ten times. However, God has not allowed him to harm me. 8If he said, 'The speckled ones will be your wages,' then all the flocks gave birth to speckled young, and if he said, 'The streaked ones will be your wages,' then all the flocks bore streaked young. 9So God has taken away your father's livestock and has given them to me."

10"During breeding season I once had a dream in which I looked up and saw that the male goats mating with the flock were streaked, speckled or spotted. 11The angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob.' I answered, 'Here I am.' 12And he said, 'Look up and see that all the male goats mating with the flock are streaked, speckled or spotted, for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you. 13I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and go back to your native land.'"

14Then Rachel and Leah replied, "Do we still have any share in the inheritance of our father's estate? 15Does he not regard us as foreigners? Not only has he sold us, but he has used up what was paid for us. 16Surely all the wealth that God took away from our father belongs to us and our children. So do whatever God has told you."

17Then Jacob put his children and his wives on camels, 18and he drove all his livestock ahead of him, along with all the goods he had accumulated in Paddan Aram,^b to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan.

30:43 Misplaced Faith

In this classic encounter between two schemers, each trying to take advantage of the other, Jacob placed considerable faith in an animal-breeding trick. Many people have believed in similar methods over the centuries. Modern genetics indicates that Jacob's results had nothing to do with such techniques. God's intervening power increased Jacob's flocks, as Jacob himself acknowledged (31:7-9).

^a That is, to become rich and

^b That is, Northwest Mesopotamia

GENESIS 31:19

¹⁹When Laban had gone to shear his sheep, Rachel stole her father's household gods. ²⁰Moreover, Jacob deceived Laban the Aramean by not telling him he was running away. ²¹So he fled with all he had, and crossing the River,^a he headed for the hill country of Gilead.

Laban Pursues Jacob

²²On the third day Laban was told that Jacob had fled. ²³Taking his relatives with him, he pursued Jacob for seven days and caught up with him in the hill country of Gilead. ²⁴Then God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night and said to him, "Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad."

²⁵Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country of Gilead when Laban overtook him, and Laban and his relatives camped there too. ²⁶Then Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done? You've deceived me, and you've carried off my daughters like captives in war. ²⁷Why did you run off secretly and deceive me? Why didn't you tell me, so I could send you away with joy and singing to the music of tambourines and harps? ²⁸You didn't even let me kiss my grandchildren and my daughters good-by. You have done a foolish thing. ²⁹I have the power to harm you, but last night the God of your father said to me, 'Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.' ³⁰Now you have gone off because you longed to return to your father's house. But why did you steal my gods?"

³¹Jacob answered Laban, "I was afraid, because I thought you would take your daughters away from me by force. ³²But if you find anyone who has your gods, he shall not live. In the presence of our relatives, see for yourself whether there is anything of yours here with me; and if so, take it." Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen the gods.

³³So Laban went into Jacob's tent and into Leah's tent and into the tent of the two maid-servants, but he found nothing. After he came out of Leah's tent, he entered Rachel's tent. ³⁴Now Rachel had taken the household gods and put them inside her camel's saddle and was sitting on them. Laban searched through everything in the tent but found nothing.

³⁵Rachel said to her father, "Don't be angry, my lord, that I cannot stand up in your presence; I'm having my period." So he searched but could not find the household gods.

³⁶Jacob was angry and took Laban to task.

31:35 Household Gods

The "gods" Rachel had stolen from her father (verse 19) were small idols or "charms" supposed to protect the family from harm. They may also have served as something like a title deed for the family inheritance. Such idols continued to water down Israel's commitment to God for many generations to come.

^a21 That is, the Euphrates

^a49 Mizpah means watchtower

^a47 The Aramaic *Jegar Sahadutha* means witness heap

"What is my crime?" he asked Laban. "What sin have I committed that you hunt me down? ³⁷Now that you have searched through all my goods, what have you found that belongs to your household? Put it here in front of your relatives and mine, and let them judge between 'he two of us."

³⁸"I have been with you for twenty years now. Your sheep and goats have not miscarried, nor have I eaten rams from your flocks. ³⁹I did not bring you animals torn by wild beasts, I bore the loss myself. And you demanded payment from me for whatever was stolen by day or night. ⁴⁰This was my situation: The heat consumed me in the daytime and the cold at night, and sleep fled from my eyes. ⁴¹It was like this for the twenty years I was in your household. I worked for you fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your flocks, and you changed my wages ten times. ⁴²If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been with me, you would surely have sent me away empty-handed. But God has seen my hardship and the toil of my hands, and last night he rebuked you."

⁴³Laban answered Jacob, "The women are my daughters, the children are my children, and the flocks are my flocks. All you see is mine. Yet what can I do today about these daughters of mine, or about the children they have borne? ⁴⁴Come now, let's make a covenant, you and I, and let it serve as a witness between us."

⁴⁵So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. ⁴⁶He said to his relatives, "Gather some stones." So they took stones and piled them in a heap, and they ate there by the heap. ⁴⁷Laban called it *Jegar Sahadutha*,^b and Jacob called it *Galeed*.^c

⁴⁸Laban said, "This heap is a witness between you and me today." That is why it was called *Galeed*. ⁴⁹It was also called *Mizpah*,^d because he said, "May the LORD keep watch between you and me when we are away from each other. ⁵⁰If you mistreat my daughters or if you take any wives besides my daughters, even though no one is with us, remember that God is a witness between you and me."

⁵¹Laban also said to Jacob, "Here is this heap, and here is this pillar I have set up between you and me. ⁵²This heap is a witness, and this pillar is a witness, that I will not go past this heap to your side to harm you and that you will not go past this heap and pillar to my side to harm me. ⁵³May the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us."

So Jacob took an oath in the name of the Fear of his father Isaac. ⁵⁴He offered a sacrifice there in the hill country and invited his relatives to a meal. After they had eaten, they spent the night there.

⁵⁵Early the next morning Laban kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them. Then he left and returned home.

Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau

32 Jacob also went on his way, and the angels of God met him. ²When Jacob saw them, he

^a47 The Hebrew *Galeed* means witness heap.

said, "This is the camp of God!" So he named that place Mahanaim.

Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. He instructed them, "This is what you are to say to our master Esau: 'Your servant Jacob says, I have been staying with Laban and have remained there until now. I have cattle and donkeys, sheep and goats, menservants and maidservants. Now I am sending this message to my lord, that I may find favor in your eyes.'"

When the messengers returned to Jacob, they said, "We went to your brother Esau, and now he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him."

In great fear and distress Jacob divided the people who were with him into two groups,^a and the flocks and herds and camels as well. He thought, "If Esau comes and attacks one group, the group that is left may escape."

Then Jacob prayed, "O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, O LORD, who said to me, 'Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper,'¹⁰ I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two groups. Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children. But you have said, 'I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.'"

He spent the night there, and from what he had with him he selected a gift for his brother Esau: 14two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, 15thirty female camels with their young, forty cows and ten bulls, and twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. 16He put them in the care of his servants, each herd by itself, and said to his servants, "Go ahead of me, and keep some space between the herds."

He instructed the one in the lead: "When my brother Esau meets you and asks, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going, and who owns all these animals in front of you?' 18then you are to say, 'They belong to your servant Jacob. They are a gift sent to my lord Esau, and he is coming behind us.'"

He also instructed the second, the third and all the others who followed the herds: "You are to say the same thing to Esau when you meet him. 20And be sure to say, 'Your servant Jacob is coming behind us.' For he thought, 'I will pacify him with these gifts I am sending on ahead; later, when I see him, perhaps he will receive me.' 21So Jacob's gifts went on ahead of him, but he himself spent the night in the camp.

Jacob Wrestles With God

22That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two maidservants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. 23After he had

sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. 24So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. 25When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. 26Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak."

But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

27The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered.

28Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel,^d because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome."

29Jacob said, "Please tell me your name."

But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there.

30So Jacob called the place Peniel,^e saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."

31The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel,^f and he was limping because of his hip. 32Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob's hip was touched near the tendon.

Jacob Meets Esau

33 Jacob looked up and there was Esau, coming with his four hundred men; so he divided the children among Leah, Rachel and the two maidservants. 2He put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph in the rear. 3He himself went on ahead and bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother.

4But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept. 5Then Esau looked up and saw the women and children. "Who are these with you?" he asked.

Jacob answered, "They are the children God has graciously given your servant."

6Then the maidservants and their children approached and bowed down. 7Next, Leah and her children came and bowed down. Last of all came Joseph and Rachel, and they too bowed down.

8Esau asked, "What do you mean by all these droves I met?"

"To find favor in your eyes, my lord," he said.

9But Esau said, "I already have plenty, my brother. Keep what you have for yourself."

10"No, please!" said Jacob. "If I have found favor in your eyes, accept this gift from me. For to see your face is like seeing the face of God, now

32:24 Wrestling with God

This nighttime encounter, as strange as any in the Bible, sounds somewhat similar to Jacob's previous on-the-road encounter with God (28:12) in a dream. But this time God left Jacob evidence of his physical presence—a limp.

^a Mahanaim means two camps.
^b Peniel means face of God.

^c Or camp, also in verse 10.

^d Hebrew Peniel, a variant of Peniel.

^e Or camp.

^f Israel means he struggles with God.

that you have received me favorably. ¹¹Please accept the present that was brought to you, for God has been gracious to me and I have all I need." And because Jacob insisted, Esau accepted it.

¹²Then Esau said, "Let us be on our way; I'll accompany you."

¹³But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that the children are tender and that I must care for the ewes and cows that are nursing their young. If they are driven hard just one day, all the animals will die. ¹⁴So let my lord go on ahead of his servant, while I move along slowly at the pace of the droves before me and that of the children, until I come to my lord in Seir."

¹⁵Esau said, "Then let me leave some of my men with you."

"But why do that?" Jacob asked. "Just let me find favor in the eyes of my lord."

¹⁶So that day Esau started on his way back to Seir. ¹⁷Jacob, however, went to Succoth, where he built a place for himself and made shelters for his livestock. That is why the place is called Succoth.^a

¹⁸After Jacob came from Paddan Aram,^b he arrived safely at the city of Shechem in Canaan and camped within sight of the city. ¹⁹For a hundred pieces of silver,^c he bought from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, the plot of ground where he pitched his tent. ²⁰There he set up an altar and called it El Eloe Israel.^d

Dinah and the Shechemites

34 Now Dinah, the daughter Leah had borne to Jacob, went out to visit the women of the land. ²When Shechem son of Hamor the Hivite, the ruler of that area, saw her, he took her and violated her. ³His heart was drawn to Dinah daughter of Jacob, and he loved the girl and spoke tenderly to her. ⁴And Shechem said to his father Hamor, "Get me this girl as my wife."

⁵When Jacob heard that his daughter Dinah had been defiled, his sons were in the fields with his livestock; so he kept quiet about it until they came home.

⁶Then Shechem's father Hamor went out to talk with Jacob. ⁷Now Jacob's sons had come in from the fields as soon as they heard what had happened. They were filled with grief and fury, because Shechem had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter—a thing that should not be done.

⁸But Hamor said to them, "My son Shechem has

his heart set on your daughter. Please give her to him as his wife. ⁹Intermarry with us, give us your daughters and take our daughters for yourselves. ¹⁰You can settle among us; the land is open to you. Live in it, trade in it, and acquire property in it."

¹¹Then Shechem said to Dinah's father and brothers, "Let me find favor in your eyes, and I will give you whatever you ask. ¹²Make the price for the bride and the gift I am to bring as great as you like, and I'll pay whatever you ask me. Only give me the girl as my wife."

¹³Because their sister Dinah had been defiled, Jacob's sons replied deceitfully as they spoke to Shechem and his father Hamor. ¹⁴They said to them, "We can't do such a thing; we can't give our sister to a man who is not circumcised. That would be a disgrace to us. ¹⁵We will give our consent to you on one condition only: that you become like us by circumcising all your males. ¹⁶Then we will give you our daughters and take your daughters for ourselves. We'll settle among you and become one people with you. ¹⁷But if you will not agree to be circumcised, we'll take our sister^e and go."

¹⁸Their proposal seemed good to Hamor and his son Shechem. ¹⁹The young man, who was the most honored of all his father's household, lost no time in doing what they said, because he was delighted with Jacob's daughter. ²⁰So Hamor and his son Shechem went to the gate of their city to speak to their fellow townsmen. ²¹"These men are friendly toward us," they said. "Let them live in our land and trade in it; the land has plenty of room for them. We can marry their daughters and they can marry ours. ²²But the men will consent to live with us as one people only on the condition that our males be circumcised, as they themselves are. ²³Won't their livestock, their property and all their other animals become ours? So let us give our consent to them, and they will settle among us."

²⁴All the men who went out of the city gate agreed with Hamor and his son Shechem, and every male in the city was circumcised.

²⁵Three days later, while all of them were still in pain, two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, took their swords and attacked the unsuspecting city, killing every male. ²⁶They put Hamor and his son Shechem to the sword and took Dinah from Shechem's house and left. ²⁷The sons of Jacob came upon the dead bodies and looted the city where their sister had been defiled. ²⁸They seized their flocks and herds and donkeys and everything else of theirs in the city and out in the fields. ²⁹They carried off all their wealth and all their women and children, taking as plunder everything in the houses.

³⁰Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on me by making me a stench to the Canaanites and Perizzites, the people living in this land. We are few in number, and if they join forces against me and attack me, I and my household will be destroyed."

³¹But they replied, "Should he have treated our sister like a prostitute?"

33:15 Surface Reconciliation

On the surface, Jacob and Esau had reconciled. Underneath the niceties, however, mistrust continued, at least on Jacob's side. He did not want Esau to accompany him on his way, nor did he wish Esau to leave some of his men for "protection." He let his brother think he was on his way to Seir (verse 14), but turned north to Succoth as soon as Esau was out of sight.

^a Succoth means shelters

^b That is, Northwest Mesopotamia

^c Or arrived at Shalem

^d Hebrew translated

^e El Eloe Israel can mean God, the God of Israel or mighty as

^f Or against

¹⁰ Or move about freely, also in verse 21

¹¹ Hebrew daughter

¹² Or because

Jacob Returns to Bethel

35 Then God said to Jacob, "Go up to Bethel and settle there, and build an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you were fleeing from your brother Esau."

¹So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Get rid of the foreign gods you have with you, and purify yourselves and change your clothes." ²Then come, let us go up to Bethel, where I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone." ³So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods they had and the rings in their ears, and Jacob buried them under the oak at Shechem. ⁴Then they set out, and the terror of God fell upon the towns all around them so that no one pursued them.

⁵Jacob and all the people with him came to Luz (that is, Bethel) in the land of Canaan. ⁶There he built an altar, and he called the place El Bethel,^a because it was there that God revealed himself to him when he was fleeing from his brother.

⁷Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died and was buried under the oak below Bethel. So it was named Allon Bacuth.^b

⁸After Jacob returned from Paddan Aram,^c God appeared to him again and blessed him. ⁹God said to him, "Your name is Jacob,^d but you will no longer be called Jacob; your name will be Israel.^e" So he named him Israel.

¹⁰And God said to him, "I am God Almighty;^f be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will come from your body. ¹¹The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I will give this land to your descendants after you." ¹²Then God went up from him at the place where he had talked with him.

¹³Jacob set up a stone pillar at the place where God had talked with him, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it. ¹⁴Jacob called the place where God had talked with him Bethel.^g

The Deaths of Rachel and Isaac

¹⁵Then they moved on from Bethel. While they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth and had great difficulty. ¹⁶And as she was having great difficulty in childbirth, the midwife said to her, "Don't be afraid, for you have another son." ¹⁷As she breathed her last—for she was dying—she named her son Ben-Oni.^h But his father named him Benjamin.ⁱ

¹⁸So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). ¹⁹Over her tomb Jacob set up a pillar, and to this day that pillar marks Rachel's tomb.

²⁰Israel moved on again and pitched his tent beyond Migdal Eder. ²¹While Israel was living in that region, Reuben went in and slept with his father's concubine Bilhah, and Israel heard of it.

Jacob had twelve sons:

²²The sons of Leah:

Reuben the firstborn of Jacob,
Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun.

²³The sons of Rachel:

Joseph and Benjamin.

²⁴The sons of Rachel's maidservant Bilhah:

Dan and Naphtali.

²⁵The sons of Leah's maidservant Zilpah:

Gad and Asher.

These were the sons of Jacob, who were born to him in Paddan Aram.

²⁶Jacob came home to his father Isaac in Mamre, near Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had stayed. ²⁷Isaac lived a hundred and eighty years. ²⁸Then he breathed his last and died and was gathered to his people, old and full of years. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Esau's Descendants

36 This is the account of Esau (that is, Edom).

¹Esau took his wives from the women of Canaan: Adah daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah daughter of Anah and granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite—²also Basemath daughter of Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth.

³Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, Basemath bore Reuel, ⁴and Oholibamah bore Jeush, Jalam and Korah. These were the sons of Esau, who were born to him in Canaan.

⁵Esau took his wives and sons and daughters and all the members of his household, as well as his livestock and all his other animals and all the goods he had acquired in Canaan, and moved to a land some distance from his brother Jacob. ⁶Their possessions were too great for them to remain together; the land where they were staying could not support them both because of their livestock. ⁷So Esau (that is, Edom) settled in the hill country of Seir.

⁸This is the account of Esau the father of the Edomites in the hill country of Seir.

⁹These are the names of Esau's sons:

Eliphaz, the son of Esau's wife Adah, and Reuel, the son of Esau's wife Basemath.

¹⁰The sons of Eliphaz:

Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam and Kenaz.

¹¹Esau's son Eliphaz also had a concubine

35:22 A Sin that Lies Sleeping

This passage offers no indication that what Reuben did was wrong, let alone subject to punishment. Yet his deed was not forgotten. Decades later, when Jacob called his sons in for a final blessing, he brought up this sin (49:4) and predicted that leadership would pass from Reuben, the firstborn son.

^a El Bethel means God of Bethel

^b Allon Bacuth means oak of weeping

^c That is, Northwest Mesopotamia, also in verse 26

¹⁰ Jacob means he grasps the heel (figuratively, he deceives).

¹¹ Israel means he struggles with God

¹² Hebrew El-Shaddai

¹³ Bethel means house of God

¹⁴ Ben-Oni means son of my trouble

¹⁵ Benjamin means son of my right hand.

Jacob Returns to Bethel

35 Then God said to Jacob, "Go up to Bethel and settle there, and build an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you were fleeing from your brother Esau."

³⁶So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Get rid of the foreign gods you have with you, and purify yourselves and change your clothes." ³⁷Then come, let us go up to Bethel, where I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone." ³⁸So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods they had and the rings in their ears, and Jacob buried them under the oak at Shechem. ³⁹Then they set out, and the terror of God fell upon the towns all around them so that no one pursued them.

⁴⁰Jacob and all the people with him came to Luz (that is, Bethel) in the land of Canaan. ⁴¹There he built an altar, and he called the place El Bethel, because it was there that God revealed himself to him when he was fleeing from his brother.

⁴²Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died and was buried under the oak below Bethel. So it was named Allon Bacuth.^a

⁴³After Jacob returned from Paddan Aram,^c God appeared to him again and blessed him. ⁴⁴God said to him, "Your name is Jacob,^d but you will no longer be called Jacob; your name will be Israel.^e" So he named him Israel.

⁴⁵And God said to him, "I am God Almighty;^f be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will come from your body. ⁴⁶The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I will give this land to your descendants after you." ⁴⁷Then God went up from him at the place where he had talked with him.

⁴⁸Jacob set up a stone pillar at the place where God had talked with him, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it. ⁴⁹Jacob called the place where God had talked with him Bethel.^g

The Deaths of Rachel and Isaac

⁵⁰Then they moved on from Bethel. While they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth and had great difficulty. ⁵¹And as she was having great difficulty in childbirth, the midwife said to her, "Don't be afraid, for you have another son." ⁵²As she breathed her last—for she was dying—she named her son Ben-Oni.^h But his father named him Benjamin.ⁱ

⁵³So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). ⁵⁴Over her tomb Jacob set up a pillar, and to this day that pillar marks Rachel's tomb.

⁵⁵Israel moved on again and pitched his tent beyond Migdal Eder. ⁵⁶While Israel was living in that region, Reuben went in and slept with his father's concubine Bilhah, and Israel heard of it.

Jacob had twelve sons:

²³The sons of Leah:

Reuben the firstborn of Jacob,
Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun.

²⁴The sons of Rachel:

Joseph and Benjamin.

²⁵The sons of Rachel's maidservant Bilhah:

Dan and Naphtali.

²⁶The sons of Leah's maidservant Zilpah:

Gad and Asher.

These were the sons of Jacob, who were born to him in Paddan Aram.

²⁷Jacob came home to his father Isaac in Mamre, near Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had stayed. ²⁸Isaac lived a hundred and eighty years. ²⁹Then he breathed his last and died and was gathered to his people, old and full of years. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Esau's Descendants

36 This is the account of Esau (that is, Edom).

²Esau took his wives from the women of Canaan: Adah daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah daughter of Anah and granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite—³also Basemath daughter of Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth.

⁴Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, Basemath bore Reuel, ⁵and Oholibamah bore Jeush, Jalam and Korah. These were the sons of Esau, who were born to him in Canaan.

⁶Esau took his wives and sons and daughters and all the members of his household, as well as his livestock and all his other animals and all the goods he had acquired in Canaan, and moved to a land some distance from his brother Jacob. ⁷Their possessions were too great for them to remain together; the land where they were staying could not support them both because of their livestock. ⁸So Esau (that is, Edom) settled in the hill country of Seir.

⁹This is the account of Esau the father of the Edomites in the hill country of Seir.

¹⁰These are the names of Esau's sons:

Eliphaz, the son of Esau's wife Adah, and Reuel, the son of Esau's wife Basemath.

¹¹The sons of Eliphaz:

Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam and Kenaz.

¹²Esau's son Eliphaz also had a concubine

35:22 A Sin that Lies Sleeping

This passage offers no indication that what Reuben did was wrong, let alone subject to punishment. Yet his deed was not forgotten. Decades later, when Jacob called his sons in for a final blessing, he brought up this sin (49:4) and predicted that leadership would pass from Reuben, the firstborn son.

^a El Bethel means God of Bethel

^b Allon Bacuth means oak of weeping

^c That is, Northwest Mesopotamia, also in verse 26

¹⁰ Jacob means he grasps the heel (figuratively, he deceives).

¹⁰ Israel means he struggles with God

¹¹ Hebrew El-Shaddai

¹⁵ Bethel means house of God

¹⁸ Ben-Oni means son of my trouble

¹⁸ Benjamin means son of my right hand.

named Timna, who bore him Amalek. These were grandsons of Esau's wife Adah.

¹³The sons of Reuel

Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah. These were grandsons of Esau's wife Basemath.

¹⁴The sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah daughter of Anah and granddaughter of Zibeon, whom she bore to Esau

Jeush, Jalam and Korah.

¹⁵These were the chiefs among Esau's descendants.

The sons of Eliphaz the firstborn of Esau: Chiefs Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz,

¹⁶Korah,^a Gatam and Amalek. These were the chiefs descended from Eliphaz in Edom; they were grandsons of Adah.

¹⁷The sons of Esau's son Reuel

Chiefs Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah. These were the chiefs descended from Reuel in Edom; they were grandsons of Esau's wife Basemath.

¹⁸The sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah:

Chiefs Jeush, Jalam and Korah. These were the chiefs descended from Esau's wife Oholibamah daughter of Anah.

¹⁹These were the sons of Esau (that is, Edom), and these were their chiefs.

²⁰These were the sons of Seir the Horite, who were living in the region:

Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, ²¹Dishon, Ezer and Dishan. These sons of Seir in Edom were Horite chiefs.

²²The sons of Lotan:

Hori and Homam.^b Timna was Lotan's sister.

²³The sons of Shobal:

Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho and Onam.

²⁴The sons of Zibeon:

Aiah and Anah. This is the Anah who discovered the hot springs^c in the desert while he was grazing the donkeys of his father Zibeon.

²⁵The children of Anah:

Dishon and Oholibamah daughter of Anah.

²⁶The sons of Dishon^d:

Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran and Keran.

²⁷The sons of Ezer:

Bilhan, Zaavan and Akan.

²⁸The sons of Dishan:

Uz and Aran.

²⁹These were the Horite chiefs:

Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, ³⁰Dishon, Ezer and Dishan. These were the Horite chiefs, according to their divisions, in the land of Seir.

The Rulers of Edom

¹These were the kings who reigned in Edom before any king reigned in Israel.

²When Bela was king in Edom, his sister was named Basemath.

³When Bela died, his son Reuel from Basemath succeeded him as king.

⁴When Reuel died, his son Hadad from Basemath succeeded him as king.

⁵When Hadad died, his son Lael from Basemath succeeded him as king. His sister was named Meabel, and she bore him a son whose name was Aram.

⁶When Lael died, his son Hadad from Meabel succeeded him as king.

⁷When Hadad died, his son Hadad from Meabel succeeded him as king.

⁸When Hadad died, his son Hadad from Meabel succeeded him as king.

⁹When Hadad died, his son Hadad from Meabel succeeded him as king. His sister was named Meabel, and she bore him a son whose name was Aram.

¹⁰These were the chiefs descended from Esau, by name, according to their clans and regions: Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, ¹¹Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, ¹²Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, ¹³Magdiel and Iram. These were the chiefs of Edom, according to their settlements in the land they occupied.

Thus was Esau the father of the Edomites.

Joseph's Dreams

37 Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan.

²This is the account of Jacob.

Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.

³Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age, and he made a richly ornamented^a robe for him. ⁴When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

⁵Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. ⁶He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had. We were bundling sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it."

⁸His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

⁹Then he had another dream, and he told it to

^a16 Masoretic Text, Samaritan Pentateuch (see also Gen. 36:11 and 1 Chron. 1:36) does not have Korah. ^b22 Hebrew Homam, a variant of Homam (see 1 Chron. 1:39).

^c42b Hebrew Dishan, a variant of Dishon.

^d39 Many manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, Samaritan Pentateuch and Syriac (see also 1 Chron. 1:50) read "these were the Horite chiefs, according to their divisions, in the land of Seir."

^e43 The meaning of the Hebrew for richly ornamented is uncertain, also in verses 23 and 32.

he said, "I had another
son and moon and eleven

... actually came and bow down to the
ground before you." His brothers were jealous
of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

Joseph Sold by His Brothers

Now his brothers had gone to graze their flocks
near Dothan. When they saw him from a distance,
they said to each other, "Here comes that dreamer!"
They plotted to kill him and said to each other,
"Let's kill him and throw him into the cistern near
Dothan." So they did as they planned.

Very well, he replied.
Now he said to him, "Go and see if all is well with
your father and your brothers." So he went
and told him. Then he said to him, "The men
of Dothan are watching you."

When he saw that he was in danger, he fled
and went to Shechem. A man
found him and asked him, "What are you looking for?"

He replied, "I'm looking for my brothers. Can
you tell me where they are grazing their flocks?"

"They have moved on from here," the man
answered. "I heard them say, 'Let's go to Do-
than.'"

So Joseph went after his brothers and found
them near Dothan. But they saw him in the dis-
tance, and before he reached them, they plotted to
kill him.

"Here comes that dreamer!" they said to each
other. "Come now, let's kill him and throw him
into the cistern. We'll say that a ferocious
beast devoured him. Then we'll see what comes
of our dreams."

When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue
him from their hands. "Let's not take his life," he
said. "Don't shed any blood. Throw him into this
cistern near the desert, but don't lay a hand on
him." Reuben said this to rescue him from them
and take him back to his father.

When Joseph came to his brothers, they
stripped him of his robe, the richly ornamented
robe he was wearing, and they took him and
threw him into the cistern. Now the cistern was
empty; there was no water in it.

As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked
up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from
Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices,
balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to
take them down to Egypt.

Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain
if we kill our brother and cover up his blood?
Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not
lay our hands on him, after all, he is our brother,
our own flesh and blood." His brothers agreed.

So when the Midianite merchants came by, his
brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and
sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ish-
maelites, who took him to Egypt.

When Reuben returned to the cistern and saw

that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes.
He went back to his brothers and said, "The boy is
not here. I have let him go."

They put Joseph's robe on a dead donkey
and spread the robe on the floor. When they took
the robe back to their father, he said, "I
We could have examined it to see who stole
your son's robe."

Joseph's robe had been torn. He said to his robe,
"Some ferocious animal has devoured him." Joseph
has surely been torn to pieces.

When Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth
and wept for his son many days, all his sons
and daughters came to comfort him, but he
refused to be comforted. Now he said in
mourning, "I will go down to the grave to my son,
for my father wept for him."

Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in
Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officers, the
captain of the guard.

Judah and Tamar

At that time, Judah left his brothers and
went down to stay with a man of Adullam
named Hirah. There, Judah met the daughter of a
Canaanite man named Shuah. He married her and
lay with her; she became pregnant and gave birth
to a son, who was named Er. She then gave birth
to a son and named him Onan. She
gave birth to still another son and named him
Shelah. It was at Kezib that she gave birth to him.

Judah got a wife for Er, his firstborn, and her
name was Tamar. But Er, Judah's firstborn, was
wicked in the Lord's sight, so the Lord put him to
death.

Then Judah said to Onan, "Lie with your broth-
er's wife and fulfill your duty to her as a brother in
law to produce offspring for your brother." But
Onan knew that the offspring would not be his, so
whenever he lay with his brother's wife, he spied
his semen on the ground to keep from producing
offspring for his brother. What he did was
wicked in the Lord's sight, so he put him to death
also.

Judah then said to his daughter-in-law Tamar,
"Live as a widow in your father's house until my
son Shelah grows up. For he thought, 'He may
die too, just like his brothers.' So Tamar went to
live in her father's house."

After a long time Judah's wife, the daughter of

38:8 A Brother's Duty

Having children was so important in Old
Testament times that if a man died childless, his
brother was required to sleep with his widow in
order to produce a family for him. (The
regulations are found in Deuteronomy 25:5-10.)
Onan's sin was a deliberate refusal to treat his
brother's widow fairly by giving her children.
Family quarrels had split Jacob and Esau, and had
sent Jacob's son Joseph into slavery, now the next
generation was carrying on in the same way.

*28 That is, about 8 ounces (about 0.2 kilogram).
are also verse 28.) Masoretic Text Midianites.

*35 Hebrew Shew.

*36 Samaritan Pentateuch Septuagint Vulgate Masorah.

Shua, died. When Judah had recovered from his grief, he went up to Timnah, to the men who were shearing his sheep, and his friend Hirah the Adullamite went with him.

¹³When Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is on his way to Timnah to shear his sheep," ¹⁴she took off her widow's clothes, covered herself with a veil to disguise herself, and then sat down at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. For she saw that, though Shelah had now grown up, she had not been given to him as his wife.

¹⁵When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute, for she had covered her face. ¹⁶Not realizing that she was his daughter-in-law, he went over to her by the roadside and said, "Come now, let me sleep with you."

"And what will you give me to sleep with you?" she asked.

¹⁷"I'll send you a young goat from my flock," he said.

"Will you give me something as a pledge until you send it?" she asked.

¹⁸He said, "What pledge should I give you?"

"Your seal and its cord, and the staff in your

hand," she answered. So he gave them to her and slept with her, and she became pregnant by him. ¹⁹After she left, she took off her veil and put on her widow's clothes again.

²⁰Meanwhile Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite in order to get his pledge back from the woman, but he did not find her. ²¹He asked the men who lived there, "Where is the shrine prostitute who was beside the road at Enaim?"

"There hasn't been any shrine prostitute here," they said.

²²So he went back to Judah and said, "I didn't find her. Besides, the men who lived there said, 'There hasn't been any shrine prostitute here.'"

²³Then Judah said, "Let her keep what she has, or we will become a laughingstock. After all, I did send her this young goat, but you didn't find her."

²⁴About three months later Judah was told, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar is guilty of prostitution, and as a result she is now pregnant."

Judah said, "Bring her out and have her burned to death!"

²⁵As she was being brought out, she sent a message to her father-in-law, "I am pregnant by the

INSIGHT

Family Battles

Fighting with their father's favorite

"Here comes that dreamer!" they said to each other. "Come now, let's kill him." 37:19

Joseph's story is the last of the brotherly battles of Genesis. Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau all quarreled. Joseph set his 11 brothers against him by telling his dream of their bowing down to him. He was his father's favorite and perhaps flaunted it. So when his brothers got a chance, they paid him back. They sold him as a slave to traveling merchants, who took him to Egypt. Never expecting to see him again, they made up a story that he had been killed by wild animals.

God had other plans. In Egypt, he gave Joseph the interpretation to several dreams. It was a ticket to prominence. Egyptians of that day were fascinated by dreams: archaeologists have uncovered lengthy textbooks on dream interpretation. Joseph soon found himself at the top of Pharaoh's government.

But success was not enough. The Bible story goes on from there, for God wanted forgiveness within the family. A famine made Joseph's brothers move out of Palestine, they came to Egypt looking for food. Kneeling before Joseph—so Egyptian by now that they did not recognize him—they begged for the right to buy food.

A Strange Struggle

So began one of the strangest struggles of the Bible. Joseph could have made up with his brothers on the spot, welcoming them with open arms. Or he could have taken revenge, putting them to death. He did neither. He began a series of elaborate tests, demanding things from them, playing tricks on them, accusing them. For nearly two years he played these games. They brought confusion and fear to his brothers—and an admission of guilt.

Twenty years had not erased the brothers' memory of Joseph. The moment their troubles began, their guilt surfaced. They said to one another, "Surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we would

that when death came, she said, "And you asked me, 'What is your wish?' and I said, 'I want to be buried in Egypt.'"

Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die. But God will be with you and bring you out of Egypt and will bury you in Egypt. My bones will be buried with you. When you leave Egypt, take my bones up to the land of Canaan, and I will be buried there. And when you leave Egypt, take my bones up to the land of Canaan, and I will be buried there."

Joseph and Pharaoh: 45:1-26

39 Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die. But God will be with you and bring you out of Egypt and will bury you in Egypt. My bones will be buried with you. When you leave Egypt, take my bones up to the land of Canaan, and I will be buried there."

and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that he could give him success in everything he did, Joseph said to his master because of his affection, "Please let me live in charge of his household, and be over him in his own house, for he is my master. When the time he put him in charge of his household came, all that he owned he gave to Joseph. The blessing of the Lord was on everything Joseph had, both in the house and in the field. So he was left in charge of everything he had, and Joseph in charge. He did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate."

Now Joseph was well built and handsome, and after a while his master's wife had love for Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!"

But he refused. With me in charge, he told her, my master does not know himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin

THE BIBLE SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Joseph's story is a drama of tremendous emotional strain. Five times he is brought to tears, crying weeping so loudly that people in the next room can hear him.

Joseph's story is a drama of tremendous emotional strain. Five times he is brought to tears, crying weeping so loudly that people in the next room can hear him. Joseph's story is a drama of tremendous emotional strain. Five times he is brought to tears, crying weeping so loudly that people in the next room can hear him.

Joseph's Story

Joseph's story is a drama of tremendous emotional strain. Five times he is brought to tears, crying weeping so loudly that people in the next room can hear him. Joseph's story is a drama of tremendous emotional strain. Five times he is brought to tears, crying weeping so loudly that people in the next room can hear him.

Joseph's story is a drama of tremendous emotional strain. Five times he is brought to tears, crying weeping so loudly that people in the next room can hear him. Joseph's story is a drama of tremendous emotional strain. Five times he is brought to tears, crying weeping so loudly that people in the next room can hear him.

The Birth of a Nation

Joseph's story is a drama of tremendous emotional strain. Five times he is brought to tears, crying weeping so loudly that people in the next room can hear him. Joseph's story is a drama of tremendous emotional strain. Five times he is brought to tears, crying weeping so loudly that people in the next room can hear him.

Joseph's story is a drama of tremendous emotional strain. Five times he is brought to tears, crying weeping so loudly that people in the next room can hear him. Joseph's story is a drama of tremendous emotional strain. Five times he is brought to tears, crying weeping so loudly that people in the next room can hear him.

Joseph's story is a drama of tremendous emotional strain. Five times he is brought to tears, crying weeping so loudly that people in the next room can hear him. Joseph's story is a drama of tremendous emotional strain. Five times he is brought to tears, crying weeping so loudly that people in the next room can hear him.

against God?" ¹⁰And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

¹¹One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. ¹²She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.

¹³When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, ¹⁴she called her household servants. "Look," she said to them, "this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. ¹⁵When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

¹⁶She kept his cloak beside her until his master came home. ¹⁷Then she told him this story: "That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. ¹⁸But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

¹⁹When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, "This is how your slave treated me," he burned with anger. ²⁰Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined.

But while Joseph was there in the prison, ²¹the LORD was with him, he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. ²²So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. ²³The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

The Cupbearer and the Baker

40 Some time later, the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their master, the king of Egypt. ²Pharaoh was angry with his two officials, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, ³and put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the same prison where Joseph was confined. ⁴The captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph, and he attended them.

After they had been in custody for some time, ⁵each of the two men—the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were being held in prison—had a dream the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own.

⁶When Joseph came to them the next morning, he saw that they were dejected. ⁷So he asked Pharaoh's officials who were in custody with him in his master's house, "Why are your faces so sad today?"

"We both had dreams," they answered, "but there is no one to interpret them."

Then Joseph said to them, "Do not! Interpretations belong to God! Tell me your dreams."

"So the chief cupbearer told Joseph his dream. He said to him, 'In my dream I saw a vine in front of me, ¹⁰and on the vine were three branches. As soon as it budded, it blossomed, and its clusters ripened into grapes. ¹¹Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup and put the cup in his hand.'"

¹²"This is what it means," Joseph said to him. "The three branches are three days. ¹³Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your position, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand, just as you used to do when you were his cupbearer. ¹⁴But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness, mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison. ¹⁵For I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon."

¹⁶When the chief baker saw that Joseph had given a favorable interpretation, he said to Joseph, "I too had a dream. On my head were three baskets of bread. ¹⁷In the top basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head."

¹⁸"This is what it means," Joseph said. "The three baskets are three days. ¹⁹Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head and hang you on a tree. ²⁰And the birds will eat away your flesh."

²⁰Now the third day was Pharaoh's birthday, and he gave a feast for all his officials. He lifted up the heads of the chief cupbearer and the chief baker in the presence of his officials: ²¹He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, so that he once again put the cup into Pharaoh's hand, ²²but he hanged the chief baker, just as Joseph had said to them in his interpretation.

²³The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.

Pharaoh's Dreams

41 When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream: He was standing by the Nile, ²when out of the river there came up seven cows, sleek and fat, and they grazed among the reeds. ³After them, seven other cows, ugly and gaunt, came up out of the Nile and stood beside those on the riverbank. ⁴And the cows that were ugly and gaunt ate up the seven sleek, fat cows. Then Pharaoh woke up.

⁵He fell asleep again and had a second dream: Seven heads of grain, healthy and good, were growing on a single stalk. ⁶After them, seven other heads of grain sprouted—thin and scorched by the east wind. ⁷The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven healthy, full heads. Then Pharaoh woke up; it had been a dream.

⁸In the morning his mind was troubled, so he

40:2 Important Officials

When Joseph was thrown into prison on a false charge, his future seemed to vanish. Yet in prison he came into contact with men who would eventually help raise him to the highest post in the nation. The "chief baker" and "chief cupbearer" were important officials in Pharaoh's court.

¹⁶ Or three wicker baskets

¹⁹ Or and impale you on a pole

²² Or impaled

sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could interpret them for him.

⁹Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, "Today I am reminded of my shortcomings. ¹⁰Pharaoh was once angry with his servants, and he imprisoned me and the chief baker in the house of the captain of the guard. ¹¹Each of us had a dream the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own. ¹²Now a young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard. We told him our dreams, and he interpreted them for us, giving each man the interpretation of his dream. ¹³And things turned out exactly as he interpreted them to us: I was restored to my position, and the other man was hanged."^{*}

¹⁴So Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was quickly brought from the dungeon. When he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came before Pharaoh.

¹⁵Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it."

¹⁶"I cannot do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."

¹⁷Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "In my dream I was standing on the bank of the Nile, ¹⁸when out of the river there came up seven cows, fat and sleek, and they grazed among the reeds. ¹⁹After them, seven other cows came up—scrawny and very ugly and lean. I had never seen such ugly cows in all the land of Egypt. ²⁰The lean, ugly cows ate up the seven fat cows that came up first. ²¹But even after they ate them, no one could tell that they had done so; they looked just as ugly as before. Then I woke up.

²²"In my dreams I also saw seven heads of grain, full and good, growing on a single stalk. ²³After them, seven other heads sprouted—withered and thin and scorched by the east wind. ²⁴The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven good heads. I told this to the magicians, but none could explain it to me."

²⁵Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh are one and the same. God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁶The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads of grain are seven years; it is one and the same dream. ²⁷The seven lean, ugly cows that came up afterward are seven years, and so are the seven worthless heads of grain scorched by the east wind: They are seven years of famine.

²⁸"It is just as I said to Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁹Seven years of great abundance are coming throughout the land of Egypt, ³⁰but seven years of famine will follow them. Then all the abundance in Egypt will be forgotten, and the famine will ravage the land. ³¹The abundance in the land will not be remembered, because the famine that follows it will be so severe. ³²The reason the dream was given to Phar-

aah in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by God, and God will do it soon.

³³And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt. ³⁴Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. ³⁵They should collect all the food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh, to be kept in the cities for food. ³⁶This food should be held in reserve for the country, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine."

³⁷The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials. ³⁸So Pharaoh asked them, "Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?"

³⁹Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. ⁴⁰You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you."

Joseph in Charge of Egypt

⁴¹So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt." ⁴²Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph's finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. ⁴³He had him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command,^c and men shouted before him, "Make way!" Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt.

⁴⁴Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, but without your word no one will lift hand or foot in all Egypt." ⁴⁵Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-Paneah and gave him Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On,^e to be his wife. And Joseph went throughout the land of Egypt.

⁴⁶Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from Pharaoh's presence and traveled throughout Egypt. ⁴⁷During the seven years of abundance the land produced plentifully. ⁴⁸Joseph collected all the food produced in those seven years of abundance in Egypt and stored it in the cities. In each city he put the food grown in the fields surrounding it. ⁴⁹Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea; it was

41:45 The Egyptianization of Joseph

Proud Egyptians did not care for Hebrews. In order that Joseph's ethnic past be erased as quickly as possible, Pharaoh gave Joseph an Egyptian name and married him into a prominent Egyptian family. Joseph gave his own sons Hebrew names, however, a practice that suggests he maintained his own identity.

^{*13} Or *impaired*

^{b38} Or *of the gods*

^{c43} Or *in the chariot of his second-in-command, or in his second chariot*

^{d43} Or *Seso down*

^{e45} That is, Heliopolis, also in verse 50

so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure.

³⁰Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of Poti- phera, priest of On. ³¹Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh⁵¹ and said, "It is because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's house- hold." ³²The second son he named Ephraim⁵² and said, "It is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering."

³³The seven years of abundance in Egypt came to an end, ³⁴and the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had said. There was famine in all the other lands, but in the whole land of Egypt there was food. ³⁵When all Egypt began to feel the fam- ine, the people cried to Pharaoh for food. Then Pharaoh told all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph and do what he tells you."

³⁶When the famine had spread over the whole country, Joseph opened the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout Egypt. ³⁷And all the countries came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the fam- ine was severe in all the world.

Joseph's Brothers Go to Egypt

42 When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why do you just keep looking at each other?" ²He continued, "I have heard that there is grain in Egypt. Go down there and buy some for us, so that we may live and not die."

³Then ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain from Egypt. ⁴But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with the others, be- cause he was afraid that harm might come to him. ⁵So Israel's sons were among those who went to buy grain, for the famine was in the land of Ca- naan also.

⁶Now Joseph was the governor of the land, the one who sold grain to all its people. So when Jo- seph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground. ⁷As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he pre- tended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them. "Where do you come from?" he asked.

"From the land of Canaan," they replied, "to buy food."

⁸Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him. ⁹Then he remembered his dreams about them and said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see where our land is unprotected."

¹⁰"No, my lord," they answered. "Your ser- vants have come to buy food. ¹¹We are all the sons of one man. Your servants are honest men, not spies."

¹²"No!" he said to them. "You have come to see where our land is unprotected."

¹³But they replied, "Your servants were twelve brothers, the sons of one man, who lives in the land of Canaan. The youngest is now with our father, and one is no more."

¹⁴Joseph said to them, "It is just as I told you. You are spies! ¹⁵And this is how you will be tested: As surely as Pharaoh lives, you will not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. ¹⁶Send one of your number to get your brother; the rest of you will be kept in prison, so that your words may be tested to see if you are telling the truth. If you are not, then as surely as Pharaoh lives, you are spies!" ¹⁷And he put them all in custody for three days.

¹⁸On the third day, Joseph said to them, "Do this and you will live, for I fear God: ¹⁹If you are honest men, let one of your brothers stay here in prison, while the rest of you go and take grain back for your starving households. ²⁰But you must bring your youngest brother to me, so that your words may be verified and that you may not die." This they proceeded to do.

²¹They said to one another, "Surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we would not listen; that's why this dis- tress has come upon us."

²²Reuben replied, "Didn't I tell you not to sin against the boy? But you wouldn't listen! Now we must give an accounting for his blood." ²³They did not realize that Joseph could understand them, since he was using an interpreter.

²⁴He turned away from them and began to weep, but then turned back and spoke to them again. He had Simeon taken from them and bound before their eyes.

²⁵Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, to put each man's silver back in his sack, and to give them provisions for their journey. After this was done for them, ²⁶they loaded their grain on their donkeys and left.

²⁷At the place where they stopped for the night one of them opened his sack to get feed for his donkey, and he saw his silver in the mouth of his sack. ²⁸"My silver has been returned," he said to his brothers. "Here it is in my sack."

Their hearts sank and they turned to each other trembling and said, "What is this that God has done to us?"

²⁹When they came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had hap- pened to them. They said, ³⁰"The man who is lord over the land spoke harshly to us and treated us as though we were spying on the land. ³¹But we said to him, 'We are honest men; we are not spies. ³²We were twelve brothers, sons of one father. One is no more, and the youngest is now with our father in Canaan.'

41:56 An Unusual Famine

Famine is common in the Middle East. There are records of two Egyptian famines so severe that starving people killed and ate each other. But it was rare for famine to affect both Egypt and Palestine at the same time, for they depended on totally different sources of water—Egypt on the Nile and Palestine on local rainfall.

⁵¹ Manasseh sounds like and may be derived from the Hebrew for forget.

⁵² Ephraim sounds like the Hebrew for twice fruitful.

Then the man who was over the land said to them, "Why do you ask whether you are brothers? Your brothers here with you are your starting households. But your youngest brother to me so I can know if you are honest men. Send your brother back to you, and you will be able to return back to you, and you will be able to return back to you."

When they were emptying their sacks, there in one sack was his pouch of silver! When they saw the silver pouches, they were frightened. Their father Jacob said to them, "I have deprived me of my children. Joseph is missing and I am alone and now you want to leave Benjamin. Everything is against me!"

Then Simeon said to his father, "You may put me in prison instead. I do not bring him back. I will be sure to take care of him, and I will bring him back."

Then Jacob said, "My son will not go down there because his brother is dead and he is the only one left. If something happens to him on the journey you are taking, you will bring my gray head down to the grave in sorrow."

The Second Journey to Egypt

43 Now the famine was still severe in the land. When they had eaten all the grain they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them, "Go back and buy us a little more food."

Simeon said to him, "The man warned us when we came here, 'You will not see my face again unless your brother is with you.' If you will send our brother along with us, we will go down and buy food for you. But if you will not send him, we will not go down, because the man said to us, 'You will not see my face again unless your brother is with you.'"

Then Jacob asked, "Why did you bring this trouble upon me by telling the man you had another brother?"

They replied, "The man questioned us closely about ourselves and our family. 'Is your father still living?' he asked us. 'Do you have another brother?'" Simeon answered his questions. How were we to know he would say, 'Bring your brother along with you?'

Then Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the boy along with me and we will go at once, so that we and our children may live and not die. I will guarantee his safety; you can hold me personally responsible for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him here before you, I will bear the blame before you all my life. ¹⁰As it is, if we had not delayed, we could have gone and returned twice."

Then their father Israel said to them, "If it must be, then do this. Put some of the best produce of the land in your bags and take them down to the man as a gift—a little balm and a little honey, some spices and myrrh, some pistachio nuts and almonds. ¹¹Take double the amount of silver with you, for you must return the silver that was put back into the mouths of your sacks. Perhaps it was

a mistake. ¹²Take your brother also and go back to the man at once. ¹⁴And may God Almighty grant you mercy before the man so that he will let your other brother and Benjamin come back with you. As for me, if I am bereaved, I am bereaved."

¹⁵So the men took the gifts and double the amount of silver, and Benjamin also. They hurried down to Egypt and presented themselves to Joseph. ¹⁶When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Take these men to my house, slaughter an animal and prepare dinner; they are to eat with me at noon."

The man did as Joseph told him and took the men to Joseph's house. ¹⁸Now the men were frightened when they were taken to his house. They thought, "We were brought here because of the silver that was put back into our sacks the first time. He wants to attack us and overpower us and seize us as slaves and take our donkeys."

¹⁹So they went up to Joseph's steward and spoke to him at the entrance to the house. ²⁰"Please, sir," they said, "we came down here the first time to buy food. ²¹But at the place where we stopped for the night we opened our sacks and each of us found his silver—the exact weight—in the mouth of his sack. So we have brought it back with us. ²²We have also brought additional silver with us to buy food. We don't know who put our silver in our sacks."

²³"It's all right," he said. "Don't be afraid. Your God, the God of your father, has given you treasure in your sacks; I received your silver." Then he brought Simeon out to them.

²⁴The steward took the men into Joseph's house, gave them water to wash their feet and provided fodder for their donkeys. ²⁵They prepared their gifts for Joseph's arrival at noon, because they had heard that they were to eat there.

²⁶When Joseph came home, they presented to him the gifts they had brought into the house, and they bowed down before him to the ground. ²⁷He asked them how they were, and then he said, "How is your aged father you told me about? Is he still living?"

²⁸They replied, "Your servant our father is still alive and well." And they bowed low to pay him honor.

²⁹As he looked about and saw his brother Benjamin, his own mother's son, he asked, "Is this your youngest brother, the one you told me about?" And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son." ³⁰Deeply moved at the sight of his brother, Joseph

43:11 A Gift for the Egyptian Ruler

What kind of gift can you send to a man who has everything? Egypt was among the richest and most sophisticated countries in the world, and Israel (Jacob), a desert nomad. He wisely chose simple gifts of local produce—things that might not be available in Egypt.

hurried out and looked for a place to weep. He went into his private room and wept there.

³¹After he had washed his face, he came out and, controlling himself, said, "Serve the food."

³²They served him by himself, the brothers by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because Egyptians could not eat with Hebrews, for that is detestable to Egyptians.

³³The men had been seated before him in the order of their ages, from the firstborn to the youngest; and they looked at each other in astonishment.

³⁴When portions were served to them from Joseph's table, Benjamin's portion was five times as much as anyone else's. So they feasted and drank freely with him.

A Silver Cup in a Sack

44 Now Joseph gave these instructions to the steward of his house: "Fill the men's sacks with as much food as they can carry, and put each man's silver in the mouth of his sack. ²Then put my cup, the silver one, in the mouth of the youngest one's sack, along with the silver for his grain." And he did as Joseph said.

³As morning dawned, the men were sent on their way with their donkeys. ⁴They had not gone far from the city when Joseph said to his steward, "Go after those men at once, and when you catch up with them, say to them, 'Why have you repaid good with evil? ⁵Isn't this the cup my master drinks from and also uses for divination? This is a wicked thing you have done.'"

⁶When he caught up with them, he repeated these words to them. ⁷But they said to him, "Why does my lord say such things? Far be it from your servants to do anything like that! ⁸We even brought back to you from the land of Canaan the silver we found inside the mouths of our sacks. So why would we steal silver or gold from your master's house? ⁹If any of your servants is found to have it, he will die; and the rest of us will become my lord's slaves."

"Very well, then," he said, "let it be as you say. Whoever is found to have it will become my slave; the rest of you will be free from blame."

Each of them quickly lowered his sack to the ground and opened it. ¹²Then the steward proceeded to search, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest. And the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. ¹³At this, they tore their clothes. Then they all loaded their donkeys and returned to the city.

Joseph was still in the house when Judah and his brothers came in, and they threw themselves to the ground before him. ¹⁵Joseph said to them,

"What is this you have done? Don't you know that a man like me can find things out by divination?"

¹⁶"What can we say to my lord?" Judah replied. "What can we say? How can we prove our innocence? God has uncovered your servants' guilt. We are now my lord's slaves—we ourselves and the one who was found to have the cup."

¹⁷But Joseph said, "Far be it from me to do such a thing! Only the man who was found to have the cup will become my slave. The rest of you, go back to your father in peace."

¹⁸Then Judah went up to him and said, "Please, my lord, let your servant speak a word to my lord. Do not be angry with your servant, though you are equal to Pharaoh himself. ¹⁹My lord asked his servants, 'Do you have a father or a brother?' ²⁰And we answered, 'We have an aged father, and there is a young son born to him in his old age. His brother is dead, and he is the only one of his mother's sons left, and his father loves him.'

²¹"Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me so I can see him for myself.' ²²And we said to my lord, 'The boy cannot leave his father, if he leaves him, his father will die.' ²³But you told your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will not see my face again.' ²⁴When we went back to your servant my father, we told him what my lord had said.

²⁵"Then our father said, 'Go back and buy a little more food.' ²⁶But we said, 'We cannot go down. Only if our youngest brother is with us will we go. We cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.'

²⁷"Your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons. ²⁸One of them went away from me, and I said, 'He has surely been torn to pieces.' And I have not seen him since. ²⁹If you take this one from me too and harm comes to him, you will bring my gray head down to the grave in misery.'

³⁰"So now, if the boy is not with us when I go back to your servant my father and if my father, whose life is closely bound up with the boy's life, ³¹sees that the boy isn't there, he will die. Your servants will bring the gray head of our father down to the grave in sorrow. ³²Your servant guaranteed the boy's safety to my father. I said, 'If I do not bring him back to you, I will bear the blame before you, my father, all my life!'

³³"Now then, please let your servant remain here as my lord's slave in place of the boy, and let the boy return with his brothers. ³⁴How can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? No! Do not let me see the misery that would come upon my father."

Joseph Makes Himself Known

45 Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. ²And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it.

43:32 Prejudice

Despite his high rank, Joseph still felt Egyptian prejudice: they would not eat at the same table with a Hebrew. Chapter 46 (verses 33-34) adds that Egyptians detested shepherds—and Hebrews herded sheep.

Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me. When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will not be plowing and reaping. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance."

"So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. Now hurry back to my father and say to him, 'This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me, don't delay. You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me—you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have. I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute.'

"You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that it is really I who am speaking to you. Tell my father about all the honor accorded me in Egypt and about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here quickly."

Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.

When the news reached Pharaoh's palace that Joseph's brothers had come, Pharaoh and all his officials were pleased. Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and return to the land of Canaan, and bring your father and your families back to me. I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you can enjoy the fat of the land.'

"You are also directed to tell them, 'Do this: Take some carts from Egypt for your children and your wives, and get your father and come. Never mind about your belongings, because the best of all Egypt will be yours.'"

So the sons of Israel did this. Joseph gave them

carts, as Pharaoh had commanded, and he also gave them provisions for their journey. To each of them he gave new clothing, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels^a of silver and five sets of clothes. And this is what he sent to his father: ten donkeys loaded with the things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and other provisions for his journey. Then he sent his brothers away, and as they were leaving he said to them, "Don't quarrel on the way!"

So they went up out of Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. They told him, "Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is ruler of all Egypt." Jacob was stunned; he did not believe them. But when they told him everything Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry him back, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. And Israel said, "I'm convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

Jacob Goes to Egypt

46 So Israel set out with all that was his, and when he reached Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

And God spoke to Israel in a vision at night and said, "Jacob! Jacob!"

"Here I am," he replied.

"I am God, the God of your father," he said. "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph's own hand will close your eyes."

Then Jacob left Beersheba, and Israel's sons took their father Jacob and their children and their wives in the carts that Pharaoh had sent to transport him. They also took with them their livestock and the possessions they had acquired in Canaan, and Jacob and all his offspring went to Egypt. He took with him to Egypt his sons and grandsons and his daughters and granddaughters—all his offspring.

These are the names of the sons of Israel (Jacob and his descendants) who went to Egypt:

Reuben the firstborn of Jacob.

The sons of Reuben:

Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron and Carmi.

The sons of Simeon:

Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman.

The sons of Levi:

Gershon, Kohath and Merari.

The sons of Judah:

Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez and Zerah (but Er and Onan had died in the land of Canaan).

The sons of Perez:

Hezron and Hamul.

The sons of Issachar:

Tola, Puah,^c Jashub^d and Shimron.

The sons of Zebulun:

45:2 Weeping and Terror

This is one of the Bible's most intensely emotional scenes: it shows Joseph weeping so loudly people heard it in the next room, and Joseph's brothers speechless with terror and guilt. Though the moment ended with embraces and kissing (14,15), years later the brothers were still afraid of revenge (50:15).

^a Or save you as a great band of survivors

Syriac (see also 1 Chron. 7:1); Masoretic Text *Puach*

26 24 and 1 Chron. 7:1); Masoretic Text *lob*

^b That is, about 7 1/2 pounds (about 3.5 kilograms)

^c13 Samaritan Pentateuch and some Septuagint manuscripts (see also Num.

^d13 Samaritan Pentateuch and

Sered, Hon and Jaheel

¹⁵These were the sons Leah bore to Jacob in Padan Aram^a besides his daughter Dinah. These sons and daughters of his were thirty-three in all

¹⁶The sons of Gad

Zephon,^b Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi and Areli

¹⁷The sons of Asher

Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi and Beniah.

Their sister was Serah.

The sons of Beniah.

Heber and Malkiel.

¹⁸These were the children born to Jacob by Zilpah whom Laban had given to his daughter Leah sixteen in all

¹⁹The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel

Joseph and Benjamin ²⁰In Egypt, Manasseh and Ephraim were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On

²¹The sons of Benjamin

Bela, Beker, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim and Ard.

²²These were the sons of Rachel who were born to Jacob—fourteen in all

²³The son of Dan.

Hushim

²⁴The sons of Naphtali

Jahziel, Guni, Jezer and Shillem.

²⁵These were the sons born to Jacob by Bilhah, whom Laban had given to his daughter Rachel—seven in all.

²⁶All those who went to Egypt with Jacob—those who were his direct descendants, not counting his sons' wives—numbered sixty-six persons.

²⁷With the two sons^d who had been born to Joseph in Egypt, the members of Jacob's family, which went to Egypt, were seventy^e in all

²⁸Now Jacob sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph to get directions to Goshen. When they arrived in the region of Goshen, ²⁹Joseph had his chariot made ready and went to Goshen to meet his father Israel. As soon as Joseph appeared before him, he threw his arms around his father^f and wept for a long time

³⁰Israel said to Joseph, "Now I am ready to die, since I have seen for myself that you are still alive."

³¹Then Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and speak to Pharaoh and will say to him, 'My brothers and my father's household, who were living in the land of Canaan, have come to me. ³²The men are shepherds, they tend livestock, and they have brought along their flocks and herds and everything they own.' ³³When Pharaoh calls you in and asks, 'What is your occupation?' ³⁴you should answer, 'Your servants have tended livestock from our boyhood on, just as our fathers did.' Then you will

be allowed to settle in the region of Goshen, for all shepherds are detestable to the Egyptians."

⁴⁷Joseph went and told Pharaoh, "My father and brothers, with their flocks and herds and everything they own, have come from the land of Canaan and are now in Goshen." ²He chose five of his brothers and presented them before Pharaoh.

³Pharaoh asked the brothers, "What is your occupation?"

"Your servants are shepherds," they replied to Pharaoh, "just as our fathers were." ⁴They also said to him, "We have come to live here awhile, because the famine is severe in Canaan and your servants' flocks have no pasture. So now, please let your servants settle in Goshen."

⁵Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you, and the land of Egypt is before you, settle your father and your brothers in the best part of the land. Let them live in Goshen. And if you know of any among them with special ability, put them in charge of my own livestock."

⁷Then Joseph brought his father Jacob in and presented him before Pharaoh. After Jacob blessed Pharaoh, ⁸Pharaoh asked him, "How old are you?"

⁹And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty. My years have been few and difficult, and they do not equal the years of the pilgrimage of my fathers." ¹⁰Then Jacob blessed^h Pharaoh and went out from his presence.

¹¹So Joseph settled his father and his brothers in Egypt and gave them property in the best part of the land, the district of Rameses, as Pharaoh directed. ¹²Joseph also provided his father and his brothers and all his father's household with food, according to the number of their children.

Joseph and the Famine

¹³There was no food, however, in the whole region because the famine was severe; both Egypt and Canaan wasted away because of the famine.

¹⁴Joseph collected all the money that was to be found in Egypt and Canaan in payment for the grain they were buying, and he brought it to Pharaoh's palace. ¹⁵When the money of the people of Egypt and Canaan was gone, all Egypt came to Joseph and said, "Give us food. Why should we die before your eyes? Our money is used up."

¹⁶"Then bring your livestock," said Joseph. "I will sell you food in exchange for your livestock, since your money is gone." ¹⁷So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and he gave them food in exchange for their horses, their sheep and goats, their cattle and donkeys. And he brought them through that year with food in exchange for all their livestock.

¹⁸When that year was over, they came to him the following year and said, "We cannot hide from our lord the fact that since our money is gone and our livestock belongs to you, there is nothing left for

^a15 That is, Northwest Mesopotamia

^b16 Samaritan Pentateuch and Septuagint (see also Num. 26:15) Masoretic Text Ziphion

^c20 That is, Heliopais

^d27 Hebrew Septuagint the nine children

^e27 Hebrew (see also Exodus 1:5 and footnote), Septuagint

(see also Acts 7:14), seventy-five

^f29 Hebrew around him

^g27 Or greeted

^h10 Or said farewell to

our lord except our bodies and our land. ¹⁹Why should we perish before your eyes—we and our land as well? Buy us and our land in exchange for food, and we with our land will be in bondage to Pharaoh. Give us seed so that we may live and not die, and that the land may not become desolate."

²⁰So Joseph bought all the land in Egypt for Pharaoh. The Egyptians, one and all, sold their fields, because the famine was too severe for them. The land became Pharaoh's, ²¹and Joseph reduced the people to servitude,^a from one end of Egypt to the other. ²²However, he did not buy the land of the priests, because they received a regular allotment from Pharaoh and had food enough from the allotment Pharaoh gave them. That is why they did not sell their land.

²³Joseph said to the people, "Now that I have bought you and your land today for Pharaoh, here is seed for you so you can plant the ground. ²⁴But when the crop comes in, give a fifth of it to Pharaoh. The other four-fifths you may keep as seed for the fields and as food for yourselves and your households and your children."

²⁵"You have saved our lives," they said. "May we find favor in the eyes of our lord; we will be in bondage to Pharaoh."

²⁶So Joseph established it as a law concerning land in Egypt—still in force today—that a fifth of the produce belongs to Pharaoh. It was only the land of the priests that did not become Pharaoh's.

²⁷Now the Israelites settled in Egypt in the region of Goshen. They acquired property there and were fruitful and increased greatly in number.

²⁸Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years, and the years of his life were a hundred and forty-seven.

²⁹When the time drew near for Israel to die, he called for his son Joseph and said to him, "If I have found favor in your eyes, put your hand under my thigh and promise that you will show me kindness and faithfulness. Do not bury me in Egypt, ³⁰but when I rest with my fathers, carry me out of Egypt and bury me where they are buried."

"I will do as you say," he said.

³¹"Swear to me," he said. Then Joseph swore to him, and Israel worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.^b

Manasseh and Ephraim

48 Some time later Joseph was told, "Your father is ill." So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim along with him. ²When Jacob was told, "Your son Joseph has come to you," Israel rallied his strength and sat up on the bed.

³Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty^c appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and there he blessed me ⁴and said to me, 'I am going to make you fruitful and will increase your numbers. I will make you a community of peoples, and I will give this land as an everlasting possession to your descendants after you.'

⁵"Now then, your two sons born to you in Egypt before I came to you here will be reckoned as mine; Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are mine. ⁶Any children born to

you after them will be yours; in the territory they inherit they will be reckoned under the names of their brothers. ⁷As I was returning from Paddan,^d to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan while we were still on the way, a little distance from Ephrath. So I buried her there beside the road to Ephrath" (that is, Bethlehem).

⁸When Israel saw the sons of Joseph, he asked, "Who are these?"

⁹"They are the sons God has given me here," Joseph said to his father.

Then Israel said, "Bring them to me so I may bless them."

¹⁰Now Israel's eyes were failing because of old age, and he could hardly see. So Joseph brought his sons close to him, and his father kissed them and embraced them.

¹¹Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face again, and now God has allowed me to see your children too."

¹²Then Joseph removed them from Israel's knees and bowed down with his face to the ground. ¹³And Joseph took both of them, Ephraim on his right toward Israel's left hand and Manasseh on his left toward Israel's right hand, and brought them close to him. ¹⁴But Israel reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim's head, though he was the younger, and crossing his arms, he put his left hand on Manasseh's head, even though Manasseh was the firstborn.

¹⁵Then he blessed Joseph and said,

"May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,
the God who has been my shepherd
all my life to this day,

¹⁶the Angel who has delivered me from all harm
—may he bless these boys.

May they be called by my name
and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac,

and may they increase greatly
upon the earth."

¹⁷When Joseph saw his father placing his right hand on Ephraim's head he was displeased; so he took hold of his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. ¹⁸Joseph said

48:14 The Younger Brother—Again

Jacob gave his firstborn blessings to the younger of Joseph's boys, just as had been done for Isaac over Ishmael, for Jacob over Esau, and for Joseph over Reuben. In adopting both Manasseh and Ephraim as his own sons, Jacob was also giving Joseph's family a double share in the inheritance—these two grandsons would each receive a full share along with Jacob's other 11 sons. The "12 tribes" of Israel were the offspring of Jacob's sons; substituting Manasseh and Ephraim for Joseph made a total of 13.

^a21 Samaritan Pentateuch and Septuagint (see also Vulgate), Masoretic Text and he moved the people into the cities down at the head of his bed ^b3 Hebrew E.I-Shuddai ^c7 That is, Northwest Mesopotamia

^d31 Or Israel bowed

to him. "No, my father, this one is the firstborn, put your right hand on his head."

¹⁹But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He too will become a people, and he too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations." ²⁰He blessed them that day and said,

In your name will Israel pronounce this blessing.

May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.

So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

²¹Then Israel said to Joseph, "I am about to die, but God will be with you^a and take you^b back to the land of your^c fathers. ²²And to you, as one who is over your brothers, I gave the ridge of land I took from the Amorites with my sword and my bow."

Jacob Blesses His Sons

49 Then Jacob called for his sons and said "Gather around so I can tell you what will happen to you in days to come.

²"Assemble and listen, sons of Jacob; listen to your father Israel.

³"Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, the first sign of my strength, excelling in honor, excelling in power.

⁴Turbulent as the waters, you will no longer excel,

for you went up onto your father's bed, onto my couch and defiled it.

⁵"Simeon and Levi are brothers—their swords^d are weapons of violence.

⁶Let me not enter their council, let me not join their assembly, for they have killed men in their anger and hamstringed oxen as they pleased.

⁷Cursed be their anger, so fierce, and their fury, so cruel!

I will scatter them in Jacob and disperse them in Israel.

⁸"Judah,^e your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies,

your father's sons will bow down to you.

⁹You are a lion's cub, O Judah; you return from the prey, my son.

Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness—who dares to rouse him?

¹⁰The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs^f and the obedience of the nations is his.

¹¹He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch;

he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes. ¹²His eyes will be darker than wine, his teeth whiter than milk.

¹³Zebulun will live by the seashore and become a haven for ships; his border will extend toward Sidon.

¹⁴Issachar is a ravening^g donkey lying down between two saddlebags.

¹⁵When he sees how good is his resting place and how pleasant is his land, he will bend his shoulder to the burden and submit to forced labor.

¹⁶Dan^h will provide justice for his people as one of the tribes of Israel.

¹⁷Dan will be a serpent by the roadside, a viper along the path, that bites the horse's heels so that its rider tumbles backward.

¹⁸"I look for your deliverance, O Lord.

¹⁹"Gadⁱ will be attacked by a band of raiders, but he will attack them at their heels.

²⁰"Asher's food will be rich, he will provide delicacies fit for a king.

²¹"Naphtali is a doe set free that bears beautiful fawns.^j

²²"Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine near a spring, whose branches climb over a wall.^k

²³With bitterness archers attacked him; they shot at him with hostility.

²⁴But his bow remained steady, his strong arms stayed^l limber, because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob,

because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, ²⁵because of your father's God, who helps you, because of the Almighty,^o who blesses you with blessings of the heavens above, blessings of the deep that lies below, blessings of the breast and womb.

²⁶Your father's blessings are greater than the blessings of the ancient mountains, than^p the bounty of the age-old hills.

Let all these rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among^q his brothers.

²⁷"Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; in the morning he devours the prey, in the evening he divides the plunder."

²⁸All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them, giving each the blessing appropriate to him.

^{a20} The Hebrew is singular

portion ⁴⁵ The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain

for praise ¹⁰ Or until Shiloh comes, or until he comes to whom tribute belongs

milk ¹⁴ Or strong ¹⁴ Or campfires

raiders ²¹ Or free he utters beautiful words

^{23,24} Or archers will attack . . . will shoot . . . will remain . . . will stay

²⁶ Or the one separated from

²² Or And to you I give one portion more than to your brothers—the

¹⁸ Judah sounds like and may be derived from the Hebrew

¹² Or will be dull from wine; his teeth white from

¹⁹ Gad can mean attack and band of

a wild colt near a spring a wild donkey on a terraced hill

²⁵ Hebrew Shaddai

²⁶ Or of my progenitors, I as great as

The Death of Jacob

¹²Then he gave them these instructions: "I am about to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite. ¹³The cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre in Canaan, which Abraham bought as a burial place from Ephron the Hittite, along with the field. ¹⁴There Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried, and there I buried Leah. ¹⁵The field and the cave in it were bought from the Hittites."

¹⁶When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his people.

50 Joseph threw himself upon his father and wept over him and kissed him. ²Then Joseph directed the physicians in his service to embalm his father Israel. So the physicians embalmed him, taking a full forty days, for that was the time required for embalming. And the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.

³When the days of mourning had passed, Joseph said to Pharaoh's court, "If I have found favor in your eyes, speak to Pharaoh for me. Tell him, 'My father made me swear an oath and said, "I am about to die; bury me in the tomb I dug for myself in the land of Canaan." Now let me go up and bury my father, then I will return.'"

⁴Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear to do."

⁵So Joseph went up to bury his father. All Pharaoh's officials accompanied him—the dignitaries of his court and all the dignitaries of Egypt—⁶besides all the members of Joseph's household and his brothers and those belonging to his father's household. Only their children and their flocks and herds were left in Goshen. ⁷Chariots and horsemen^a also went up with him. It was a very large company.

⁸When they reached the threshing floor of Atad, near the Jordan, they lamented loudly and bitterly; and there Joseph observed a seven-day period of mourning for his father. ⁹When the Ca-

naanites who lived there saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "The Egyptians are holding a solemn ceremony of mourning." That is why that place near the Jordan is called Abel Mizraim^c.

¹⁰So Jacob's sons did as he had commanded them. ¹¹They carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre, which Abraham had bought as a burial place from Ephron the Hittite, along with the field. ¹²After burying his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, together with his brothers and all the others who had gone with him to bury his father.

Joseph Reassures His Brothers

¹³When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?" ¹⁴So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died: ¹⁵'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father." When their message came to him, Joseph wept.

¹⁶His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said.

¹⁷But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? ¹⁸You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. ¹⁹So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

The Death of Joseph

²⁰Joseph stayed in Egypt, along with all his father's family. He lived a hundred and ten years ²¹and saw the third generation of Ephraim's children. Also the children of Makir son of Manasseh were placed at birth on Joseph's knees.^d

²²Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." ²³And Joseph made the sons of Israel swear an oath and said, "God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place."

²⁴So Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. And after they embalmed him, he was placed in a coffin in Egypt.

50:3 An Egyptian Funeral

Joseph's political importance is underlined by this elaborate embalming procedure for his father. Jacob's mourning period was only two days shorter than that given for a Pharaoh. All the court dignitaries went along for the funeral, a substantial journey (verse 7).

^a32 Or the sons of Heth

^b9 Or charioteers

^c11 Abel Mizraim means mourning of the Egyptians.

^d23 That is, were counted as

EXODUS

INTRODUCTION

Free at Last

The slaves in Egypt get a liberator

I said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering." 3:7

Nothing stirs a nation's blood like a liberator. India called an insignificant little man named Mahatma (or "the great one") for leading his people to freedom. South America memorializes Simon Bolivar. For the Jews, one liberator named Moses accomplished what all these—and more.

The Bible devotes one-eighth of its pages to the story of Moses' time (a bulk of material worth the length of the entire New Testament). And when Jesus came as the great Liberator who set all humanity free, the New Testament reached back to Moses for a comparison (Hebrews 3:1-6).

Bondage in Egypt

The time was ripe for a liberator. Genesis closed with Jacob's family of 70 moving to Egypt. But in the opening scene of Exodus, 350 years later, hundreds of thousands of their ancestors were toiling on Pharaoh's huge construction projects—not as guests but as slaves.

One particularly ruthless pharaoh ordered the murder of all male Jewish babies, unwittingly setting the stage for one of the great ironies of history. Moses' parents hid him in a watertight basket among the grasses of a swamp. There, the tiny baby caught the eye of the pharaoh's daughter. The very edict intended to destroy the Jews led to their deliverance.

Adopted into the palace, Moses got the benefit of a superb classical education. His Egyptian upbringing was balanced by Jewish nurture: in another striking irony, the pharaoh's daughter paid Moses' own mother to nurse him. The son of slaves, yet brought up in the seat of power, Moses prepared for his eventual goal of making a nation out of a disorganized band of captives.

His career had to wait, though, for a period of humbling in the desert. Moses fled Egypt as a brash, self-confident man who liked to take matters into his own hands. Forty years later he reluctantly returned, with little besides a stick and a donkey.

Free at Last

The Jews had endured nearly four centuries of oppression before they were liberated. So far as we know, during those years they received no direct communication from heaven. Surely God must have seemed silent.

Moses faced a formidable challenge. Somehow he had to earn the trust of the slaves and inspire hope in them so that they could indeed throw off their chains. He had to prove that God had not forgotten them. When the time was right, God unleashed a spectacle of might and power that brought a cruel pharaoh to his knees—and convinced the Israelites that God really did care for them.

God used Moses in remarkable ways. He was the first person recorded in the Bible to work miracles. He met God in intimate ways granted no other human. He had a hand in the authorship of a good portion of the Old Testament. But in Jewish history he earned a place primarily as a liberator. He led the march from slavery to freedom, from Egypt to the promised land.

How to Read Exodus

Exodus divides neatly into two parts. The first 20 chapters, on the Jews' flight from Egypt, read like an exciting novel. Everything else in the Old Testament flows out of the events of the exodus—these 20 chapters simply cannot be missed.

As you read Exodus, look for important lessons that apply to your life. For example, study the life of Moses, one of a handful of truly great leaders in history. Chapter 18 shows Moses learning

an important leadership principle, and chapters 32-35 include encounters and conversations with God that have no equal in the Bible.

Exodus contains much material about the nature of God. Search for each place where God makes an appearance. Exodus shows a greater proportion of miracles—direct supernatural acts of God—than any part of the Bible except the Gospels. Why were these miracles done? Can you see a pattern? What should the Israelites have learned from them? Did they?

The last 20 chapters mainly consist of laws and regulations, given at Mount Sinai, to govern the life of the nation. Read them to note the concerns and priorities important to God as he designs an entire culture.

The instructions are usually clustered in groups, encompassing every area of life:

1. Moral rules, such as the Ten Commandments
2. Civil and social rules, much like a criminal code
3. Religious and ceremonial rules for the Jews.

See "A National Law Library," page 104, for more information on these laws.

The religious rituals with their many sacrifices and festivals seem strange to modern Westerners, but they were not at all unusual then. Also, they prepared the way for a Redeemer who was greater than Moses: Jesus Christ. You will need study books and commentaries to find all the symbols that apply to Jesus' life, as shown, for example, in the Passover. Fortunately, the Bible includes a brief but powerful commentary in Hebrews (see especially Hebrews 7-10.). This book should be read alongside Exodus and the three books that follow.

PLANS FOR READING EXODUS

PLAN 1: An Overview of Exodus in 5 Days

- Day 1. Read the Introduction to Exodus and then chapter 3, God's call of Moses.
- Day 2. Read chapter 10 and the very brief chapter 11, they record three of the ten plagues against Egypt.
- ☐ Day 3. Read chapter 14, which contains the exciting story of crossing the Red Sea.
- ☐ Day 4. Read the Ten Commandments as recorded in chapter 20. (If you have time, chapter 19 gives the dramatic setting for these laws.)
- ☐ Day 5. Read chapter 32. It records the most striking example of what was to become a characteristic of the Israelites: mass rebellion.

PLAN 2: All of Exodus in 39 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10-11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17
☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28 ☐ 29 ☐ 30 ☐ 31
☐ 32 ☐ 33 ☐ 34 ☐ 35 ☐ 36 ☐ 37 ☐ 38 ☐ 39 ☐ 40

The Israelites Oppressed

1 These are the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt with Jacob, each with his family: ²Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; ³Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin; ⁴Dan and Naphtali; Gad and Asher. ⁵The descendants of Jacob numbered seventy^a in all; Joseph was already in Egypt.

⁶Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, ⁷but the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them.

⁸Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt. ⁹"Look," he said

to his people, "the Israelites have become much too numerous for us. ¹⁰Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country."

¹¹So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. ¹²But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites ¹³and worked them ruthlessly. ¹⁴They made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the

^a Masoretic Text (see also Gen. 46:27), Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint (see also Acts 7:14 and note at Gen. 46:27) seventy-five

...and the hard labor the Egyptians used on them.

15The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, "When you see the Hebrew women in childbirth, observe them on the delivery stool; if it is a girl, kill her; if a boy, let her live." 16The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live. 17When the king of Egypt summoned them and asked them, "Why have you let the boys live?"

18The midwives answered Pharaoh, "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive."

19The Lord was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

20Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: "Every newborn son you must throw into the Nile, but every daughter you may keep."

The Birth of Moses

2 Now a man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. 3But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. 4His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

5Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the river bank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her slave girl to get it. 6She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. This is one of the Hebrew midwives.

7Then the king asked Pharaoh's daughter, "What is this Hebrew woman doing to her child?" 8The midwife answered, "I am letting the child live, for I fear God."

9Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her maid, "Take this baby and nurse her." 10Pharaoh's daughter said to her maid, "Take the baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So the woman took the baby and nursed him. 11When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water."

Moses Flees to Midian

12One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. 13Glancing this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. 14The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, "Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?"

15The man said, "Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid and thought, "What I did must have become known."

16When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian, where he sat down by a well. 17Now a priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came to draw water and fill the troughs to water their father's flock. 18Some shepherds came along and drove them away, but Moses got up and came to their rescue and watered their flock.

19When the girls returned to Reuel their father, he asked them, "Why have you returned so early today?"

20They answered, "An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds. He even drew water for us and watered the flock."

21"And where is he?" he asked his daughters. "Why did you leave him? Invite him to have something to eat!"

22Moses agreed to stay with the man, who gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses in marriage. 23Zipporah gave birth to a son, and Moses named him Gershom,^c saying, "I have become an alien in a foreign land."

24During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. 25God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. 26So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.

Moses and the Burning Bush

3 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. 3So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up."

4When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

And Moses said, "Here I am."

5"Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off

2:10 Selective History

Exodus illustrates how selective the Bible's history is. The first chapter, for example, skips over the name of the Egyptian pharaoh (leaving a riddle for scholars to argue over ever since), and yet identifies by name two Hebrew midwives (1:15). After compressing three-and-a-half centuries into a few verses, Exodus devotes chapters 3-40 to the events of a single year. In contrast to Genesis's large cast of characters, Exodus focuses on one main character, Moses.

^a Hebrew: The daughters Zipporah, Gershom, and Targamah live in the Hebrew land.
^b Gershom sounds like the Hebrew for no debt there.

^c10 Moses sounds like the Hebrew for draw

you would be for the place where you are standing is holy ground." Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." At this Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

13Then the Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard their crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go, I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

14But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

15And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain."

16Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

17God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM.¹² This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

18God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation."

19"Go, assemble the elders of Israel and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—appeared to me and said: I have watched over you and have seen what has been done to you in Egypt. 20And I have promised to bring you up out of your misery in Egypt into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites—a land flowing with milk and honey.'

21The elders of Israel will listen to you. Then you and the elders are to go to the king of Egypt

and say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Egyptians, has met with us. Let us take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God.' 22But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him. 23So I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go."

24And I will make the Egyptians favorably disposed toward this people, so that when you leave you will not go empty-handed. 25Every woman is to ask her neighbor and any woman living in her house for articles of silver and gold and for clothing, which you will put on your sons and daughters. And so you will plunder the Egyptians."

Signs for Moses

4 Moses answered, "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The LORD did not appear to you?'"

5 Then the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?"

6 "A staff," he replied.

7 The LORD said, "Throw it on the ground."

Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and he ran from it. 8 Then the LORD said to him, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail." So Moses reached out and took hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand. 9 "This," said the LORD, "is so that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has appeared to you."

10 Then the LORD said, "Put your hand inside your cloak." So Moses put his hand into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was leprous,¹⁴ like snow.

11 "Now put it back into your cloak," he said. So Moses put his hand back into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was restored, like the rest of his flesh.

12 Then the LORD said, "If they do not believe you or pay attention to the first miraculous sign, they may believe the second. 13 But if they do not believe these two signs or listen to you, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. The water you take from the river will become blood on the ground."

14 Moses said to the LORD, "O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue."

15 The LORD said to him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD? 16 Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."

17 But Moses said, "O Lord, please send someone else to do it."

18 Then the LORD's anger burned against Moses and he said, "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and his heart will be glad when he sees you. 19 You shall speak to him and

3:11 Who, Me?

Moses had big doubts about his ability to lead. He resisted God, bringing up his unworthiness (here) and lack of authority (verse 13), his fear of the people's distrust (4:1), his speech difficulties (4:10), and sheer cowardice (4:13). The remainder of Exodus should give people with similar self-doubts great hope, for it traces Moses' personal development from this fumbling start to his emergence as one of history's most decisive, powerful leaders.

¹² The Hebrew is plural. Hebrew for I AM in verse 14.

¹⁴ Or I will be what I will be.

¹⁵ The Hebrew for LORD sounds like and may be derived from the word used for various diseases affecting the skin—not necessarily leprosy.

put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. ¹⁶He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him. ¹⁷But take this staff in your hand so you can perform miraculous signs with it.

Moses Returns to Egypt

¹⁸Then Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, "Let me go back to my own people in Egypt to see if any of them are still alive."

Jethro said, "Go, and I wish you well."

¹⁹Now the LORD had said to Moses in Midian, "Go back to Egypt, for all the men who wanted to kill you are dead." ²⁰So Moses took his wife and sons, put them on a donkey and started back to Egypt. And he took the staff of God in his hand.

²¹The LORD said to Moses, "When you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have given you the power to do. But I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go. ²²Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the LORD says: Israel is my firstborn son. ²³and I told you, 'Let my son go, so he may worship me.' But you refused to let him go; so I will kill your firstborn son."

²⁴At a lodging place on the way, the LORD met Moses^a and was about to kill him. ²⁵But Zipporah took a flint knife, cut off her son's foreskin and touched Moses' feet with it.^b "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me," she said. ²⁶So the LORD let him alone. (At that time she said "bridegroom of blood," referring to circumcision.)

²⁷The LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the desert to meet Moses." So he met Moses at the mountain of God and kissed him. ²⁸Then Moses told Aaron everything the LORD had sent him to say, and also about all the miraculous signs he had commanded him to perform.

²⁹Moses and Aaron brought together all the elders of the Israelites, ³⁰and Aaron told them everything the LORD had said to Moses. He also performed the signs before the people, ³¹and they believed. And when they heard that the LORD was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped.

Bricks Without Straw

5 Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the desert.'"

²Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go."

³Then they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Now let us take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God, or he may strike us with plagues or with the sword."

⁴But the king of Egypt said, "Moses and Aaron, why are you taking the people away from their labor? Get back to your work!" ⁵Then Pharaoh said, "Look, the people of the land are now nu-

merous, and you are stopping them from working."

⁶That same day Pharaoh gave this order to the slave drivers and foremen in charge of the people: "You are no longer to supply the people with straw for making bricks; let them go and gather their own straw. ⁷But require them to make the same number of bricks as before, don't reduce the quota. They are lazy; that is why they are crying out, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.' ⁸Make the work harder for the men so that they keep working and pay no attention to lies."

⁹Then the slave drivers and the foremen went out and said to the people, "This is what Pharaoh says: 'I will not give you any more straw. ¹⁰Go and get your own straw wherever you can find it, but your work will not be reduced at all.'"

¹²So the people scattered all over Egypt to gather stubble to use for straw. ¹³The slave drivers kept pressing them, saying, "Complete the work required of you for each day, just as when you had straw." ¹⁴The Israelite foremen appointed by Pharaoh's slave drivers were beaten and were asked, "Why didn't you meet your quota of bricks yesterday or today, as before?"

¹⁵Then the Israelite foremen went and appealed to Pharaoh: "Why have you treated your servants this way? ¹⁶Your servants are given no straw, yet we are told, 'Make bricks!' Your servants are being beaten, but the fault is with your own people."

¹⁷Pharaoh said, "Lazy, that's what you are—lazy! That is why you keep saying, 'Let us go and sacrifice to the LORD.' ¹⁸Now get to work. You will not be given any straw, yet you must produce your full quota of bricks."

¹⁹The Israelite foremen realized they were in trouble when they were told, "You are not to reduce the number of bricks required of you for each day." ²⁰When they left Pharaoh, they found Moses and Aaron waiting to meet them, ²¹and they said, "May the LORD look upon you and judge you! You have made us a stench to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us."

God Promises Deliverance

²²Moses returned to the LORD and said, "O Lord, why have you brought trouble upon this people? Is this why you sent me? ²³Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble upon this people, and you have not rescued your people at all."

6 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: Because of my mighty hand he will let them go; because of my mighty hand he will drive them out of his country."

²God also said to Moses, "I am the LORD. ³I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty,^c but by my name the LORD^d I did not make myself known to them.^e ⁴I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they lived as aliens. ⁵Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom

^a24 Or Moses son, Hebrew him

^b25 Or and drew near Moses' feet

^c3 Hebrew El-Shaddai

^d4 See note at Exodus 3:15

^e5 Or Almighty and by my name the LORD did I not let myself be known to them?

the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant.

⁶ Therefore say to the Israelites: 'I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.' ⁸ And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the Lord.

Moses reported this to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him because of their discouragement and cruel bondage.

¹⁰ Then the Lord said to Moses, ¹¹ "Go, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the Israelites go out of his country."

But Moses said to the Lord, "If the Israelites will not listen to me, why would Pharaoh listen to me, since I speak with faltering lips?"

Family Record of Moses and Aaron

¹³ Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron about the Israelites and Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he commanded them to bring the Israelites out of Egypt.

¹⁴ These were the heads of their families:

The sons of Reuben the firstborn son of Israel were Hanoch and Pallu, Hezron and Carmi. These were the clans of Reuben.

¹⁵ The sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman. These were the clans of Simeon.

¹⁶ These were the names of the sons of Levi according to their records: Gershon, Kohath and Merari. Levi lived 137 years.

¹⁷ The sons of Gershon, by clans, were Libni and Shimei.

¹⁸ The sons of Kohath were Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel. Kohath lived 133 years.

¹⁹ The sons of Merari were Mahli and Mushi.

These were the clans of Levi according to their records.

6:9 Oppressed by Egypt

With Egypt at the zenith of its power, Pharaoh used slaves to build massive monuments, enforcing his rule with an army of renowned charioteers and bowmen. Egyptian hieroglyphics pictured the word for *foreigner* as a bound man with blood flowing from a wound in his head; the Israelites felt the full weight of such oppression. For a while, the increasing cruelty of Egyptian taskmasters turned the Israelites against Moses and his campaign to free them. But this oppression also made them anxious to leave.

²⁰ Amram married his father's sister Jochebed, who bore him Aaron and Moses. Amram lived 137 years.

²¹ The sons of Izhar were Korah, Nepheg and Zicri.

²² The sons of Uzziel were Mishael, Elzaphan and Sithri.

²³ Aaron married Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab and sister of Nahshon, and she bore him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

²⁴ The sons of Korah were Assir, Elkanah and Abiasaph. These were the Korahite clans.

²⁵ Eleazar son of Aaron married one of the daughters of Putiel, and she bore him Phinehas.

These were the heads of the Levite families, clan by clan.

²⁶ It was this same Aaron and Moses to whom the Lord said, "Bring the Israelites out of Egypt by their divisions." ²⁷ They were the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt about bringing the Israelites out of Egypt. It was the same Moses and Aaron.

Aaron to Speak for Moses

²⁸ Now when the Lord spoke to Moses in Egypt, ²⁹ he said to him, "I am the Lord. Tell Pharaoh king of Egypt everything I tell you."

³⁰ But Moses said to the Lord, "Since I speak with faltering lips, why would Pharaoh listen to me?"

⁷ Then the Lord said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet. ² You are to say everything I command you, and your brother Aaron is to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his country. ³ But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt, ⁴ he will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and with mighty acts of judgment I will bring out my divisions, my people the Israelites. ⁵ And the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring the Israelites out of it."

⁶ Moses and Aaron did just as the Lord commanded them. ⁷ Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three when they spoke to Pharaoh.

Aaron's Staff Becomes a Snake

⁸ The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ⁹ "When Pharaoh says to you, 'Perform a miracle,' then say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh,' and it will become a snake."

¹⁰ So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the Lord commanded. Aaron threw his staff down in front of Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a snake. ¹¹ Pharaoh then summoned wise men and sorcerers, and the Egyptian magicians also did the same things by their secret arts: ¹² Each one threw down his staff and it became a snake. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs.

¹ Hebrew *I am uncircumcised of lips*, also in verse 30

²¹⁴ The Hebrew for families here and in verse 25 refers to units larger than

...and he would
...as the river had said
...to him
...Pharaoh's

heart is unrelenting, he refuses to let the people go. (Ex 10:1) Pharaoh in the morning as he goes out to the water. Wait on the bank of the Nile to meet him and take in your hand the staff that was changed into a snake. (Ex 10:2) Then say to him, The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to say to you, Let my people go, so that they may not die in the desert. But until now you have not listened. This is what the Lord says. By this you will know that I am the Lord. With the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water of the Nile, and it will be changed into blood. (Ex 10:3) The fish in the Nile will die, and the river will stink, the Egyptians will not be able to drink its water.

(Ex 10:4) The Lord said to Moses, Tell Aaron, Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over the streams and canals, over

INSIGHT

Day of the Locusts

The 10th plague proved a point for both Jews and Egyptians

...and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring the locusts out of it. (Ex 10:1)

Locusts or grasshoppers normally live a solitary life, hopping from stalk to stalk and placidly munching on leaves and flowers. Then something happens—whether in response to climate, the season, or crowded conditions—that triggers a change. The locusts grow restive, flush an ominous pink color, and begin to seek other locusts.

They become a plague. Great clustering herds of them, millions strong, blacken the sky, blotting out sunlight. Groups of them fall to the ground like cluster bombs and disperse to destroy even sight of vegetation. Pesticide spraying may kill a few million, but the migratory swarm will return within just weeks.

A single swarm crossing the Red Sea was once measured at 15 miles wide, three miles deep, and 100 miles long. Upon landing, the locusts consumed crops, leather, fences, and even tool handles, leaving behind total devastation over 2,000 square miles.

Why the Ten Plagues?

Exodus 10 depicts ten catastrophic plagues on Egypt—including a locust swarm—in brief but graphic detail. The Bible does not concern itself with the question of how these natural phenomena occurred. It merely affirms that something supernatural took place. The miracles were an unprecedented display of God's power.

A nation was about to be born, and the Jews uprooting from Egypt called for such power. The Israelites had, after all, lived for centuries in Egypt. It would take a strong incentive indeed to motivate a massive, abrupt departure. And Egypt would not easily let thousands of valuable slaves walk away free.

Two Repetitions at Sea

The ten plagues convincingly established Moses' authority. He had hesitated to accept a leadership role, doubting whether the other Israelites would trust him (4:1). But Moses' dramatic confrontations with Pharaoh dispelled all doubts. He and he alone could lead them to freedom.

Someone else's freedom was also at stake: that of God himself. In Egypt, religion centered around idolatry, with scores of gods—including even snakes and dung beetles—held up as objects of worship. Against that background, the plagues appear as God's open warfare against the false gods of Egypt. He said as much: "I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt" (12:12).

Exodus asserts more than a dozen times that the plagues were given so that Israel and Egypt would know the power of Israel's God. Evidently they worked. Egyptians became so convinced of God's power that they let thousands of slaves leave, with the wealth of Egypt showered upon them as farewell presents. The Israelites were so convinced that they left their home and history and marched out bearing a single man toward a desert and a new life.

Life Questions. Do you know of any modern countries that treat minorities cruelly, like the Egyptians treated the Jews? What would make such a government change its ways?

the ponds and all the reservoirs—and they will turn to blood. Blood will be everywhere in Egypt, even in the wooden buckets and stone jars.”

²⁰Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD had commanded. He raised his staff in the presence of Pharaoh and his officials and struck the water of the Nile, and all the water was changed into blood. ²¹The fish in the Nile died, and the river smelled so bad that the Egyptians could not drink its water. Blood was everywhere in Egypt.

²²But the Egyptian magicians did the same things by their secret arts, and Pharaoh's heart became hard; he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said. ²³Instead, he turned and went into his palace, and did not take even this to heart. ²⁴And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile to get drinking water, because they could not drink the water of the river.

The Plague of Frogs

²⁵Seven days passed after the LORD struck the Nile. ¹Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘This is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. ²If you refuse to let them go, I will plague your whole country with frogs. ³The Nile will teem with frogs. They will come up into your palace and your bedroom and onto your bed, into the houses of your officials and on your people, and into your ovens and kneading troughs. ⁴The frogs will go up on you and your people and all your officials.’”

⁵Then the LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron, ‘Stretch out your hand with your staff over the streams and canals and ponds, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt.’”

⁶So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land. ⁷But the magicians did the same things by their secret arts; they also made frogs come up on the land of Egypt.

⁸Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “Pray to the LORD to take the frogs away from me and my people, and I will let your people go to offer sacrifices to the LORD.”

⁹Moses said to Pharaoh, “I leave to you the honor of setting the time for me to pray for you and your officials and your people that you and your houses may be rid of the frogs, except for those that remain in the Nile.”

“Tomorrow,” Pharaoh said.

Moses replied, “It will be as you say, so that you may know there is no one like the LORD our God.

The frogs will leave you and your houses, your officials and your people; they will remain only in the Nile.”

¹²After Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh, Moses cried out to the LORD about the frogs he had brought on Pharaoh. ¹³And the LORD did what Moses asked. The frogs died in the houses, in the courtyards and in the fields. ¹⁴They were piled into heaps, and the land reeked of them. ¹⁵But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said.

The Plague of Gnats

¹⁶Then the LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron, ‘Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the ground,’ and throughout the land of Egypt the dust will become gnats.” ¹⁷They did this, and when Aaron stretched out his hand with the staff and struck the dust of the ground, gnats came upon men and animals. All the dust throughout the land of Egypt became gnats. ¹⁸But when the magicians tried to produce gnats by their secret arts, they could not. And the gnats were on men and animals.

¹⁹The magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” But Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not listen, just as the LORD had said.

The Plague of Flies

²⁰Then the LORD said to Moses, “Get up early in the morning and confront Pharaoh as he goes to the water and say to him, ‘This is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. ²¹If you do not let my people go, I will send swarms of flies on you and your officials, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians will be full of flies, and even the ground where they are.’”

²²“But on that day I will deal differently with the land of Goshen, where my people live; no swarms of flies will be there, so that you will know that I, the LORD, am in this land. ²³I will make a distinction between my people and your people. This miraculous sign will occur tomorrow.”

²⁴And the LORD did this. Dense swarms of flies poured into Pharaoh's palace and into the houses of his officials, and throughout Egypt the land was ruined by the flies.

²⁵Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “Go, sacrifice to your God here in the land.”

²⁶But Moses said, “That would not be right. The sacrifices we offer the LORD our God would be detestable to the Egyptians. And if we offer sacrifices that are detestable in their eyes, will they not stone us? ²⁷We must take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God, as he commands us.”

²⁸Pharaoh said, “I will let you go to offer sacrifices to the LORD your God in the desert, but you must not go very far. Now pray for me.”

²⁹Moses answered, “As soon as I leave you, I

8:27 Oriental Bargaining

Those who have lived in the Middle East recognize in Moses' encounters with Pharaoh an example of high-level Oriental bargaining. As the pressure increased, Pharaoh kept raising his offers: from allowing sacrifices within Egypt (verse 25), to permitting sacrifices nearby in the desert (verse 28), to letting only the adult males go (10:11), to releasing all people but no flocks (10:24). Finally, with the tenth and final plague Pharaoh agreed to all Moses' demands (12:32).

will pray to the LORD, and tomorrow the flies will leave Pharaoh and his officials and his people. Only be sure that Pharaoh does not act deceitfully again by saying the people go to offer sacrifices to the LORD.

Then Moses left Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD, and the LORD did what Moses asked. The flies left Pharaoh and his officials and his people, but they remained. But this time also Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people go.

The Plague on Livestock

9 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: "Let my people go, so that they may worship me." If you refuse to let them go and continue to hold them back, the hand of the LORD will bring a terrible plague on your livestock in the field—on your horses and donkeys and camels and on your cattle and sheep and goats. But the LORD will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and that of Egypt, so that no animal belonging to the Israelites will die."

The LORD set a time and said, "Tomorrow the LORD will do this in the land." And the next day the LORD did it: All the livestock of the Egyptians died, but not one animal belonging to the Israelites died. Pharaoh sent men to investigate and found that not even one of the animals of the Israelites had died. Yet his heart was unyielding and he would not let the people go.

The Plague of Boils

Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Take handfuls of soot from a furnace and have Moses toss it into the air in the presence of Pharaoh. It will become fine dust over the whole land of Egypt, and festering boils will break out on men and animals throughout the land."

So they took soot from a furnace and stood before Pharaoh. Moses tossed it into the air, and festering boils broke out on men and animals. The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils that were on them and on all the Egyptians. But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said to Moses.

The Plague of Hail

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Get up early in the morning, confront Pharaoh and say to him, 'This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. For this time I will send the full force of my plagues against you and against your officials and your people, so you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth. For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth. But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. You still set yourself against my people

and will not let them go. Therefore, at this time tomorrow I will send the worst hailstorm that has ever fallen on Egypt, from the day it was founded till now. Give an order now to bring your livestock and everything you have in the field to a place of shelter, because the hail will fall on every man and animal that has not been brought in and is still out in the field, and they will die."

Those officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of the LORD hurried to bring their slaves and their livestock inside. But those who ignored the word of the LORD left their slaves and livestock in the field.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that hail will fall all over Egypt—on men and animals and on everything growing in the fields of Egypt." When Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, the LORD sent thunder and hail, and lightning flashed down to the ground. So the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. Hail fell and lightning flashed back and forth. It was the worst storm in all the land of Egypt since it had become a nation. Throughout Egypt hail struck everything in the fields—both men and animals, it beat down everything growing in the fields and stripped every tree. The only place it did not hail was the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were.

Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron. "This time I have sinned," he said to them. "The LORD is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. Pray to the LORD, for we have had enough thunder and hail. I will let you go; you don't have to stay any longer."

Moses replied, "When I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands in prayer to the LORD. The thunder will stop and there will be no more hail, so you may know that the earth is the LORD's. But I know that you and your officials still do not fear the LORD God."

(The flax and barley were destroyed, since the barley had headed and the flax was in bloom. The wheat and spelt, however, were not destroyed, because they ripen later.)

Then Moses left Pharaoh and went out of the city. He spread out his hands toward the LORD; the thunder and hail stopped, and the rain no longer poured down on the land. When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: He and his officials hardened their hearts. So Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the LORD had said through Moses.

The Plague of Locusts

10 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his officials so that I may perform these miraculous signs of mine among them that you may tell your children and grandchildren how I dealt harshly with the Egyptians and how I performed my signs among them, and that you may know that I am the LORD."

So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said

to him. "This is what the LORD, the God of the Egyptians, says: 'How long will you refuse to humble yourselves before me? Let my people go, so that they may worship the LORD. If you refuse to let them go, I will send locusts into your country tomorrow to devour the face of the ground so that they will devour what little you have left after the hail, including every tree that is in your fields. They will fill your houses with locusts, of all your officials and all the Egyptians, including neither your fathers nor your forefathers, have ever seen from the day they settled in this land till now.'" Then Moses turned and left Pharaoh.

Pharaoh's officials said to him, "How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the people go, so that they may worship the LORD their God. Do you not yet realize that Egypt is ruined?"

"Then Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. 'Go, worship the LORD your God,' he said. 'But just who will be going?'"

"Moses answered, 'We will go with our young and old, with our sons and daughters, and with our flocks and herds, because we are to celebrate a festival to the LORD.'"

"Pharaoh said, 'The LORD be with you—if I let you go, along with your women and children! Clearly you are bent on evil.'¹¹ No! Have only the men go, and worship the LORD, since that's what you have been asking for." Then Moses and Aaron were driven out of Pharaoh's presence.

"And the LORD said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over Egypt so that locusts will swarm over the land and devour everything growing in the fields, everything left by the hail.'"

"So Moses stretched out his staff over Egypt, and the LORD made an east wind blow across the land all that day and all that night. By morning the wind had brought the locusts; they invaded all Egypt and settled down in every area of the country in great numbers. Never before had there been such a plague of locusts, nor will there ever be again. They covered all the ground until it was black. They devoured all that was left after the hail—everything growing in the fields and the fruit on the trees. Nothing green remained on tree or plant in all the land of Egypt.

"Pharaoh quickly summoned Moses and Aaron and said, 'I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you. Now forgive my sin once more and pray to the LORD your God to take this deadly plague away from me.'"

"Moses then left Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD. And the LORD changed the wind to a very strong west wind, which caught up the locusts and carried them into the Red Sea.^b Not a locust was left anywhere in Egypt. But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let the Israelites go.

The Plague of Darkness

"Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that darkness will spread over Egypt—darkness that can be felt.'"

"So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and total darkness covered all Egypt for three days. No one could see anyone else or leave his place for three days. Yet all the Israelites had light in the places where they lived.

"Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and said, 'Go, worship the LORD. Even your women and children may go with you; only leave your flocks and herds behind.'"

"But Moses said, 'You must allow us to have sacrifices and burnt offerings to present to the LORD our God. Our livestock too must go with us; not a hoof is to be left behind. We have to use some of them in worshiping the LORD our God, and until we get there we will not know what we are to use to worship the LORD.'"

"But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he was not willing to let them go. Pharaoh said to Moses, 'Get out of my sight! Make sure you do not appear before me again! The day you see my face you will die.'"

"Just as you say," Moses replied, "I will never appear before you again."

The Plague on the Firstborn

11 Now the LORD had said to Moses, "I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. After that, he will let you go from here, and when he does, he will drive you out completely. Tell the people that men and women alike are to ask their neighbors for articles of silver and gold." (The LORD made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people, and Moses himself was highly regarded in Egypt by Pharaoh's officials and by the people.)

"So Moses said, 'This is what the LORD says: About midnight I will go throughout Egypt. Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the slave girl, who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle as well. There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt—worse than there has ever been or ever will be again. But among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any man or animal.' Then you will know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. All these officials of yours will come to me, bowing down before me and saying, 'Go, you and all the people who follow you!' After that I will leave." Then Moses, hot with anger, left Pharaoh.

10:21 Attack on False Gods

God used the ten plagues as a form of warfare against the gods of Egypt (12:12). Some scholars see in each individual punishment an attack against a specific Egyptian idol. Thus they believe the plague on the Nile River opposed the Egyptians' river god, the plague of flies flouted worship of the sacred fly, the plague of darkness attacked the sun-god Ra, and the plague on livestock countered the sacred bull.

^a10 Or Be careful, trouble is in store for you!

^b19 Hebrew Yam Suph; that is, Sea of Reeds

⁹The Lord had said to Moses, "Pharaoh will refuse to listen to you—so that my wonders may be multiplied in Egypt." ¹⁰Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders before Pharaoh, but the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let the Israelites go out of his country.

¹¹ The Hebrew word can mean both *lamb* or *kid*; also in verse 4.

The Passover

12 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, ²"This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb^a for his family, one for each household. ⁴If any household

INSIGHT

Independence Day

An unusual style of celebrating freedom

"There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt—worse than there has ever been or ever will be again." 11:6

Most of the nations of the world celebrate independence days. Each nation celebrates in their own way, but these celebrations bear a striking *unlikeness* to the Jewish independence day, a day called Passover.

The Jews trace their cultural birthday back to a dark, foreboding night—the Israelites' last in Egypt (chapter 12). There are no blaring bands nor balloons nor fireworks to commemorate this event. Everything takes place inside a home, with a family or cluster of families gathered around a table. Participants taste morsels of food, pausing before each portion to hear Old Testament accounts of the history they are reliving. Their independence day resembles a worship service, not a party.

A Work of God Alone

More than anything else, the Jewish independence day expresses this one fact: God did it. No Israelite armies stood against the mighty Egyptians. Freedom came in the blackest night while Jewish families huddled around the Passover table, their bags packed, waiting for deliverance.

When God's time came, the Egyptian captors not only released the Israelites, but begged them to go and showered them with them gold and riches. The Jews remember that event with humility and praise; there is no room for pride. Later, when Pharaoh changed his mind and set his chariots loose upon the fleeing tribes, God came through again. Israelites stood trembling like cowards, already wondering about their freedom. But God destroyed the great Egyptian army.

For the Jews, independence from Egypt meant dependence on God. In fact, God came back to this event throughout the Bible as a way of describing himself: "I am the God who brought you out of Egypt."

The pattern of dependence was to continue all through Exodus. When the wilderness wanderers ran out of water, God provided. When food supplies failed, God provided. When raiders attacked, God provided. Independence day merely set the tone for a national history that was an active movement of God.

Passover's New Meaning

Much later, Passover night would take on an even broader significance. During one particular Passover feast, as thousands of Jews were bringing their choice lambs to Jerusalem, one man was selected as the Passover Lamb for all humanity (1 Corinthians 5:7). The words "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (12:13) came to convey a whole new meaning.

Today, though Jewish people still celebrate Passover, most Christians do not. Rather, that ceremony has been incorporated into a new one called the Eucharist, or the Lord's Supper, with Christ representing the Passover lamb. Although much of the ceremony's content has changed, one thing has not. The Lord's Supper, too, memorializes a time of pain and of bloodshed, a time of freedom and deliverance. It, too, was God's act alone. He gets the credit.

Life Questions. How is the celebration of the Lord's Supper a celebration of the Christian's independence or freedom from death?

14:11-12 "But a temporary resident and a hired man must be eaten inside your house. Do not break any of these laws." 14:13 "The whole community of Israel must observe it."

14:14-15 "An alien living among you who wants to celebrate the LORD's Passover must have all the males in his household circumcised; then he may take part like one born in the land. No uncircumcised man may eat of it. 14:16 "The same law applies to the slave-born and to the alien living among you."

14:17-18 "The Israelites did just what the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron. 14:19 "And on that very day the LORD brought the Israelites out of Egypt by the Red Sea."

Consecration of the Firstborn

13 The LORD said to Moses, 2 "Consecrate to me every firstborn male. The first offspring of every womb among the Israelites belongs to me, whether man or animal."

3 "Then Moses said to the people, "Commemorate this day—the day you came out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery, because the LORD brought you out of it with a mighty hand. Eat nothing containing yeast. 4 "Today—in the month of Abib, you are leaving. 5 "When the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites and Jebusites—the land he swore to your forefathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey—you are to observe this ceremony in this month: 6 "For seven days eat bread made without yeast and on the seventh day hold a festival to the LORD. 7 "Eat unleavened bread during those seven days; nothing with yeast in it is to be seen among you, nor shall any yeast be seen anywhere within your borders. 8 "On that day tell your son, 'I do this because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.' 9 "This observance will be for you like a sign on your hand and a reminder on your forehead that the law of the LORD is to be on your lips. For the LORD brought you out of Egypt with his mighty hand. 10 "You must keep this ordinance at the appointed time year after year."

11 "After the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites and gives it to you, as he promised on oath to you and your forefathers, 12 you are to give over to the LORD the first offspring of every womb. All the firstborn males of your livestock belong to the LORD. 13 "Redeem with a lamb every firstborn donkey, but if you do not redeem it, break its neck. Redeem every firstborn among your sons."

13:1 The Firstborn Principle

God required Israel to offer only "firstborn" male animals as sacrifices. This was a picture of Jesus, the firstborn son of Mary, offered as a sacrifice for sin.

14:11 "In days to come, when your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' say to him, 'With a mighty hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.' 14:12 "When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed every firstborn in Egypt, both man and animal. This is why I sacrifice to the LORD the first male offspring of every womb and redeem each of my firstborn sons." 14:13 "And it will be like a sign on your hand and a symbol on your forehead that the LORD brought us out of Egypt with his mighty hand."

Crossing the Sea

14:14 "When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, "If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt." 14:15 "So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea." The Israelites went up out of Egypt armed for battle.

14:16 "Moses took the bones of Joseph with him because Joseph had made the sons of Israel swear an oath. He had said, 'God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up with you from this place.'"

14:17 "After leaving Succoth they camped at Etham on the edge of the desert. 14:18 "By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. 14:19 "Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people."

14 Then the LORD said to Moses, 2 "Tell the Israelites to turn back and encamp near Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. They are to encamp by the sea, directly opposite Baal Zephon. 3 "Pharaoh will think, 'The Israelites are wandering around the land in confusion, hemmed in by the desert.' 4 "And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them. But I will gain glory for myself through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD." So the Israelites did this.

5 "When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds about them and said, "What have we done? We have let the Israelites go and have lost their services!" 6 "So he had his chariot made ready and took his army with him. 7 "He took six hundred of the best chariots, along with all the other chariots of Egypt, with officers over all of them. 8 "The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, so that he pursued the Israelites, who were marching out boldly. 9 "The Egyptians—all Pharaoh's horses and chariots, horsemen and troops—pursued the Israelites and overtook them as they camped by the sea near Pi Hahiroth, opposite Baal Zephon."

10 "As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the LORD. 11 "They said to Moses, 'Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the

¹⁴ Hebrew Yam Suph, that is, Sea of Reeds

¹⁹ See Gen. 50:25.

⁹ Or charioteers; also in verses 17, 18, 23, 26 and 28

desert to die. What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Let us alone, let us serve the Egyptians?' It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!"

16 Then the LORD said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you fear you will never see again. 17 The LORD will fight for you, you need only to be still."

18 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. Lift your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. 19 I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them. And I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. 20 The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen."

21 Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, 22 coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long.

23 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, 24 and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.

25 The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea. 26 During the last watch of the night the LORD looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. 27 He made the wheels of their chariots come off so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, "Let's get away from the Israelites! The LORD is fighting for them against Egypt."

28 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen." 29 Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing toward it, and the LORD swept them into the sea. 30 The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen—the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived.

31 But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. 32 That day the LORD saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. 33 And when the Israelites saw the great power the LORD displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared

the LORD and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant.

The Song of Moses and Miriam

15 Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD.

"I will sing to the LORD,
for he is highly exalted.

The horse and its rider
he has hurled into the sea.

2 The LORD is my strength and my song;
he has become my salvation.

He is my God, and I will praise him,
my father's God, and I will exalt him.

3 The LORD is a warrior;
the LORD is his name.

4 Pharaoh's chariots and his army
he has hurled into the sea.

The best of Pharaoh's officers
are drowned in the Red Sea.

5 The deep waters have covered them;
they sank to the depths like a stone.

6 "Your right hand, O LORD,
was majestic in power.

Your right hand, O LORD,
shattered the enemy.

7 In the greatness of your majesty
you threw down those who opposed you.

You unleashed your burning anger;
it consumed them like stubble.

8 By the blast of your nostrils
the waters piled up.

The surging waters stood firm like a wall;
the deep waters congealed in the heart of the sea.

9 "The enemy boasted,
'I will pursue, I will overtake them.

I will divide the spoils;
I will gorge myself on them.

I will draw my sword
and my hand will destroy them.'

10 But you blew with your breath,
and the sea covered them.

They sank like lead
in the mighty waters.

11 "Who among the gods is like you, O LORD?
Who is like you—

15:1 A Story for All Time

Moses' song celebrates the event from which this book gets its name: "the exodus" from Egypt, when a band of slaves escaped from the most powerful civilization on earth. The psalmists never tired of celebrating that event in song (see, for example, Psalms 78 and 105), and the prophets later referred back to days of the exodus to stir the conscience of their nation.

¹⁷ Or He jammed the wheels of their chariots (see Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint and Syriac)

²⁷ Or from

⁴ Hebrew Yam

months in business
no more in 24
working wonders.

14 You stretched out your right hand
and the earth swallowed them.

11 In your unfolding love you will lead
the people you have redeemed
by your strength you will guide them
to your holy dwelling

English will give the people of Pakistan
the choice of Islam will be rewarded
the kingdom of Allah will be raised with
everything

the people of America will not accept
any and should not call upon them

1944

the people of the world to see the
the people of the world to see the
the people of the world to see the
the people of the world to see the
the people of the world to see the

1995

27 Nov 1950

1994

1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered. This involves understanding the context and the specific requirements of the task.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

14. 7. 2004

... ..

20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 280 281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321 322 323 324 325 326 327 328 329 330 331 332 333 334 335 336 337 338 339 340 341 342 343 344 345 346 347 348 349 350 351 352 353 354 355 356 357 358 359 360 361 362 363 364 365 366 367 368 369 370 371 372 373 374 375 376 377 378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387 388 389 390 391 392 393 394 395 396 397 398 399 400 401 402 403 404 405 406 407 408 409 410 411 412 413 414 415 416 417 418 419 420 421 422 423 424 425 426 427 428 429 430 431 432 433 434 435 436 437 438 439 440 441 442 443 444 445 446 447 448 449 450 451 452 453 454 455 456 457 458 459 460 461 462 463 464 465 466 467 468 469 470 471 472 473 474 475 476 477 478 479 480 481 482 483 484 485 486 487 488 489 490 491 492 493 494 495 496 497 498 499 500 501 502 503 504 505 506 507 508 509 510 511 512 513 514 515 516 517 518 519 520 521 522 523 524 525 526 527 528 529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536 537 538 539 540 541 542 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554 555 556 557 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573 574 575 576 577 578 579 580 581 582 583 584 585 586 587 588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600 601 602 603 604 605 606 607 608 609 610 611 612 613 614 615 616 617 618 619 620 621 622 623 624 625 626 627 628 629 630 631 632 633 634 635 636 637 638 639 640 641 642 643 644 645 646 647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660 661 662 663 664 665 666 667 668 669 670 671 672 673 674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681 682 683 684 685 686 687 688 689 690 691 692 693 694 695 696 697 698 699 700 701 702 703 704 705 706 707 708 709 710 711 712 713 714 715 716 717 718 719 720 721 722 723 724 725 726 727 728 729 730 731 732 733 734 735 736 737 738 739 740 741 742 743 744 745 746 747 748 749 750 751 752 753 754 755 756 757 758 759 760 761 762 763 764 765 766 767 768 769 770 771 772 773 774 775 776 777 778 779 780 781 782 783 784 785 786 787 788 789 790 791 792 793 794 795 796 797 798 799 800 801 802 803 804 805 806 807 808 809 810 811 812 813 814 815 816 817 818 819 820 821 822 823 824 825 826 827 828 829 830 831 832 833 834 835 836 837 838 839 840 841 842 843 844 845 846 847 848 849 850 851 852 853 854 855 856 857 858 859 860 861 862 863 864 865 866 867 868 869 870 871 872 873 874 875 876 877 878 879 880 881 882 883 884 885 886 887 888 889 890 891 892 893 894 895 896 897 898 899 900 901 902 903 904 905 906 907 908 909 910 911 912 913 914 915 916 917 918 919 920 921 922 923 924 925 926 927 928 929 930 931 932 933 934 935 936 937 938 939 940 941 942 943 944 945 946 947 948 949 950 951 952 953 954 955 956 957 958 959 960 961 962 963 964 965 966 967 968 969 970 971 972 973 974 975 976 977 978 979 980 981 982 983 984 985 986 987 988 989 990 991 992 993 994 995 996 997 998 999 1000 1001 1002 1003 1004 1005 1006 1007 1008 1009 1010 1011 1012 1013 1014 1015 1016 1017 1018 1019 1020 1021 1022 1023 1024 1025 1026 1027 1028 1029 1030 1031 1032 1033 1034 1035 1036 1037 1038 1039 1040 1041 1042 1043 1044 1045 1046 1047 1048 1049 1050

The Nature of Work and Ethic

Two things are clear from the fact we are
not using the "change of state" for three days
the "change of state" is not a "change of state".

...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...

... ..
... ..
... ..

一、政治思想：热爱祖国，热爱社会主义，热爱中国共产党，热爱集体，热爱劳动，热爱科学，热爱人民，热爱和平，热爱生命，热爱自然，热爱环境，热爱动物，热爱植物，热爱微生物，热爱昆虫，热爱鸟类，热爱鱼类，热爱海洋生物，热爱陆地生物，热爱所有生物，热爱所有生命，热爱所有存在，热爱所有可能，热爱所有未来，热爱所有希望，热爱所有梦想，热爱所有理想，热爱所有信念，热爱所有信仰，热爱所有精神，热爱所有灵魂，热爱所有心灵，热爱所有思想，热爱所有智慧，热爱所有知识，热爱所有文化，热爱所有艺术，热爱所有科学，热爱所有技术，热爱所有发明，热爱所有创造，热爱所有进步，热爱所有发展，热爱所有繁荣，热爱所有昌盛，热爱所有富强，热爱所有文明，热爱所有进步，热爱所有发展，热爱所有繁荣，热爱所有昌盛，热爱所有富强，热爱所有文明。

...
...
...

Manna and Onail

[illegible][illegible]

The Master and the man said it all the morning
 "In the evening you will know that I was the Lord
 who tempted you for 40 days. And in the morn-
 ing you will see the gates of the land because in
 the night your grumbling against me. Then you
 will see that you should grumble against me." Then
 the Lord said, "You will know that I was the Lord
 when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and
 all the bread you want in the morning. Because in
 the night your grumbling against me. Then you
 will see that you should grumble against me. But you
 are not grumbling against me, but against
 the Lord."

"They know our history. Say to the other side
the community. Come across the line in
the house and community."

the whole team was working in the whole world
to contribute the whole toward the peace, and
there was the gift of the whole something to be
done.

The first step is to identify the main purpose of the document. This is usually found in the title or the first paragraph. Once the purpose is identified, the next step is to identify the main points or arguments. These are usually found in the body of the document. Finally, the third step is to identify the conclusion or the final point. This is usually found in the last paragraph of the document.

The meeting began with the opening prayer by the pastor, Rev. Dr. J. H. ... and the singing of the hymn, "The Church's One Foundation".

Part 1: Fundamentals

[illegible]

1. The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various committees of the Board of Directors of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, for the year ending December 31, 1910:

at the camp. ¹⁴When the dew was gone, thin
ices like frost on the ground appeared on the
desert floor. ¹⁵When the Israelites saw it, they said
to each other, "What is it?" For they did not know
what it was.

Moses said to them, "It is the bread the LORD
has given you to eat." ¹⁶This is what the LORD has
commanded: Each one is to gather as much as he
needs. Take an omer^a for each person you have in
your tent.

The Israelites did as they were told: some gath-
ered some little. ¹⁸And when they mea-
sured by the omer, he who gathered much did
gather too much, and he who gathered little did
gather too little. Each one gathered as much as
he needed.

Then Moses said to them, "No one is to keep
any of it until morning."

However, some of them paid no attention to
Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it
was full of maggots and began to smell. So Moses
was angry with them.

Each morning everyone gathered as much as
he needed, and when the sun grew hot, it melted
away. ²²On the sixth day, they gathered twice as
much—two omers^b for each person—and the
leaders of the community came and reported this
to Moses. ²³He said to them, "This is what the
LORD commanded: Tomorrow is to be a day of
rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. So bake what you
want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Save
whatever is left and keep it until morning."

²⁴So they saved it until morning, as Moses com-
manded, and it did not stink or get maggots in it.
²⁵"Eat it today," Moses said, "because today is a
Sabbath to the LORD. You will not find any of it on
the ground today. ²⁶Six days you are to gather it,
but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not
be any."

²⁷Nevertheless, some of the people went out on
the seventh day to gather it, but they found none.
²⁸Then the LORD said to Moses, "How long will
you refuse to keep my commands and my in-
structions? ²⁹Bear in mind that the LORD has given
you the Sabbath; that is why on the sixth day he
gives you bread for two days. Everyone is to stay
where he is on the seventh day; no one is to go
out." ³⁰So the people rested on the seventh day.

"The people of Israel called the bread manna.^c
It was white like coriander seed and tasted like
wafers made with honey. ³²Moses said, "This is
what the LORD has commanded: 'Take an omer of
manna and keep it for the generations to come, so
they can see the bread I gave you to eat in the
desert when I brought you out of Egypt.'"

So Moses said to Aaron, "Take a jar and put an
omer of manna in it. Then place it before the LORD
to be kept for the generations to come."

As the LORD commanded Moses, Aaron put
the manna in front of the Testimony, that it might
be kept. ³⁵The Israelites ate manna forty years,
until they came to a land that was settled; they ate
manna until they reached the border of Canaan.

^a(An omer is one tenth of an ephah.)

Water From the Rock

17 The whole Israelite community set out from
the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to
place as the LORD commanded. They camped at
Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to
drink. ²So they quarreled with Moses and said,
"Give us water to drink."

Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me?
Why do you put the LORD to the test?"

³But the people were thirsty for water there, and
they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why
did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and
our children and livestock die of thirst?"

⁴Then Moses cried out to the LORD, "What am I
to do with these people? They are almost ready to
stone me."

⁵The LORD answered Moses, "Walk on ahead of
the people. Take with you some of the elders of
Israel and take in your hand the staff with which
you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶I will stand there
before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock,
and water will come out of it for the people to
drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders
of Israel. ⁷And he called the place Massah^d and
Meribah^e because the Israelites quarreled and be-
cause they tested the LORD saying, "Is the LORD
among us or not?"

The Amalekites Defeated

⁸The Amalekites came and attacked the Israel-
ites at Rephidim. ⁹Moses said to Joshua, "Choose
some of our men and go out to fight the Amalek-
ites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with
the staff of God in my hands."

¹⁰So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had
ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the
top of the hill. ¹¹As long as Moses held up his
hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever
he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were win-
ning. ¹²When Moses' hands grew tired, they took
a stone and put it under him and he sat on it.
Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one
side, one on the other—so that his hands remained
steady till sunset. ¹³So Joshua overcame the Ama-
lekite army with the sword.

¹⁴Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this on a
scroll as something to be remembered and make
sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely
blot out the memory of Amalek from under
heaven."

¹⁵Moses built an altar and called it The LORD is
my Banner. ¹⁶He said, "For hands were lifted up to
the throne of the LORD. The LORD will be at war
against the Amalekites from generation to genera-
tion."

Jethro Visits Moses

18 Now Jethro, the priest of Midian and father-
in-law of Moses, heard of everything God
had done for Moses and for his people Israel, and
how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt.

^aat 15, probably about 2 quarts (about 2 liters), also in verses 18, 32, 35 and 36

²⁸ The Hebrew is plural

³¹ Manna means What is it? (see verse 15)

²² That is, probably about 4 quarts (about 4 L)

²⁷ Massah means testing.

¹⁷ Meribah

means quarreling

¹⁵ Or "Because a hand was against the throne of the LORD, the

people. ¹²Put limits for the people around the mountain and tell them, 'Be careful that you do not go up the mountain or touch the foot of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. ¹³He shall surely be stoned or shot with arrows; not a hand is to be laid on him. Whether man or animal, he shall not be permitted to live.' Only when the ram's horn sounds a long blast may they go up to the mountain."

After Moses had gone down the mountain to the people, he consecrated them, and they washed their clothes. ¹⁵Then he said to the people, "Prepare yourselves for the third day. Abstain from sexual relations."

¹⁶On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled. ¹⁷Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, the whole mountain trembled violently. ¹⁹and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder. Then Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him.^a

²⁰The LORD descended to the top of Mount Sinai and called Moses to the top of the mountain. So Moses went up. ²¹and the LORD said to him, "Go down and warn the people so they do not force their way through to see the LORD and many of them perish. ²²Even the priests, who approach the LORD, must consecrate themselves, or the LORD will break out against them."

²³Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot come up Mount Sinai, because you yourself warned us, 'Put limits around the mountain and set it apart as holy.'"

²⁴The LORD replied, "Go down and bring Aaron up with you. But the priests and the people must not force their way through to come up to the LORD, or he will break out against them."

²⁵So Moses went down to the people and told them

The Ten Commandments

20 And God spoke all these words:

¹"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

20:1 Long-lasting Laws

The Ten Commandments given here and in Deuteronomy 5 form a central core of morality, a major advance from other legal codes of the day. The New Testament reiterates all but the fourth commandment. The phrase "Judeo-Christian ethics," heard often in courtrooms and legislative chambers, refers to the broad moral principles derived from the laws outlined here and in the next three books.

³"You shall have no other gods before me.

⁴"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

⁷"You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

⁸"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. ¹¹For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

¹²"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

¹³"You shall not murder.

¹⁴"You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵"You shall not steal.

¹⁶"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

¹⁷"You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

¹⁸When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance ¹⁹and said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die."

²⁰Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning."

²¹The people remained at a distance, while Moses approached the thick darkness where God was.

Idols and Altars

²²Then the LORD said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites this: 'You have seen for yourselves that I have spoken to you from heaven: ²³Do not make any gods to be alongside me; do not make for yourselves gods of silver or gods of gold.

^a Most Hebrew manuscripts, a few Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint all the people

^b Or besides

¹⁹ Or and God answered him with thunder

18 Make an altar of earth for me and sacrifice
 19 of it your burnt offerings and fellowship offer-
 20 ings: your sheep and goats and your cattle
 21 19:1-20:17 However I choose my name to be honored. I will
 22 20:1-21:17 you and bless you. 23 If you make an altar
 24 20:24-21:17 of stone for me, do not build it with dressed
 25 20:24-21:17 stone. For you will decide it if you use a tool on it.
 26 And do not go up to my altar on steps, lest your
 27 20:24-21:17 footings be raised on it.

21 These are the laws you are to set before
 22 them.

Hebrew Servants

23 If you buy a Hebrew servant, he is to serve
 24 you six years. But in the seventh year, he shall
 25 20:23-21:17 go free without anything. 26 If he comes
 27 20:23-21:17 alone, he is to go free alone. But if he has a wife
 28 when he comes, she is to go with him. 29 If his
 30 master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or
 31 daughters, the woman and her children shall be-
 32 20:23-21:17 long to her master, and only the man shall go free.

33 But if the servant declares, "I love my master
 34 and my wife and children and do not want to go

free," when his master must take him before the
 35 judges, 36 He shall take him to the door or the door-
 37 post and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be
 38 his servant for life.

39 If a man sells his daughter as a servant, she is
 40 not to go free as menservants do. 41 If she does not
 42 please the master who has selected her for him-
 43 self, he must let her be redeemed. He has no
 44 right to sell her to foreigners, because he has bro-
 45 ken faith with her. 46 If he selects her for his son, he
 47 must grant her the rights of a daughter. 48 If he
 49 marries another woman, he must not deprive the
 50 first one of her food, clothing and marital rights.
 51 If he does not provide her with these three
 52 things, she is to go free, without any payment of
 53 money.

Personal Injuries

54 Anyone who strikes a man and kills him shall
 55 surely be put to death. 56 However, if he does not
 57 do it intentionally, but God lets it happen, he is to
 58 flee to a place I will designate. 59 But if a man
 60 schemes and kills another man deliberately, take
 61 him away from my altar and put him to death.

19:1-20:17 your offerings

20:1-21:17 Or before God

20:23-21:17 Or master so that he does not choose her

INSIGHT

The Covenant

What difference does a stone tablet make?

"Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession." 19:5

Many scholars call the next few chapters the most pivotal section of the Old Testament. The Israelites, called before a trembling and smoking mountain by loud trumpet blasts, were about to receive something unique in all history: a stone document to be deposited in the most valuable piece of furniture in the nation, the Ark of the Covenant. What made a stone tablet so valuable? The "covenant" it summarized was sacred, signed by the finger of God himself.

And yet someone who simply turned to Exodus and started reading the contents of the covenant might have trouble understanding all the fuss. The covenant begins with the familiar Ten Commandments. It proceeds from there to rules on cursing parents and knocking out teeth, oddly mixed in with rules on interest rates and cooking young goats in their mothers' milk. What is so special, after all, about the laws and instructions described here?

Since we don't normally communicate on stone tablets today, the question, "What made a stone tablet so valuable?" might better be rephrased, "What makes a piece of paper valuable?" Seen in that light, today's societies, like the Israelites', stake an awful lot on certain pieces of paper.

Constitution

Resting in a helium-filled bronze case in the Library of Congress, the U.S. Constitution is arguably the most valuable single piece of paper in the entire country. At a moment's notice it can be lowered into a fireproof, shockproof safe. But dollars alone barely hint at the Constitution's value. Its real importance comes to light in a marble building down the street, where the Supreme Court hears hundreds of legal cases.

Each case has climbed up from lower courts through an arduous, expensive process and now only one decision remains. Whatever the Supreme Court decides will rule as the law of the land. The Supreme Court bases its decision on one final authority: the Constitution. If the nine members judge a law "constitutional," the law will stand. If not, it will be overturned.

For Israel, the covenant became their constitution. Details of the law came out in three main places: here at Sinai (Exodus and Leviticus), during the wilderness wanderings (Numbers), and on the plains of Moab (Deuteronomy). The complete legal code extended from the grand sweep of

Anyone who attacks^a his father or his mother must be put to death.

Anyone who kidnaps another and either sells or still has him when he is caught must be put to death.

Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.

¹⁸If men quarrel and one hits the other with a stone or with his fist^b and he does not die but is wounded, ¹⁹the one who struck the blow will be held responsible if the other gets up and walks around outside with his staff; however, he must pay the injured man for the loss of his time so that he is completely healed.

If a man beats his male or female slave with a whip and the slave dies as a direct result, he must be punished, ²¹but he is not to be punished if the slave gets up after a day or two, since the slave is his property.

If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely^c but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows. ²³But if there is serious in-

jury, you are to take life for life, ²⁴eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, ²⁵burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

²⁶If a man hits a manservant or maidservant in the eye and destroys it, he must let the servant go free to compensate for the eye. ²⁷And if he knocks out the tooth of a manservant or maidservant, he must let the servant go free to compensate for the tooth.

²⁸If a bull gores a man or a woman to death, the bull must be stoned to death, and its meat must not be eaten. But the owner of the bull will not be held responsible. ²⁹If, however, the bull has had the habit of goring and the owner has been warned but has not kept it penned up and it kills a man or woman, the bull must be stoned and the owner also must be put to death. ³⁰However, if payment is demanded of him, he may redeem his life by paying whatever is demanded. ³¹This law also applies if the bull gores a son or daughter. ³²If the bull gores a male or female slave, the owner must pay thirty shekels^d of silver to the master of the slave, and the bull must be stoned.

³³If a man uncovers a pit or digs one and fails to

^a15 Or kills

^b18 Or with a tool

^c22 Or she has a miscarriage

^d32 That is, about 12 ounces (about 0.3 kilogram)

national police to petty disputes of living together. God was shaping an entire culture for a group of homeless pilgrims. In all, 613 separate commands ordered their political, social, and spiritual lives.

Other nations were haunted by the unpredictability of their gods. Who could tell what would anger or please them? But because of the covenant, Israelites knew exactly what God required and where they stood before him. They had a basis for trust and security as a nation.

For Israel, the covenant established its birth as a nation. God said he had chosen the Jews as a treasured possession (19:5-6). He wanted a nation unlike any other, a model society centered around a commitment to him. He needed a pure people, kept separate.

The next few books of the Bible spell out the obligations, but also the rewards, of being God's chosen people, his "family." If they obeyed, the Israelites would live free from diseases, their crops would grow bountifully, their women would give birth to many children, their armies prove victorious—in short, they would enjoy unprecedented national wealth and security (23:20-28). The covenant defined those benefits—all part of being born as the children of God.

Marriage Certificate

Marriage is far more than a piece of paper, surely. It involves love and trust, sexuality, the thousand details involved in two people sharing life together. But in the eyes of the law, marriage requires a piece of paper. The document makes formal and legal the most intimate, personal relationship human beings ever have.

Later, the prophets Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel would compare the covenant to marriage. They pointed out that Israel's treatment of God amounted to adultery, and they called the nation back to its original covenant. The laws listed in detail are merely the formal expression of a love relationship between God and his people.

Pieces of paper define the boundaries of a relationship, but in no way can they express it adequately. You cannot get an adequate picture of life in a country by reading its constitution's dry prose, nor can you understand the mystery of marriage by studying a certificate of marriage. In the same way, the laws and rules in the Book of the Covenant surely do not yield a complete picture of life in a nation bound to God. But the covenant, and the context in which it came, show much about what God desired from his followers.

Life Questions. Do you own any valuable papers that express a kind of "covenant"? If you drew up a covenant between yourself and God, what would it say?

cover it and an ox or a donkey falls into it, ³⁴the owner of the pit must pay for the loss; he must pay its owner, and the dead animal will be his.

³⁵"If a man's bull injures the bull of another and it dies, they are to sell the live one and divide both the money and the dead animal equally. ³⁶However, if it was known that the bull had the habit of goring, yet the owner did not keep it penned up, the owner must pay, animal for animal, and the dead animal will be his.

Protection of Property

22 "If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he must pay back five head of cattle for the ox and four sheep for the sheep.

²"If a thief is caught breaking in and is struck so that he dies, the defender is not guilty of bloodshed; ³but if it happens^a after sunrise, he is guilty of bloodshed.

"A thief must certainly make restitution, but if he has nothing, he must be sold to pay for his theft.

⁴"If the stolen animal is found alive in his possession—whether ox or donkey or sheep—he must pay back double.

⁵"If a man grazes his livestock in a field or vineyard and lets them stray and they graze in another man's field, he must make restitution from the best of his own field or vineyard.

⁶"If a fire breaks out and spreads into thornbushes so that it burns shocks of grain or standing grain or the whole field, the one who started the fire must make restitution.

⁷"If a man gives his neighbor silver or goods for safekeeping and they are stolen from the neighbor's house, the thief, if he is caught, must pay back double. ⁸But if the thief is not found, the owner of the house must appear before the judges^b to determine whether he has laid his hands on the other man's property. ⁹In all cases of illegal possession of an ox, a donkey, a sheep, a garment, or any other lost property about which somebody says, 'This is mine,' both parties are to bring their cases before the judges. The one whom the judges declare^c guilty must pay back double to his neighbor.

¹⁰"If a man gives a donkey, an ox, a sheep or any other animal to his neighbor for safekeeping and it dies or is injured or is taken away while no one is looking, ¹¹the issue between them will be settled by the taking of an oath before the Lord that the

neighbor did not lay hands on the other person's property. The owner is to accept this, and no restitution is required. ¹²But if the animal was stolen from the neighbor, he must make restitution to the owner. ¹³If it was torn to pieces by a wild animal, he shall bring in the remains as evidence and he will not be required to pay for the torn animal.

¹⁴"If a man borrows an animal from his neighbor and it is injured or dies while the owner is not present, he must make restitution. ¹⁵But if the owner is with the animal, the borrower will not have to pay. If the animal was hired, the money paid for the hire covers the loss.

Social Responsibility

¹⁶"If a man seduces a virgin who is not pledged to be married and sleeps with her, he must pay the bride-price, and she shall be his wife. ¹⁷If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he must still pay the bride-price for virgins.

¹⁸"Do not allow a sorceress to live.

¹⁹"Anyone who has sexual relations with an animal must be put to death.

²⁰"Whoever sacrifices to any god other than the Lord must be destroyed.^d

²¹"Do not mistreat an alien or oppress him, for you were aliens in Egypt.

²²"Do not take advantage of a widow or an orphan. ²³If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry. ²⁴My anger will be aroused, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives will become widows and your children fatherless.

²⁵"If you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not be like a moneylender; charge him no interest.^e ²⁶If you take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, return it to him by sunset, ²⁷because his cloak is the only covering he has for his body. What else will he sleep in? When he cries out to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate.

²⁸"Do not blaspheme God^f or curse the ruler of your people.

²⁹"Do not hold back offerings from your granaries or your vats.^g

"You must give me the firstborn of your sons. ³⁰Do the same with your cattle and your sheep. Let them stay with their mothers for seven days, but give them to me on the eighth day.

³¹"You are to be my holy people. So do not eat the meat of an animal torn by wild beasts; throw it to the dogs.

Laws of Justice and Mercy

23 "Do not spread false reports. Do not help a wicked man by being a malicious witness.

²"Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you give testimony in a lawsuit, do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd, ³and do not show favoritism to a poor man in his lawsuit.

⁴"If you come across your enemy's ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to take it back to him. ⁵If you see the donkey of someone who hates you

22:9 Punishment by Restitution

In contrast to the punishments of other contemporary codes (such as Sumer and Babylonia), the penalties for wrongdoing described in the next few chapters emphasize punishments fitted to the crime. They stress restitution, rather than vengeance. Modern courtrooms are once again practicing restitution—making the criminal serve society or "make good" to the victim.

^a 1 Or if he strikes him ^b 8 Or before God, also in verse 9 ^c 9 Or whom God declares
irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the Lord, often by totally destroying them
^d 29 The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain.

^e 20 The Hebrew term refers to the
^f 25 Or excessive interest ^g 28 Or Do

(Faint, illegible handwritten notes)

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

The first of the seven days was the day of the first day of the week. The second day was the day of the second day of the week. The third day was the day of the third day of the week. The fourth day was the day of the fourth day of the week. The fifth day was the day of the fifth day of the week. The sixth day was the day of the sixth day of the week. The seventh day was the day of the seventh day of the week.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

11. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 271:1233-1234, 1994

from the fact it is measured from the
top of the head without vest, as I
said on the 12th of the appointed time in
the year of the month and came up

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
 Your obedient servant,
 J. H. M.

... weathering at the end of
... was rather a sharp drop from the

... 1. 1954

1. The first of these is the fact that the
2. second of these is the fact that the
3. third of these is the fact that the
4. fourth of these is the fact that the
5. fifth of these is the fact that the
6. sixth of these is the fact that the
7. seventh of these is the fact that the
8. eighth of these is the fact that the
9. ninth of these is the fact that the
10. tenth of these is the fact that the

1945 JUL 25 TUES 11:30 PM

... the treatment of your soul and
... your soul

... and the mother's milk

Let's hope to prepare the way.

...and reaching an agreement ahead of you is
...the only way to get the job done. It is
...the only way to get the job done. It is
...the only way to get the job done. It is

It was almost impossible to obtain the right kind of

...and so on, as they are in the case of the
...and so on, as they are in the case of the

as stated to me and being met with the
the intention of the Porters, Captain.

... and I will make them
... and I will make them

1. 1974 1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025 2026 2027 2028 2029 2030 2031 2032 2033 2034 2035 2036 2037 2038 2039 2040 2041 2042 2043 2044 2045 2046 2047 2048 2049 2050 2051 2052 2053 2054 2055 2056 2057 2058 2059 2060 2061 2062 2063 2064 2065 2066 2067 2068 2069 2070 2071 2072 2073 2074 2075 2076 2077 2078 2079 2080 2081 2082 2083 2084 2085 2086 2087 2088 2089 2090 2091 2092 2093 2094 2095 2096 2097 2098 2099 2100 2101 2102 2103 2104 2105 2106 2107 2108 2109 2110 2111 2112 2113 2114 2115 2116 2117 2118 2119 2120 2121 2122 2123 2124 2125 2126 2127 2128 2129 2130 2131 2132 2133 2134 2135 2136 2137 2138 2139 2140 2141 2142 2143 2144 2145 2146 2147 2148 2149 2150 2151 2152 2153 2154 2155 2156 2157 2158 2159 2160 2161 2162 2163 2164 2165 2166 2167 2168 2169 2170 2171 2172 2173 2174 2175 2176 2177 2178 2179 2180 2181 2182 2183 2184 2185 2186 2187 2188 2189 2190 2191 2192 2193 2194 2195 2196 2197 2198 2199 2200 2201 2202 2203 2204 2205 2206 2207 2208 2209 2210 2211 2212 2213 2214 2215 2216 2217 2218 2219 2220 2221 2222 2223 2224 2225 2226 2227 2228 2229 2230 2231 2232 2233 2234 2235 2236 2237 2238 2239 2240 2241 2242 2243 2244 2245 2246 2247 2248 2249 2250 2251 2252 2253 2254 2255 2256 2257 2258 2259 2260 2261 2262 2263 2264 2265 2266 2267 2268 2269 2270 2271 2272 2273 2274 2275 2276 2277 2278 2279 2280 2281 2282 2283 2284 2285 2286 2287 2288 2289 2290 2291 2292 2293 2294 2295 2296 2297 2298 2299 2300 2301 2302 2303 2304 2305 2306 2307 2308 2309 2310 2311 2312 2313 2314 2315 2316 2317 2318 2319 2320 2321 2322 2323 2324 2325 2326 2327 2328 2329 2330 2331 2332 2333 2334 2335 2336 2337 2338 2339 2340 2341 2342 2343 2344 2345 2346 2347 2348 2349 2350 2351 2352 2353 2354 2355 2356 2357 2358 2359 2360 2361 2362 2363 2364 2365 2366 2367 2368 2369 2370 2371 2372 2373 2374 2375 2376 2377 2378 2379 2380 2381 2382

ship them or follow their practice. You must ~~conquer~~ them and break their sacred stones to pieces. Worship the Lord your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you ^{2b}and none will ~~die~~ be born in your land. I will give you ^{a full} life upon it.

28 I will send my terror ahead of you and throw into confusion every nation you encounter. I will make all your enemies turn their backs and run. 29 I will send the hornet ahead of you to drive the Hivites, Canaanites and Hittites out of your way. 30 I will not drive them out in a single year, because the land would become desolate and the wild animals too numerous for you. 31 Little by little I will drive them out before you, until you have increased enough to take possession of the land.

31 "I will establish your borders from the Red Sea^a to the Sea of the Philistines,^b and from the desert to the River.^c I will hand over to you the people who live in the land and you will drive them out before you. 32 Do not make a covenant with them or with their gods. 33 Do not let them live on your land or they will cause you to sin against me because the worship of their gods will certainly be a snare to you."

The Covenant Confirmed

24 Then he said to Moses, "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. You are to worship at a distance, but Moses alone is to approach the LORD, the others must not come near. And the people may not come up with him."

When Moses went and told the people all the LORD's words and laws, they responded with one voice: "Everything the LORD has said we will do." Moses then wrote down everything the LORD had said.

He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the Lord. Moses took salt of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other salt he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey."

Jesus then took the mixed, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words."

Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphires, clear as the sky itself. But God did not raise his hand against those elders of the Israelites, they saw God, and they did not die.

One day, said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the

in it so that they light the space in front of it.³⁹ Its wick trimmers and trays are to be of pure gold.³⁹ A talent⁴⁰ of pure gold is to be used for the lampstand and all these accessories.⁴⁰ See that you make them according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.

The Tabernacle

26 Make the tabernacle with ten curtains of finely twisted linen and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, with cherubim worked into them by a skilled craftsman.² All the curtains are to be the same size—twenty-eight cubits long and four cubits wide.³ Join five of the curtains together, and do the same with the other five.⁴ Make loops of blue material along the edge of the end curtain in one set, and do the same with the end curtain in the other set.⁵ Make fifty loops on one curtain and fifty loops on the end curtain of the other set, with the loops opposite each other.⁶ Then make fifty gold clasps and use them to fasten the curtains together so that the tabernacle is a unit.

⁷ Make curtains of goat hair for the tent over the tabernacle—eleven altogether.⁸ All eleven curtains are to be the same size—thirty cubits long and four cubits wide.⁹ Join five of the curtains together into one set and the other six into another set. Fold the sixth curtain double at the front of the tent.¹⁰ Make fifty loops along the edge of the end curtain in one set and also along the edge of the end curtain in the other set.¹¹ Then make fifty bronze clasps and put them in the loops to fasten the tent together as a unit.¹² As for the additional length of the tent curtains, the half curtain that is left over is to hang down at the rear of the tabernacle.¹³ The tent curtains will be a cubit⁴ longer on both sides; what is left will hang over the sides of the tabernacle so as to cover it.¹⁴ Make for the tent a covering of ram skins dyed red, and over that a covering of hides of sea cows.⁴

⁵ Make upright frames of acacia wood for the tabernacle.¹⁶ Each frame is to be ten cubits long and a cubit and a half wide,¹⁷ with two projections set parallel to each other. Make all the frames of the tabernacle in this way.¹⁸ Make twenty frames for the south side of the tabernacle¹⁹ and make forty silver bases to go under them—two bases for each frame, one under each projection.²⁰ For the other side, the north side of the tabernacle, make twenty frames²¹ and forty silver bases—two under each frame.²² Make six frames for the far end, that is, the west end of the tabernacle,²³ and make two frames for the corners at the far end.²⁴ At these two corners they must be double from the bottom all the way to the top, and fitted into a single ring, both shall be like that.²⁵ So there will be eight frames and sixteen silver bases—two under each frame.

²⁶ Also make crossbars of acacia wood: five for the frames on one side of the tabernacle,²⁷ five for those on the other side, and five for the frames on the west, at the far end of the tabernacle.²⁸ The

center crossbar is to extend from end to end at the middle of the frames.²⁹ Overlay the frames with gold and make gold rings to hold the crossbars. Also overlay the crossbars with gold.

³⁰ Set up the tabernacle according to the plan shown you on the mountain.

³¹ Make a curtain of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen, with cherubim worked into it by a skilled craftsman.³² Hang it with gold hooks on four posts of acacia wood overlaid with gold and standing on four silver bases.³³ Hang the curtain from the clasps and place the ark of the Testimony behind the curtain. The curtain will separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place.³⁴ Put the atonement cover on the ark of the Testimony in the Most Holy Place.³⁵ Place the table outside the curtain on the north side of the tabernacle and put the lampstand opposite it on the south side.

³⁶ For the entrance to the tent make a curtain of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen—the work of an embroiderer.³⁷ Make gold hooks for this curtain and five posts of acacia wood overlaid with gold. And cast five bronze bases for them.

The Altar of Burnt Offering

27 Build an altar of acacia wood, three cubits high; it is to be square, five cubits long and five cubits wide.² Make a horn at each of the four corners, so that the horns and the altar are of one piece, and overlay the altar with bronze.³ Make all its utensils of bronze—its pots to remove the ashes, and its shovels, sprinkling bowls, meat forks and firepans.⁴ Make a grating for it, a bronze network, and make a bronze ring at each of the four corners of the network.⁵ Put it under the ledge of the altar so that it is halfway up the altar.⁶ Make poles of acacia wood for the altar and overlay them with bronze.⁷ The poles are to be inserted into the rings so they will be on two sides of the altar when it is carried.⁸ Make the altar hollow, out of boards. It is to be made just as you were shown on the mountain.

The Courtyard

⁹ Make a courtyard for the tabernacle. The

26:33 A Torn Curtain

The thick curtain described here separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. Anyone who ventured beyond that curtain would die. The New Testament, however, records that at Jesus' crucifixion the curtain tore in two, from top to bottom. The tearing symbolized what Christ had accomplished: he broke down the separation between God and humanity (Matthew 27:51; Hebrews 10:20).

³⁹ That is, about 75 pounds (about 34 kilograms) wide.

⁴⁰ That is, about 45 feet (about 13.5 meters) long and 6 feet (about 1.8 meters) wide.

⁴¹ That is, about 1 1/2 feet (about 0.5 meter).

⁴² That is, dugongs.

⁴³ That is, about 15 feet (about 4.5 meters) long and 2 1/4 feet (about 0.7 meter) wide.

⁴⁴ That is, about 4 1/2 feet (about 1.3 meters).

⁴⁵ That is, about 7 1/2 feet (about 2.3 meters) long and wide.

south side shall be a hundred cubits long and is to have curtains of finely twisted linen with twenty posts and twenty bronze bases and with silver hooks and bands on the posts. 11 The north side shall also be a hundred cubits long and is to have curtains, with twenty posts and twenty bronze bases and with silver hooks and bands on the posts.

12 The west end of the courtyard shall be fifty cubits wide and have curtains, with ten posts and ten bases. 13 On the east end, toward the sun

rise, the courtyard shall also be fifty cubits wide. 14 Curtains fifteen cubits long are to be on each side of the entrance with ten posts and ten bases. 15 And curtains fifteen cubits long are to be on the other side with three posts and three bases.

16 For the entrance to the courtyard, make a curtain twenty cubits long of blue and purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen, the work of an embroiderer, with ten posts and ten bases. 17 All the posts around the courtyard are to have silver bands and hooks and bases of bronze.

¹⁰ That is, about 150 feet (about 46 meters); also in verse 11.

¹¹ That is, about 22 1/2 feet (about 6.9 meters); also in verse 15.

¹² That is, about 75 feet (about 23 meters); also in verse 13.
¹³ That is, about 50 feet (about 15 meters).

INSIGHT

When God Was Obvious *Few atheists, but many rebels*

To the Israelites the glory of the LORD looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. 24:17

Why doesn't God intervene more? Why doesn't he directly feed the hungry, heal all the sick, and stop all wars? If God really exists, at the least why doesn't he make himself more obvious?

People who ask such questions often assume that, if God ever did spectacularly reveal himself, all doubts would vanish. Everyone would line up to believe in him.

Astonishing Reactions

Exodus tells of a time when God made himself perfectly obvious. The plagues on Egypt revealed his mighty power. An enormous miracle at the Red Sea provided sensational deliverance. A recurring miracle supplied food for the Israelites every morning. And, if questions about God's existence arose, doubters needed only to look to the ever-present glory cloud or pillar of fire. It must have been hard to be an atheist in those days.

Yet every instance of God's faithfulness seemed to summon up astonishing human unfaithfulness. The same Israelites who had watched God crush a pharaoh quaked at the first sign of Egyptian chariots. Three days after a miraculous escape across the Red Sea they were grumbling to Moses and God about water supplies.

A month or so later, when hunger pangs began to gnaw at them, they bitterly complained, "If only we had died by the LORD's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death" (16:3). God responded with a provision of manna (that would continue for 40 years) and quail, but the Israelites were soon complaining about the water supplies again.

The Great Rebellion

Exodus 32 shows the Israelites at their worst. People who had eaten manna for breakfast, who had just solemnly agreed to keep every word of the covenant, who were at that moment standing beside a mountain stormy with the Lord's presence—those very people proceeded to melt down their gold jewelry and flagrantly flout the first commandment.

"Stiff-necked," God called the Israelites as he burned in anger against them. Only Moses' eloquent appeal saved their lives.

The history of the Israelites should nail a coffin lid on the notion that impressive displays of God's power will guarantee faith. (Jesus would later say, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead." Luke 16:31.) People who had everyday proof of God demonstrated only one thing: the monotonous consistency of human nature.

The offenders would pay for their acts by wandering 40 years in a desolate wilderness while a new, untainted generation grew up to replace them. But a pattern was beginning to emerge: if the Israelites failed God in the shadow of Mount Sinai, how would they possibly withstand the seduction of new cultures in the promised land? The next generation, too, would fail God, as would all their descendants. The old covenant, as Paul would so convincingly argue in the book of Galatians, succeeded mainly by proving undeniably the need for a new one.

Life Questions: Do you ever have doubts about God's existence? What would it take to completely convince you?

courtyard shall be a hundred cubits long and fifty cubits wide,^a with curtains of finely twisted linen five cubits^b high, and with bronze bases.¹⁹ All the other articles used in the service of the tabernacle, whatever their function, including all the tent pegs for it and those for the courtyard, are to be of bronze.

Oil for the Lampstand

²⁰“Command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning. ²¹In the Tent of Meeting, outside the curtain that is in front of the Testimony, Aaron and his sons are to keep the lamps burning before the LORD from evening till morning. This is to be a lasting ordinance among the Israelites for the generations to come.

The Priestly Garments

28 Have Aaron your brother brought to you from among the Israelites, along with his sons Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, so they may serve me as priests. ²Make sacred garments for your brother Aaron, to give him dignity and honor. ³Tell all the skilled men to whom I have given wisdom in such matters that they are to make garments for Aaron, for his consecration, so he may serve me as priest. ⁴These are the garments they are to make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a woven tunic, a turban and a sash. They are to make these sacred garments for your brother Aaron and his sons, so they may serve me as priests. ⁵Have them use gold, and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and fine linen.

The Ephod

⁶“Make the ephod of gold, and of blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of finely twisted linen—the work of a skilled craftsman. ⁷It is to have two shoulder pieces attached to two of its corners, so it can be fastened. ⁸Its skillfully woven waistband is to be like it—of one piece with the ephod and made with gold, and with blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and with finely twisted linen.

⁹“Take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel. ¹⁰In the order of their birth—six names on one stone and the remaining six on the other. ¹¹Engrave the names of the sons of Israel on the two stones the way a gem cutter engraves a seal. Then mount the stones in gold filigree settings. ¹²and fasten them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod as memorial stones for the sons of Israel. Aaron is to bear the names on his shoulders as a memorial before the LORD. ¹³Make gold filigree settings. ¹⁴and two braided chains of pure gold, like a rope, and attach the chains to the settings.

The Breastpiece

¹⁵“Fashion a breastpiece for making decisions—the work of a skilled craftsman. Make it like the ephod: of gold, and of blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of finely twisted linen. ¹⁶It is to be square

—a span^c long and a span wide—and folded double. ¹⁷Then mount four rows of precious stones on it. In the first row there shall be a ruby, a topaz and a beryl; ¹⁸in the second row a turquoise, a sapphire^d and an emerald; ¹⁹in the third row a jacinth, an agate and an amethyst; ²⁰in the fourth row a chrysolite, an onyx and a jasper.^e Mount them in gold filigree settings. ²¹There are to be twelve stones, one for each of the names of the sons of Israel, each engraved like a seal with the name of one of the twelve tribes.

²²“For the breastpiece make braided chains of pure gold, like a rope. ²³Make two gold rings for it and fasten them to two corners of the breastpiece. ²⁴Fasten the two gold chains to the rings at the corners of the breastpiece, ²⁵and the other ends of the chains to the two settings, attaching them to the shoulder pieces of the ephod at the front. ²⁶Make two gold rings and attach them to the other two corners of the breastpiece on the inside edge next to the ephod. ²⁷Make two more gold rings and attach them to the bottom of the shoulder pieces on the front of the ephod, close to the seam just above the waistband of the ephod. ²⁸The rings of the breastpiece are to be tied to the rings of the ephod with blue cord, connecting it to the waistband, so that the breastpiece will not swing out from the ephod.

²⁹“Whenever Aaron enters the Holy Place, he will bear the names of the sons of Israel over his heart on the breastpiece of decision as a continuing memorial before the LORD. ³⁰Also put the Urim and the Thummim in the breastpiece, so they may be over Aaron’s heart whenever he enters the presence of the LORD. Thus Aaron will always bear the means of making decisions for the Israelites over his heart before the LORD.

Other Priestly Garments

³¹“Make the robe of the ephod entirely of blue cloth, ³²with an opening for the head in its center. There shall be a woven edge like a collar^f around this opening, so that it will not tear. ³³Make pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet yarn around the hem of the robe, with gold bells between them. ³⁴The gold bells and the pomegranates are to alternate around the hem of the robe. ³⁵Aaron must wear it when he ministers. The sound of the bells will be heard when he enters the Holy Place before the LORD and when he comes out, so that he will not die.

³⁶“Make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it as on a seal: HOLY TO THE LORD. ³⁷Fasten a blue cord to it to attach it to the turban; it is to be on the front of the turban. ³⁸It will be on Aaron’s forehead, and he will bear the guilt involved in the sacred gifts the Israelites consecrate, whatever their gifts may be. It will be on Aaron’s forehead continually so that they will be acceptable to the LORD.

³⁹“Weave the tunic of fine linen and make the turban of fine linen. The sash is to be the work of an embroiderer. ⁴⁰Make tunics, sashes and headbands for Aaron’s sons, to give them dignity and

^a18 That is, about 150 feet (about 46 meters) long and 75 feet (about 23 meters) wide.

^b16 That is, about 9 inches (about 22 centimeters).

^c18 Or *lapis lazuli*.

^d18 That is, about 7 1/2 feet (about 2.3 meters).

stones is uncertain.

^e20 The precise identification of some of these precious stones is uncertain.

^f32 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

honor. ⁴¹After you put these clothes on your brother Aaron and his sons, anoint and ordain them. Consecrate them so they may serve me as priests.

⁴²"Make linen undergarments as a covering for the body, reaching from the waist to the thigh. ⁴³Aaron and his sons must wear them whenever they enter the Tent of Meeting or approach the altar to minister in the Holy Place, so that they will not incur guilt and die.

"This is to be a lasting ordinance for Aaron and his descendants.

Consecration of the Priests

29 "This is what you are to do to consecrate them, so they may serve me as priests. Take a young bull and two rams without defect. ²And from fine wheat flour, without yeast, make bread, and cakes mixed with oil, and wafers spread with oil. ³Put them in a basket and present them in it—along with the bull and the two rams. ⁴Then bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and wash them with water. ⁵Take the garments and dress Aaron with the tunic, the robe of the ephod, the ephod itself and the breastpiece. Fasten the ephod on him by its skillfully woven waistband. ⁶Put the turban on his head and attach the sacred diadem to the turban. ⁷Take the anointing oil and anoint him by pouring it on his head. ⁸Bring his sons and dress them in tunics ⁹and put headbands on them. Then tie sashes on Aaron and his sons. ¹⁰The priesthood is theirs by a lasting ordinance. In this way you shall ordain Aaron and his sons.

¹⁰"Bring the bull to the front of the Tent of Meeting, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on its head. ¹¹Slaughter it in the LORD's presence at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. ¹²Take some of the bull's blood and put it on the horns of the altar with your finger, and pour out the rest of it at the base of the altar. ¹³Then take all the fat around the inner parts, the covering of the liver, and both kidneys with the fat around them, and burn them on the altar. ¹⁴But burn the bull's flesh and its hide and its offal outside the camp. It is a sin offering.

¹⁵"Take one of the rams, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on its head. ¹⁶Slaughter it and take the blood and sprinkle it against the altar on all sides. ¹⁷Cut the ram into pieces and wash the inner parts and the legs, putting them with the head and the other pieces. ¹⁸Then burn the entire ram on the altar. It is a burnt offering to the LORD, a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the LORD by fire.

¹⁹"Take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on its head. ²⁰Slaughter it; take some of its blood and put it on the lobes of the right ears of Aaron and his sons, on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet. Then sprinkle blood against the altar on all sides. ²¹And take some of the blood on the altar and some of the anointing oil and sprinkle it on Aaron and his garments and on his sons and their

garments. Then he and his sons and their garments will be consecrated.

²²"Take from this ram the fat, the fat tail—the fat around the inner parts, the covering of the liver, both kidneys with the fat around them, and the right thigh. (This is the ram for the ordination.) ²³From the basket of bread made without yeast, which is before the LORD, take a loaf, and a cake made with oil, and a wafer. ²⁴Put all these in the hands of Aaron and his sons and wave them before the LORD as a wave offering. ²⁵Then take them from their hands and burn them on the altar along with the burnt offering for a pleasing aroma to the LORD, an offering made to the LORD by fire. ²⁶After you take the breast of the ram for Aaron's ordination, wave it before the LORD as a wave offering, and it will be your share.

²⁷"Consecrate those parts of the ordination ram that belong to Aaron and his sons: the breast that was waved and the thigh that was presented. ²⁸This is always to be the regular share from the Israelites for Aaron and his sons. It is the contribution the Israelites are to make to the LORD from their fellowship offerings.^b

²⁹"Aaron's sacred garments will belong to his descendants so that they can be anointed and ordained in them. ³⁰The son who succeeds him as priest and comes to the Tent of Meeting to minister in the Holy Place is to wear them seven days.

³¹"Take the ram for the ordination and cook the meat in a sacred place. ³²At the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, Aaron and his sons are to eat the meat of the ram and the bread that is in the basket. ³³They are to eat these offerings by which atonement was made for their ordination and consecration. But no one else may eat them, because they are sacred. ³⁴And if any of the meat of the ordination ram or any bread is left over till morning, burn it up. It must not be eaten, because it is sacred.

³⁵"Do for Aaron and his sons everything I have commanded you, taking seven days to ordain them. ³⁶Sacrifice a bull each day as a sin offering to make atonement. Purify the altar by making atonement for it, and anoint it to consecrate it. ³⁷For seven days make atonement for the altar and consecrate it. Then the altar will be most holy, and whatever touches it will be holy.

³⁸"This is what you are to offer on the altar regularly each day: two lambs a year old. ³⁹Offer one in the morning and the other at twilight. ⁴⁰With the first lamb offer a tenth of an ephah^c of fine flour mixed with a quarter of a hin^d of oil from pressed olives, and a quarter of a hin of wine as a drink offering. ⁴¹Sacrifice the other lamb at twilight with the same grain offering and its drink offering

29:20 The Whole Body

As part of their purification, the priests daubed blood on their ears (which hear God's laws), their hands (which do his will), and their toes (which were prepared to follow in his steps).

^a Hebrew, Septuagint on them

^b 28 Traditionally peace offerings

^c 40 That is, probably about 1 quart (about 1 liter)

^d 40 That is, probably about 2 quarts (about 2 liters)

as in the morning—a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the LORD by fire.

⁴²For the generations to come this burnt offering is to be made regularly at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting before the LORD. There I will meet you and speak to you; ⁴³there also I will meet with the Israelites, and the place will be consecrated by my glory.

⁴⁴So I will consecrate the Tent of Meeting and the altar and will consecrate Aaron and his sons to serve me as priests. ⁴⁵Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God. ⁴⁶They will know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God.

The Altar of Incense

30 Make an altar of acacia wood for burning incense. ²It is to be square, a cubit long and a cubit wide, and two cubits high^a—its horns of one piece with it. ³Overlay the top and all the sides and the horns with pure gold, and make a gold molding around it. ⁴Make two gold rings for the altar below the molding—two on opposite sides—to hold the poles used to carry it. ⁵Make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. ⁶Put the altar in front of the curtain that is before the ark of the Testimony—before the atonement cover that is over the Testimony—where I will meet with you.

⁷“Aaron must burn fragrant incense on the altar every morning when he tends the lamps. ⁸He must burn incense again when he lights the lamps at twilight so incense will burn regularly before the LORD for the generations to come. ⁹Do not offer on this altar any other incense or any burnt offering or grain offering,^b and do not pour a drink offering on it. ¹⁰Once a year Aaron shall make atonement on its horns. This annual atonement must be made with the blood of the atoning sin offering for the generations to come. It is most holy to the LORD.”

Atonement Money

¹¹Then the LORD said to Moses, ¹²“When you take a census of the Israelites to count them, each one must pay the LORD a ransom for his life at the time he is counted. Then no plague will come on them when you number them. ¹³Each one who

crosses over to those already counted is to give a half shekel,^c according to the sanctuary shekel, which weighs twenty gerahs. This half shekel is an offering to the LORD. ¹⁴All who cross over, those twenty years old or more, are to give an offering to the LORD. ¹⁵The rich are not to give more than a half shekel and the poor are not to give less when you make the offering to the LORD to atone for your lives. ¹⁶Receive the atonement money from the Israelites and use it for the service of the Tent of Meeting. It will be a memorial for the Israelites before the LORD, making atonement for your lives.”

Basin for Washing

¹⁷Then the LORD said to Moses, ¹⁸“Make a bronze basin, with its bronze stand, for washing. Place it between the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and put water in it. ¹⁹Aaron and his sons are to wash their hands and feet with water from it. ²⁰Whenever they enter the Tent of Meeting, they shall wash with water so that they will not die. Also, when they approach the altar to minister by presenting an offering made to the LORD by fire, ²¹they shall wash their hands and feet so that they will not die. This is to be a lasting ordinance for Aaron and his descendants for the generations to come.”

Anointing Oil

²²Then the LORD said to Moses, ²³“Take the following fine spices: 500 shekels^d of liquid myrrh, half as much (that is, 250 shekels) of fragrant cinnamon, 250 shekels of fragrant cane, ²⁴500 shekels of cassia—all according to the sanctuary shekel—and a hin^e of olive oil. ²⁵Make these into a sacred anointing oil, a fragrant blend, the work of a perfumer. It will be the sacred anointing oil. ²⁶Then use it to anoint the Tent of Meeting, the ark of the Testimony, ²⁷the table and all its articles, the lampstand and its accessories, the altar of incense, ²⁸the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and the basin with its stand. ²⁹You shall consecrate them so they will be most holy, and whatever touches them will be holy.

³⁰“Anoint Aaron and his sons and consecrate them so they may serve me as priests. ³¹Say to the Israelites, ‘This is to be my sacred anointing oil for the generations to come. ³²Do not pour it on men’s bodies and do not make any oil with the same formula. It is sacred, and you are to consider it sacred. ³³Whoever makes perfume like it and whoever puts it on anyone other than a priest must be cut off from his people.’”

Incense

³⁴Then the LORD said to Moses, “Take fragrant spices—gum resin,^f onycha and galbanum—and pure frankincense, all in equal amounts, ³⁵and make a fragrant blend of incense, the work of a perfumer. It is to be salted and pure and sacred. ³⁶Grind some of it to powder and place it in front of the Testimony in the Tent of Meeting, where I will

30:10 Jewish Holy Days

Orthodox Jews still faithfully honor the Day of Atonement described here, the holy day of Yom Kippur. But the New Testament book of Hebrews reinterprets this period of time as a copy, or shadow, of the real thing to come in Jesus Christ. What a high priest accomplished, through elaborate ceremony, once a year on the Day of Atonement, Christ did once for all (Hebrews 8-9). As a consequence, all of us—not just a purified priest—can confidently “enter the Most Holy Place.”

^a2 That is, about 1 1/2 feet (about 0.5 meter) long and wide and about 3 feet (about 0.9 meter) high (about 6 grams), also in verse 15. ^b23 That is, about 12 1/2 pounds (about 6 kilograms) (about 4 liters).

^c13 That is, about 1/5 ounce.

^d24 That is, probably about 4 quarts.

meet with you. It shall be most holy to you. ³⁷Do not make any incense with this formula for yourselves; consider it holy to the LORD. ³⁸Whoever makes any like it to enjoy its fragrance must be cut off from his people.

Bezalel and Oholiab

31 Then the LORD said to Moses, ²"See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, ³and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts— ⁴to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, ⁵to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship. ⁶Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also I have given skill to all the craftsmen to make everything I have commanded you: ⁷the Tent of Meeting, the ark of the Testimony with the atonement cover on it, and all the other furnishings of the tent— ⁸the table and its articles, the pure gold lampstand and all its accessories, the altar of incense, ⁹the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, the basin with its stand— ¹⁰and also the woven garments, both the sacred garments for Aaron the priest and the garments for his sons when they serve as priests, ¹¹and the anointing oil and fragrant incense for the Holy Place. They are to make them just as I commanded you."

The Sabbath

¹²Then the LORD said to Moses, ¹³"Say to the Israelites, 'You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the LORD, who makes you holy.'

¹⁴"Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it must be put to death; whoever does any work on that day must be cut off from his people. ¹⁵For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day must be put to death. ¹⁶The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. ¹⁷It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he abstained from work and rested.'"

¹⁸When the LORD finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the Testimony, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.

The Golden Calf

32 When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, "Come, make us gods^b who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him."

²Aaron answered them, "Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me." ³So all

the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. ⁴He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, "These are your gods,^c O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt."

⁵When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, "Tomorrow there will be a festival to the LORD." ⁶So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings.^d Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.

⁷Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. ⁸They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.'

⁹"I have seen these people," the LORD said to Moses, "and they are a stiff-necked people. ¹⁰Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation."

¹¹But Moses sought the favor of the LORD his God. "O LORD," he said, "why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? ¹²Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people. ¹³Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.'"

¹⁴Then the LORD relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.

¹⁵Moses turned and went down the mountain with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands. They were inscribed on both sides, front and back. ¹⁶The tablets were the work of God; the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.

¹⁷When Joshua heard the noise of the people shouting, he said to Moses, "There is the sound of war in the camp."

¹⁸Moses replied:

"It is not the sound of victory,
it is not the sound of defeat;
it is the sound of singing that I hear."

¹⁹When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain. ²⁰And he took the calf they had made and burned it in the fire; then he ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it.

²¹He said to Aaron, "What did these people do

^a13 Or who sanctifies you, or who sets you apart as holy

^b1 Or a god; also in verses 23 and 31

^c4 Or This is your god; also in verse 8

^d6 Traditionally peace offerings

to you, that you led them into such great sin?"

²²"Do not be angry, my lord," Aaron answered. "You know how prone these people are to evil." ²³They said to me, "Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him." ²⁴So I told them, "Whoever has any gold jewelry, take it off." Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!"

²⁵Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so became a laughingstock to their enemies. ²⁶So he stood at the entrance to the camp and said, "Whoever is for the LORD, come to me." And all the Levites rallied to him.

²⁷Then he said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says. 'Each man strap a sword to his side. Go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each killing his brother and friend and neighbor.' " ²⁸The Levites did as Moses commanded, and that day about three thousand of the people died. ²⁹Then Moses said, "You have been set apart to the LORD today, for you were against your own sons and brothers, and he has blessed you this day."

³⁰The next day Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin."

³¹So Moses went back to the LORD and said, "Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. ³²But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written."

³³The LORD replied to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book. ³⁴Now go, lead the people to the place I spoke of, and my angel will go before you. However, when the time comes for me to punish, I will punish them for their sin."

³⁵And the LORD struck the people with a plague because of what they did with the calf Aaron had made.

33 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Leave this place, you and the people you brought up out of Egypt, and go up to the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.' ²I will send an angel before you and drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. ³Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way."

⁴When the people heard these distressing words, they began to mourn and no one put on any ornaments. ⁵For the LORD had said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites, 'You are a stiff-necked people. If I were to go with you even for a moment, I might destroy you. Now take off your ornaments and I will decide what to do with you.' " ⁶So the Israelites stripped off their ornaments at Mount Horeb.

The Tent of Meeting

⁷Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it

outside the camp some distance away, calling it the "tent of meeting." Anyone inquiring of the LORD would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp. ⁸And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent. ⁹As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the LORD spoke with Moses. ¹⁰Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshiped, each at the entrance to his tent. ¹¹The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.

Moses and the Glory of the LORD

¹²Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.' ¹³If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people."

¹⁴The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

¹⁵Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. ¹⁶How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"

¹⁷And the LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name."

¹⁸Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."

¹⁹And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. ²⁰But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."

²¹Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. ²²When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by."

33:3 Why the Jews?

This remarkable scene shows Moses pleading with God not to abandon the Jews, his chosen people. Eventually, God did agree to lead them on (33:17). Why were the Jews chosen? Why not some other race? When the Bible touches on the question at all, it gives no comprehensive answer. Usually, the reply boils down to something like this, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy" (33:19). God reserves the right to choose whomever he wants. But Exodus makes one thing clear. Israelites were not chosen because of their bravery or impressiveness or even faithfulness. Their selection was an act of God's pure grace; no one else can take the credit.

²³Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."

The New Stone Tablets

34 The LORD said to Moses, "Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. ²Be ready in the morning, and then come up on Mount Sinai. Present yourself to me there on top of the mountain. ³No one is to come with you or be seen anywhere on the mountain; not even the flocks and herds may graze in front of the mountain."

⁴So Moses chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones and went up Mount Sinai early in the morning, as the LORD had commanded him; and he carried the two stone tablets in his hands. ⁵Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. ⁶And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation."

⁸Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshiped. ⁹"O Lord, if I have found favor in your eyes," he said, "then let the Lord go with us. Although this is a stiff-necked people, forgive our wickedness and our sin, and take us as your inheritance."

¹⁰Then the LORD said: "I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the LORD, will do for you. ¹¹Obey what I command you today. I will drive out before you the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. ¹²Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you are going, or they will be a snare among you. ¹³Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and cut down their Asherah poles.^a ¹⁴Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

¹⁵"Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land; for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them, they will invite you and you will eat their sacrifices. ¹⁶And when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same.

¹⁷"Do not make cast idols.

¹⁸"Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For seven days eat bread made without yeast as I commanded you. Do this at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in that month you came out of Egypt.

¹⁹"The first offspring of every womb belongs to me, including all the firstborn males of your livestock, whether from herd or flock. ²¹Redeem the firstborn donkey with a lamb, but if you do not redeem it, break its neck. Redeem all your firstborn sons.

"No one is to appear before me empty-handed.

²¹"Six days you shall labor, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the plowing season and harvest you must rest.

²²"Celebrate the Feast of Weeks with the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year.^b ²³Three times a year all your men are to appear before the Sovereign LORD, the God of Israel. ²⁴I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your territory, and no one will covet your land when you go up three times each year to appear before the LORD your God.

²⁵"Do not offer the blood of a sacrifice to me along with anything containing yeast, and do not let any of the sacrifice from the Passover Feast remain until morning.

²⁶"Bring the best of the firstfruits of your soil to the house of the LORD your God.

"Do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk."

²⁷Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." ²⁸Moses was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant—the Ten Commandments.

The Radiant Face of Moses

²⁹When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD. ³⁰When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him. ³¹But Moses called to them; so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them. ³²Afterward all the Israelites came near him, and he gave them all the commands the LORD had given him on Mount Sinai.

³³When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face. ³⁴But whenever he entered the LORD's presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, ³⁵they saw that his face was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the LORD.

Sabbath Regulations

35 Moses assembled the whole Israelite community and said to them, "These are the things the LORD has commanded you to do. ²For

34:6-7 Capsule Description

The self-description of God found in these two verses became for the Jews a profound summary of God's nature. The Old Testament quotes or alludes to this passage more than any other.

^a13 That is, symbols of the goddess Asherah

^b22 That is, in the fall

six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day shall be your holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the Lord. Whoever does any work on it must be put to death. ³Do not light a fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day."

Materials for the Tabernacle

⁴Moses said to the whole Israelite community, "This is what the Lord has commanded. ⁵From

⁶ That is, dugongs also in verse 23

what you have, take an offering for the Lord. Everyone who is willing is to bring to the Lord an offering of gold, silver and bronze; ⁶blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; ⁷ram skins dyed red and hides of sea cows⁶; acacia wood, ⁸olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; ⁹and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece

INSIGHT

A Portable Cathedral

An unlikely sight in the desert

And everyone who was willing and whose heart moved him came and brought an offering to the Lord for the work on the Tent of Meeting. 35:21

Thousands of years ago a wonderful work of art was built, and the last chapters of Exodus provide a wealth of details about it. In a hostile desert landscape, a tribe of just-liberated slaves built something of exquisite beauty: a portable cathedral, or tabernacle.

God directed the project personally, specially endowing the craftsmen with skill (31:1-6) and elaborating right down to the color choice of woven yarns, the precise length of curtains and wooden frames, and the design of gold filigree. The people of Israel joined together in a flurry of activity, carefully following God's pattern. A ton of gold went into the project, as well as nearly four tons of silver and stockpiles of precious gems and rare woods.

God Moves In

After describing the tabernacle construction in great detail, the Bible devotes just five verses, the last five in Exodus, to its culmination. In a matter-of-fact tone, those sentences record a remarkable event.

Throughout the book of Exodus God had been progressively revealing himself to Moses: once in a burning bush, once in a mysterious appearance beside a rock, once on a trembling mountain, and often in a cloud-covered Tent of Meeting. God's presence caused such fear and awe that the people of Israel begged that he not speak to them directly (20:19). When Moses had come down from Mount Sinai after meeting with God, he glowed as if radioactive, and everyone was too frightened to go near him (34:30).

Yet, on the day the tabernacle was completed, this same God moved in. His glory filled the new tabernacle. God took up residence with his people.

A Visible Reminder

From then on, whenever the Israelites marched or camped, their portable cathedral stayed in the exact center of the camp, with their tents and personal belongings radiating out from the Most Holy Place and Ark of the Covenant. The tabernacle gave them a visible reminder of God's central place. Each day priests performed functions of sacrifice and worship there.

The story of the tabernacle, which takes up one-third of Exodus, reveals much about the character of God. He can never be taken lightly—the rituals here and in the next three books show that God must be approached with care and reverence. He cannot be experienced directly, in his fullness, by ordinary people; a holy God is simply too overwhelming. Even Moses, Exodus says, could not look on God's face and live (33:20).

And yet, amazingly, that same God who seemed so distant came near. Despite the huge gulf separating God and humanity—a gulf that all the rules on holiness and purification only hint at—God allowed personal access to himself. He made himself available.

Life Questions: Where does God "live" now?

10^a All who are skilled among you are to come and make everything the Lord has commanded: 11the tabernacle with its tent and its covering, clasps, frames, crossbars, posts and bases; 12the ark with its poles and the atonement cover and the curtain that shields it; 13the table with its poles and all its articles and the bread of the Presence; 14the lampstand that is for light with its accessories, lamps and oil for the light; 15the altar of incense with its poles, the anointing oil and the fragrant incense; the curtain for the doorway at the entrance to the tabernacle; 16the altar of burnt offering with its bronze grating, its poles and all its utensils; the bronze basin with its stand; 17the curtains of the courtyard with its posts and bases, and the curtain for the entrance to the courtyard; 18the tent pegs for the tabernacle and for the courtyard, and their ropes; 19the woven garments worn for ministering in the sanctuary—both the sacred garments for Aaron the priest and the garments for his sons when they serve as priests.”

20Then the whole Israelite community withdrew from Moses’ presence, 21and everyone who was willing and whose heart moved him came and brought an offering to the Lord for the work on the Tent of Meeting, for all its service, and for the sacred garments. 22All who were willing, men and women alike, came and brought gold jewelry of all kinds: brooches, earrings, rings and ornaments. They all presented their gold as a wave offering to the Lord. 23Everyone who had blue, purple or scarlet yarn or fine linen, or goat hair, ram skins dyed red or hides of sea cows brought them. 24Those presenting an offering of silver or bronze brought it as an offering to the Lord, and everyone who had acacia wood for any part of the work brought it. 25Every skilled woman spun with her hands and brought what she had spun—blue, purple or scarlet yarn or fine linen. 26And all the women who were willing and had the skill spun the goat hair. 27The leaders brought onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece. 28They also brought spices and olive oil for the light and for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense. 29All the Israelite men and women who were willing brought to the Lord freewill offerings for all the work the Lord through Moses had commanded them to do.

Bezalel and Oholiab

30Then Moses said to the Israelites, “See, the Lord has chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, 31and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts— 32to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, 33to cut and set stones, to work in wood and to engage in all kinds of artistic craftsmanship. 34And he has given both him and Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, the ability to teach others. 35He has filled them with skill to do all kinds of work as craftsmen, designers, embroiderers in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen, and weavers—

36 all of them master craftsmen and designers. 37So Bezalel, Oholiab and every skilled person to whom the Lord has given skill and ability to know how to carry out all the work of constructing the sanctuary are to do the work just as the Lord has commanded.”

38Then Moses summoned Bezalel and Oholiab and every skilled person to whom the Lord had given ability and who was willing to come and do the work. 39They received from Moses all the offerings the Israelites had brought to carry out the work of constructing the sanctuary. And the people continued to bring freewill offerings morning after morning. 40So all the skilled craftsmen who were doing all the work on the sanctuary left their work 41and said to Moses, “The people are bringing more than enough for doing the work the Lord commanded to be done.”

42Then Moses gave an order and they sent this word throughout the camp: “No man or woman is to make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary.” And so the people were restrained from bringing more, 43because what they already had was more than enough to do all the work.

The Tabernacle

44All the skilled men among the workmen made the tabernacle with ten curtains of finely twisted linen and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, with cherubim worked into them by a skilled craftsman. 45All the curtains were the same size—twenty-eight cubits long and four cubits wide. 46They joined five of the curtains together and did the same with the other five. 47Then they made loops of blue material along the edge of the end curtain in one set, and the same was done with the end curtain in the other set. 48They also made fifty loops on one curtain and fifty loops on the end curtain of the other set, with the loops opposite each other. 49Then they made fifty gold clasps and used them to fasten the two sets of curtains together so that the tabernacle was a unit.

50They made curtains of goat hair for the tent over the tabernacle—eleven altogether. 51All eleven curtains were the same size—thirty cubits long and four cubits wide. 52They joined five of the curtains into one set and the other six into another set. 53Then they made fifty loops along the edge of the end curtain in one set and also along the edge of the end curtain in the other set. 54They made fifty bronze clasps to fasten the tent together as a

36:5 Enthusiastic Givers

Some commentators estimate that the tabernacle description makes up the largest single subject covered in the Bible. The Israelites united around the common goal of its construction. Chapter 35:20-29 emphasizes that all gifts toward the tabernacle were completely voluntary, yet the Israelites responded with such enthusiasm they had to be restrained from bringing more offerings.

^a9 That is, about 42 feet (about 12.5 meters) long and 6 feet (about 1.8 meters) wide
long and 6 feet (about 1.8 meters) wide

^a15 That is, about 45 feet (about 13.5 meters)

¹⁹Then they made for the tent a covering of ^{19a}fine goats' skins dyed red, and over that a covering of ^{19b}hides of sea cows.^a

²⁰They made upright frames of acacia wood for the tabernacle. Each frame was ten cubits long and a cubit and a half wide.^b ²¹With two provisions ^{21a}we parallel to each other. They made all the frames of the tabernacle in this way. ²²They made twenty frames for the south side of the tabernacle. ²³And made forty silver bases to go under them—two bases for each frame, one under each provision. ²⁴For the other side, the north side of the tabernacle, they made twenty frames. ²⁵And forty silver bases—two under each frame. ²⁶They made six frames for the far end, that is, the west end of the tabernacle. ²⁷And two frames were made for the corners of the tabernacle at the far end. ²⁸At these two corners the frames were double from the bottom ^{28a}the way to the top and fitted into a single ring, both were made alike. ²⁹So there were eight frames and sixteen silver bases—two under each frame.

³⁰They also made crossbars of acacia wood: five for the frames on one side of the tabernacle, ³¹five for those on the other side, and five for the frames on the west, at the far end of the tabernacle. ³²They made the center crossbar so that it extended from end to end at the middle of the frames. ³³They overlaid the frames with gold and made gold rings to hold the crossbars. They also overlaid the crossbars with gold.

³⁴They made the curtain of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen, with cherubim worked into it by a skilled craftsman. ³⁵They made four posts of acacia wood for it and overlaid them with gold. They made gold hooks for them and cast their four silver bases. ³⁶For the entrance to the tent they made a curtain of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen—the work of an embroiderer; ³⁷and they made five posts with hooks for them. They overlaid the tops of the posts and their bands with gold and made their five bases of bronze.

The Ark

37 Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood—two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high.^c ²He overlaid it with pure gold, both inside and out, and made a gold molding around it. ³He cast four gold rings for it and fastened them to its four feet, with two rings on one side and two rings on the other. ⁴Then he made poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold. ⁵And he inserted the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark to carry it.

⁶He made the atonement cover of pure gold—two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half wide.^d ⁷Then he made two cherubim out of hammered gold at the ends of the cover. ⁸He made one cherub on one end and the second cherub on the

other, at the two ends he made them of one piece with the cover. ⁹The cherubim had their wings spread upward, overshadowing the cover with them. The cherubim faced each other, looking toward the cover.

The Table

¹⁰They made the table of acacia wood—two cubits long, a cubit wide, and a cubit and a half high.^e ¹¹Then they overlaid it with pure gold and made a gold molding around it. ¹²They also made around it a rim a handbreadth wide and put a gold molding on the rim. ¹³They cast four gold rings for the table and fastened them to the four corners, where the four legs were. ¹⁴The rings were put close to the rim to hold the poles used in carrying the table. ¹⁵The poles for carrying the table were made of acacia wood and were overlaid with gold. ¹⁶And they made from pure gold the articles for the table—its plates and dishes and bowls and its pitchers for the pouring out of drink offerings.

The Lampstand

¹⁷They made the lampstand of pure gold and hammered it out, base and shaft; its flowerlike cups, buds and blossoms were of one piece with it. ¹⁸Six branches extended from the sides of the lampstand—three on one side and three on the other. ¹⁹Three cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms were on one branch, three on the next branch and the same for all six branches extending from the lampstand. ²⁰And on the lampstand were four cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms. ²¹One bud was under the first pair of branches extending from the lampstand, a second bud under the second pair, and a third bud under the third pair—six branches in all. ²²The buds and the branches were all of one piece with the lampstand, hammered out of pure gold.

²³They made its seven lamps, as well as its wick trimmers and trays, of pure gold. ²⁴They made the lampstand and all its accessories from one talent^f of pure gold.

The Altar of Incense

²⁵They made the altar of incense out of acacia wood. It was square, a cubit long and a cubit wide, and two cubits high—its horns of one piece with it. ²⁶They overlaid the top and all the sides and the horns with pure gold, and made a gold molding around it. ²⁷They made two gold rings below the molding—two on opposite sides—to hold the poles used to carry it. ²⁸They made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold.

²⁹They also made the sacred anointing oil and the pure, fragrant incense—the work of a perfumer.

^a19 That is, dugongs. ^b21 That is, about 15 feet (about 4.5 meters) long and 2 1/4 feet (about 0.7 meter) wide. ^c1 That is, about 3 3/4 feet (about 1.1 meters) long and 2 1/4 feet (about 0.7 meter) wide. ^d24 That is, about 3 3/4 feet (about 1.1 meters) long and 2 1/4 feet (about 0.7 meter) wide. ^e10 Or He, also in verses 11-29. ^f10 That is, about 3 feet (about 0.9 meter) long, 1 1/2 feet (about 0.5 meter) wide, and 2 1/4 feet (about 0.7 meter) high. ¹² That is, about 3 inches (about 8 centimeters). ²⁴ That is, about 75 pounds (about 34 kilograms). ²⁵ That is, about 1 1/2 feet (about 0.5 meter) long and wide, and about 3 feet (about 0.9 meter) high.

The Altar of Burnt Offering

38 They built the altar of burnt offering of acacia wood three cubits¹ high; it was square, five cubits long and five cubits wide.² They made a horn at each of the four corners, so that the horns and the altar were of one piece, and they overlaid the altar with bronze.³ They made all its utensils of bronze—its pots, shovels, sprinkling bowls, meat forks and firepans.⁴ They made a grating for the altar, a bronze network, to be under its edge, halfway up the altar.⁵ They cast bronze rings to hold the poles for the four corners of the bronze grating.⁶ They made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with bronze.⁷ They inserted the poles into the rings so they would be on the sides of the altar for carrying it. They made it below, out of boards

Basin for Washing

They made the bronze basin and its bronze stand from the mirrors of the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

The Courtyard

Next they made the courtyard. The south side was a hundred cubits⁴ long and had curtains of finely twisted linen,¹⁰ with twenty posts and twenty bronze bases, and with silver hooks and bands on the posts.¹¹ The north side was also a hundred cubits long and had twenty posts and twenty bronze bases, with silver hooks and bands on the posts.

The west end was fifty cubits⁶ wide and had curtains with ten posts and ten bases, with silver hooks and bands on the posts.¹³ The east end, toward the sunrise, was also fifty cubits wide. Fourteen cubits⁷ long were on one side of the entrance, with three posts and three bases, and fourteen cubits long were on the other side of the entrance to the courtyard, with three posts and three bases.¹⁶ All the curtains around the courtyard were of finely twisted linen.¹⁷ The bases for the posts were bronze. The hooks and bands on the posts were silver, and their tops were overlaid with silver; so all the posts of the courtyard had silver bands.

The curtain for the entrance to the courtyard was of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen—the work of an embroiderer. It was twenty cubits⁸ long and, like the curtains of the courtyard, five cubits⁹ high,¹⁹ with four posts and four bronze bases. Their hooks and bands were silver, and their tops were overlaid with silver.²⁴ All the tent pegs of the tabernacle and of the surrounding courtyard were bronze.

The Materials Used

These are the amounts of the materials used for the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the Testimony,

which were recorded at Moses' command by the Levites under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron, the priest.²² (Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made everything the LORD commanded Moses,²⁴ with him was Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan—a craftsman and designer, and an embroiderer in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen.)²⁴ The total amount of the gold from the wave offering used for all the work on the sanctuary was 29 talents and 730 shekels,¹ according to the sanctuary shekel.

The silver obtained from those of the community who were counted in the census was 100 talents and 1,775 shekels,² according to the sanctuary shekel—²⁶one beka per person, that is, half a shekel,² according to the sanctuary shekel, from everyone who had crossed over to those counted, twenty years old or more, a total of 603,550 men.²⁷ The 100 talents³ of silver were used to cast the bases for the sanctuary and for the curtain—100 bases from the 100 talents, one talent for each base.²⁸ They used the 1,775 shekels⁴ to make the hooks for the posts, to overlay the tops of the posts, and to make their bands.

The bronze from the wave offering was 70 talents and 2,400 shekels.⁵ They used it to make the bases for the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, the bronze altar with its bronze grating and all its utensils,³¹ the bases for the surrounding courtyard and those for its entrance and all the tent pegs for the tabernacle and those for the surrounding courtyard.

The Priestly Garments

39 From the blue, purple and scarlet yarn they made woven garments for ministering in the sanctuary. They also made sacred garments for Aaron, as the LORD commanded Moses.

The Ephod

They⁶ made the ephod of gold, and of blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of finely twisted linen.³ They hammered out thin sheets of gold and cut strands to be worked into the blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen—the work of a skilled craftsman.⁴ They made shoulder pieces for the ephod, which were attached to two of its corners, so it could be fastened.⁵ Its skillfully woven waistband was like it—of one piece with the ephod and made with gold, and with blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and with finely twisted linen, as the LORD commanded Moses.

They mounted the onyx stones in gold filigree settings and engraved them like a seal with the names of the sons of Israel.⁷ Then they fastened them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod as memorial stones for the sons of Israel, as the LORD commanded Moses.

¹ Or the 230 talents 2-9

² That is, about 4 1/2 feet (about 1.3 meters)

³ That is, about 7 1/2 feet (about 2.3 meters) long

and wide ⁴ That is, about 150 feet (about 46 meters)

⁵ That is, about 75 feet (about 23 meters)

⁶ That is, about

21.2 feet (about 6.9 meters)

⁷ That is, about 30 feet (about 9 meters)

⁸ That is, about 7 1/2 feet (about 2.3 meters)

⁹ The weight of the gold was a little over one ton (about 1 metric ton).

¹⁰ The weight of the silver was a little over 3.4 tons

about 3.4 metric tons

¹¹ That is, about 1.5 ounce (about 5.5 grams)

¹² That is, about 3 3/4 tons (about 3.4 metric tons)

¹³ That is, about 45 pounds (about 20 kilograms)

¹⁴ The weight of the bronze was about 2 1/2 tons (about 2.4 metric tons)

¹⁵ Or he, also in verses 7, 8 and 22

The Breastpiece

They fashioned the breastpiece—the work of a skilled craftsman. They made it like the ephod: of gold, and of blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of finely twisted linen. ⁹It was square—a span^a long and a span wide—and folded double. ¹⁰Then they mounted four rows of precious stones on it. In the first row there was a ruby, a topaz and a beryl; ¹¹in the second row a turquoise, a sapphire^b and an emerald; ¹²in the third row a jacinth, an agate and an amethyst; ¹³in the fourth row a chrysolite, an onyx and a jasper.^c They were mounted in gold filigree settings. ¹⁴There were twelve stones, one for each of the names of the sons of Israel, each engraved like a seal with the name of one of the twelve tribes.

¹⁵For the breastpiece they made braided chains of pure gold, like a rope. ¹⁶They made two gold filigree settings and two gold rings, and fastened the rings to two of the corners of the breastpiece. ¹⁷They fastened the two gold chains to the rings at the corners of the breastpiece, ¹⁸and the other ends of the chains to the two settings, attaching them to the shoulder pieces of the ephod at the front. ¹⁹They made two gold rings and attached them to the other two corners of the breastpiece on the inside edge next to the ephod. ²⁰Then they made two more gold rings and attached them to the bottom of the shoulder pieces on the front of the ephod, close to the seam just above the waistband of the ephod. ²¹They tied the rings of the breastpiece to the rings of the ephod with blue cord, connecting it to the waistband so that the breastpiece would not swing out from the ephod—as the LORD commanded Moses.

Other Priestly Garments

²²They made the robe of the ephod entirely of blue cloth—the work of a weaver— ²³with an opening in the center of the robe like the opening of a collar,^d and a band around this opening, so that it would not tear. ²⁴They made pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen around the hem of the robe. ²⁵And they made bells of pure gold and attached them around the hem between the pomegranates. ²⁶The bells and pomegranates alternated around the hem of the robe to be worn for ministering, as the LORD commanded Moses.

²⁷For Aaron and his sons, they made tunics of fine linen—the work of a weaver— ²⁸and the turban of fine linen, the linen headbands and the undergarments of finely twisted linen. ²⁹The sash was of finely twisted linen and blue, purple and scarlet yarn—the work of an embroiderer—as the LORD commanded Moses.

³⁰They made the plate, the sacred diadem, out of pure gold and engraved on it, like an inscription on a seal: HOLY TO THE LORD. ³¹Then they fastened a blue cord to it to attach it to the turban, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Moses Inspects the Tabernacle

³²So all the work on the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting, was completed. The Israelites did everything just as the LORD commanded Moses. ³³Then they brought the tabernacle to Moses: the tent and all its furnishings, its clasps, frames, crossbars, posts and bases; ³⁴the covering of ram skins dyed red, the covering of hides of sea cows^e and the shielding curtain; ³⁵the ark of the Testimony with its poles and the atonement cover; ³⁶the table with all its articles and the bread of the Presence; ³⁷the pure gold lampstand with its row of lamps and all its accessories, and the oil for the light; ³⁸the gold altar, the anointing oil, the fragrant incense, and the curtain for the entrance to the tent; ³⁹the bronze altar with its bronze grating, its poles and all its utensils; the basin with its stand; ⁴⁰the curtains of the courtyard with its posts and bases, and the curtain for the entrance to the courtyard; the ropes and tent pegs for the courtyard; all the furnishings for the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting; ⁴¹and the woven garments worn for ministering in the sanctuary, both the sacred garments for Aaron the priest and the garments for his sons when serving as priests.

⁴²The Israelites had done all the work just as the LORD had commanded Moses. ⁴³Moses inspected the work and saw that they had done it just as the LORD had commanded. So Moses blessed them.

Setting Up the Tabernacle

40 Then the LORD said to Moses: ²"Set up the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting, on the first day of the first month. ³Place the ark of the Testimony in it and shield the ark with the curtain. ⁴Bring in the table and set out what belongs on it. Then bring in the lampstand and set up its lamps. ⁵Place the gold altar of incense in front of the ark of the Testimony and put the curtain at the entrance to the tabernacle.

⁶"Place the altar of burnt offering in front of the entrance to the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting; ⁷place the basin between the Tent of Meeting and the altar and put water in it. ⁸Set up the courtyard

39:32 Following Orders

The last few chapters of Exodus repeat almost verbatim what has gone before; they simply record that the Israelites followed all of God's prior instructions for building the tabernacle. The phrase "as the LORD commanded" resonates like a drumbeat through this section. A people not known for following orders took the tabernacle project very seriously. It became for them not just a symbol, but the actual reality of God living in their midst. The tabernacle was the focal point of worship for 300 years, until the temple was built. Later, New Testament writers resurrected this image by calling believers God's "tabernacle," or dwelling place.

^a9 That is, about 9 inches (about 22 centimeters)
stones is uncertain

^b11 Or lapis lazuli

^c13 The precise identification of some of these precious

^d23 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

^e34 That is, dugongs

around it and put the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard

⁹Take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and everything in it, consecrate it and all its furnishings, and it will be holy. ¹⁰Then anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils; consecrate the altar, and it will be most holy. ¹¹Anoint the basin and its stand and consecrate them.

¹²Bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and wash them with water. ¹³Then dress Aaron in the sacred garments, anoint him and consecrate him so he may serve me as priest. ¹⁴Bring his sons and dress them in tunics. ¹⁵Anoint them just as you anointed their father, so they may serve me as priests. Their anointing will be to a priesthood that will continue for all generations to come." ¹⁶Moses did everything just as the LORD commanded him.

¹⁷So the tabernacle was set up on the first day of the first month in the second year. ¹⁸When Moses set up the tabernacle, he put the bases in place, erected the frames, inserted the crossbars and set up the posts. ¹⁹Then he spread the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering over the tent, as the LORD commanded him.

²⁰He took the Testimony and placed it in the ark, attached the poles to the ark and put the atonement cover over it. ²¹Then he brought the ark into the tabernacle and hung the shielding curtain and shielded the ark of the Testimony, as the LORD commanded him.

²²Moses placed the table in the Tent of Meeting on the north side of the tabernacle outside the curtain ²³and set out the bread on it before the LORD, as the LORD commanded him.

²⁴He placed the lampstand in the Tent of Meeting opposite the table on the south side of the

tabernacle ²⁵and set up the lamps before the LORD, as the LORD commanded him.

²⁶Moses placed the gold altar in the Tent of Meeting in front of the curtain and burned fragrant incense on it, as the LORD commanded him. ²⁷Then he put up the curtain at the entrance to the tabernacle.

²⁸He set the altar of burnt offering near the entrance to the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting, and offered on it burnt offerings and grain offerings, as the LORD commanded him.

²⁹He placed the basin between the Tent of Meeting and the altar and put water in it for washing. ³⁰And Moses and Aaron and his sons used it to wash their hands and feet. ³¹They washed whenever they entered the Tent of Meeting or approached the altar, as the LORD commanded Moses.

³²Then Moses set up the courtyard around the tabernacle and altar and put up the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard. And so Moses finished the work.

The Glory of the Lord

³⁴Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

³⁶In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out, ³⁷but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out—until the day it lifted. ³⁸So the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel during all their travels.

LEVITICUS

The Book of Purification

FROM LEVITICUS 1:1 TO 27:34

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS IS A BOOK OF PURIFICATION. IT IS A BOOK OF THE HOLY GHOST, WHOSE WORK IS TO PURIFY THE HEART AND THE CONSCIENCE.

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS IS A BOOK OF THE HOLY GHOST, WHOSE WORK IS TO PURIFY THE HEART AND THE CONSCIENCE. IT IS A BOOK OF THE HOLY GHOST, WHOSE WORK IS TO PURIFY THE HEART AND THE CONSCIENCE.

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS IS A BOOK OF THE HOLY GHOST, WHOSE WORK IS TO PURIFY THE HEART AND THE CONSCIENCE. IT IS A BOOK OF THE HOLY GHOST, WHOSE WORK IS TO PURIFY THE HEART AND THE CONSCIENCE.

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS IS A BOOK OF THE HOLY GHOST, WHOSE WORK IS TO PURIFY THE HEART AND THE CONSCIENCE. IT IS A BOOK OF THE HOLY GHOST, WHOSE WORK IS TO PURIFY THE HEART AND THE CONSCIENCE.

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS IS A BOOK OF THE HOLY GHOST, WHOSE WORK IS TO PURIFY THE HEART AND THE CONSCIENCE. IT IS A BOOK OF THE HOLY GHOST, WHOSE WORK IS TO PURIFY THE HEART AND THE CONSCIENCE.

Walking With God

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS IS A BOOK OF THE HOLY GHOST, WHOSE WORK IS TO PURIFY THE HEART AND THE CONSCIENCE. IT IS A BOOK OF THE HOLY GHOST, WHOSE WORK IS TO PURIFY THE HEART AND THE CONSCIENCE.

How to Read Leviticus

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS IS A BOOK OF THE HOLY GHOST, WHOSE WORK IS TO PURIFY THE HEART AND THE CONSCIENCE. IT IS A BOOK OF THE HOLY GHOST, WHOSE WORK IS TO PURIFY THE HEART AND THE CONSCIENCE.

When you read the Bible, careful attention to detail is usually a key to understanding. In Leviticus, however, you will get more from looking at the big picture than from studying the details. Some laws we simply don't understand. But Leviticus as a whole shows what kind of people God wanted Israel to be. As you read, keep your mind on the big picture. Pay special attention to the explanatory notes. Try to imagine how these laws affected everyday life. Keep asking yourself: how would these laws make the Israelites different from other people—and why were those differences important to God?

PLANS FOR READING LEVITICUS

PLAN 1: An Overview of Leviticus in 1 Day

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to Leviticus and chapter 26, which summarizes the purpose of God's laws. Scan through the sectional headings of the book to get an idea of what subjects it covers.

PLAN 2: All of Leviticus in 26 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11-12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17
☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26 ☐ 27

The Burnt Offering

1 The LORD called to Moses and spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting. He said, ²"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When any of you brings an offering to the LORD, bring as your offering an animal from either the herd or the flock.

³"If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he is to offer a male without defect. He must present it at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting so that it^a will be acceptable to the LORD. ⁴He is to lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him. ⁵He is to slaughter the young bull before the LORD, and then Aaron's sons the priests shall bring the blood and sprinkle it against the altar on all sides at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. ⁶He is to skin the burnt offering and cut it into pieces. ⁷The sons of Aaron the priest are to put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. ⁸Then Aaron's sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, including the head and the fat, on the burning wood that is on the altar. ⁹He is to wash the inner parts and the legs with water, and the priest is to burn all of it on the altar. It is a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

¹⁰"If the offering is a burnt offering from the flock, from either the sheep or the goats, he is to offer a male without defect. ¹¹He is to slaughter it at the north side of the altar before the LORD, and

Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle its blood against the altar on all sides. ¹²He is to cut it into pieces, and the priest shall arrange them, including the head and the fat, on the burning wood that is on the altar. ¹³He is to wash the inner parts and the legs with water, and the priest is to bring all of it and burn it on the altar. It is a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

¹⁴"If the offering to the LORD is a burnt offering of birds, he is to offer a dove or a young pigeon. ¹⁵The priest shall bring it to the altar, wring off the head and burn it on the altar; its blood shall be drained out on the side of the altar. ¹⁶He is to remove the crop with its contents^b and throw it to the east side of the altar, where the ashes are. ¹⁷He shall tear it open by the wings, not severing it completely, and then the priest shall burn it on the wood that is on the fire on the altar. It is a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

The Grain Offering

2 "When someone brings a grain offering to the LORD, the offering is to be of fine flour. He is to pour oil^c and incense on it ²and take it to Aaron. The priest shall take a handful of flour and oil, together with all the u

^a Or he

^b Or crop and the feathers, the meaning of the Hebrew for this word

d reader
 20x. a
 10, est

on the altar, an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD. ³The rest of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the offerings made to the LORD by fire.

⁴ If you bring a grain offering baked in an oven, it is to consist of fine flour: cakes made without yeast and mixed with oil, or^a wafers made without yeast and spread with oil. ⁵If your grain offering is prepared on a griddle, it is to be made of fine flour mixed with oil, and without yeast. ⁶Crumble it and pour oil on it; it is a grain offering. ⁷If your grain offering is cooked in a pan, it is to be made of fine flour and oil. ⁸Bring the grain offering made of these things to the LORD, present it to the priest, who shall take it to the altar. ⁹He shall take out the memorial portion from the grain offering and burn it on the altar as an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD. ¹⁰The rest of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the offerings made to the LORD by fire.

¹¹ "Every grain offering you bring to the LORD must be made without yeast, for you are not to burn any yeast or honey in an offering made to the LORD by fire. ¹²You may bring them to the LORD as an offering of the firstfruits, but they are not to be offered on the altar as a pleasing aroma. ¹³Season all your grain offerings with salt. Do not leave the salt of the covenant of your God out of your grain offerings; add salt to all your offerings.

¹⁴ "If you bring a grain offering of firstfruits to the LORD, offer crushed heads of new grain roasted in the fire. ¹⁵Put oil and incense on it; it is a grain offering. ¹⁶The priest shall burn the memorial portion of the crushed grain and the oil, together with all the incense, as an offering made to the LORD by fire.

The Fellowship Offering

3 "If someone's offering is a fellowship offering,^b and he offers an animal from the herd, whether male or female, he is to present before the LORD an animal without defect. ²He is to lay his hand on the head of his offering and slaughter it at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. Then Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood against the altar on all sides. ³From the fellowship offering he is to bring a sacrifice made to the LORD by fire: all the fat that covers the inner parts or is connected to them, ⁴both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the covering of the liver, which he will remove with the kidneys. ⁵Then Aaron's sons are to burn it on the altar on top of the burnt offering that is on the burning wood, as an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

⁶ "If he offers an animal from the flock as a fellowship offering to the LORD, he is to offer a male or female without defect. ⁷If he offers a lamb, he is to present it before the LORD. ⁸He is to lay his hand on the head of his offering and slaughter it in front of the Tent of Meeting. Then Aaron's sons shall sprinkle its blood against the altar on all sides. ⁹From the fellowship offering he is to bring a sacrifice made to the LORD by fire: its fat, the entire

fat tail cut off close to the backbone, all the fat that covers the inner parts or is connected to them, ¹⁰both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins and the covering of the liver, which he will remove with the kidneys. ¹¹The priest shall burn them on the altar as food, an offering made to the LORD by fire.

¹² "If his offering is a goat, he is to present it before the LORD. ¹³He is to lay his hand on its head and slaughter it in front of the Tent of Meeting. Then Aaron's sons shall sprinkle its blood against the altar on all sides. ¹⁴From what he offers he is to make this offering to the LORD by fire: all the fat that covers the inner parts or is connected to them, ¹⁵both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the covering of the liver, which he will remove with the kidneys. ¹⁶The priest shall burn them on the altar as food, an offering made by fire, a pleasing aroma. All the fat is the LORD's.

¹⁷ "This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live: You must not eat any fat or any blood."

The Sin Offering

4 The LORD said to Moses, ²"Say to the Israelites: 'When anyone sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD's commands—

³ 'If the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, he must bring to the LORD a young bull without defect as a sin offering for the sin he has committed. ⁴He is to present the bull at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting before the LORD. He is to lay his hand on its head and slaughter it before the LORD. ⁵Then the anointed priest shall take some of the bull's blood and carry it into the Tent of Meeting. ⁶He is to dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle some of it seven times before the LORD, in front of the curtain of the sanctuary. ⁷The priest shall then put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense that is before the LORD in the Tent of Meeting. The rest of the bull's blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. ⁸He shall remove all the fat from the bull of the sin offering—the fat that covers the inner parts or is connected to them, ⁹both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the covering of the liver, which he will remove with the kidneys—¹⁰just as the fat is removed from the ox^c sacrificed as a fellowship offering. ⁴ Then the priest shall

4:3 The One for the Many

For his sin, a priest had to sacrifice one bull—the same sacrifice required for a sin by the whole community (verses 13-14). The two sins were, in a sense, equal, for the high priest represented the whole community before God. The belief that a single purified individual can stand up for a nation prepared the way for Jesus, whose sinless obedience stands before God in our place.

^a4 Or and ^b7 Traditionally peace offering; also in verses 3, 6 and 9

^c10 Traditionally peace offering, also in verses 26, 31 and 35

^d10 The Hebrew word can include both male and female

burn them on the altar of burnt offering. ¹¹But the hide of the bull and all its flesh, as well as the head and legs, the inner parts and offal— ¹²that is, all the rest of the bull—he must take outside the camp to a place ceremonially clean, where the ashes are thrown, and burn it in a wood fire on the ash heap.

¹³“If the whole Israelite community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD’s commands, even though the community is unaware of the matter, they are guilty. ¹⁴When they become aware of the sin they committed, the assembly must bring a young bull as a sin offering and present it before the Tent of Meeting. ¹⁵The elders of the community are to lay their hands on the bull’s head before the LORD, and the bull shall be slaughtered before the LORD. ¹⁶Then the anointed priest is to take some of the bull’s blood into the Tent of Meeting. ¹⁷He shall dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle it before the LORD seven times in front of the curtain. ¹⁸He is to put some of the blood on the horns of the altar that is before the LORD in the Tent of Meeting. The rest of the blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. ¹⁹He shall remove all the fat from it and burn it on the altar, ²⁰and do with this bull just as he did with the bull for the sin offering. In this way the priest will make atonement for them, and they will be forgiven. ²¹Then he shall take the bull outside the camp and burn it as he burned the first bull. This is the sin offering for the community.

²²“When a leader sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the commands of the LORD his God, he is guilty. ²³When he is made aware of the sin he committed, he must bring as his offering a male goat without defect. ²⁴He is to lay his hand on the goat’s head and slaughter it at the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered before the LORD. It is a sin offering. ²⁵Then the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. ²⁶He shall burn all the fat on the altar as he burned the fat of the fellowship offering. In this way the priest will make atonement for the man’s sin, and he will be forgiven.

²⁷“If a member of the community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD’s commands, he is guilty. ²⁸When he is made aware of the sin he committed, he must bring as his offering for the sin he committed a female goat without defect. ²⁹He is to lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and slaughter it at the place of the burnt offering. ³⁰Then the priest is to take some of the blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. ³¹He shall remove all the fat, just as the fat is removed from the fellowship offering, and the priest shall burn it on the altar as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. In this way the priest will make atonement for him, and he will be forgiven.

³²“If he brings a lamb as his sin offering, he is to bring a female without defect. ³³He is to lay his hand on its head and slaughter it for a sin offering at the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered. ³⁴Then the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. ³⁵He shall remove all the fat, just as the fat is removed from the lamb of the fellowship offering, and the priest shall burn it on the altar on top of the offerings made to the LORD by fire. In this way the priest will make atonement for him for the sin he has committed, and he will be forgiven.

5 “If a person sins because he does not speak up when he hears a public charge to testify regarding something he has seen or learned about, he will be held responsible.

²“Or if a person touches anything ceremonially unclean—whether the carcasses of unclean wild animals or of unclean livestock or of unclean creatures that move along the ground— even though he is unaware of it, he has become unclean and is guilty.

³“Or if he touches human uncleanness—anything that would make him unclean— even though he is unaware of it, when he learns of it he will be guilty.

⁴“Or if a person thoughtlessly takes an oath to do anything, whether good or evil—in any matter one might carelessly swear about— even though he is unaware of it, in any case when he learns of it he will be guilty.

⁵“When anyone is guilty in any of these ways, he must confess in what way he has sinned and, as a penalty for the sin he has committed, he must bring to the LORD a female lamb or goat from the flock as a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin.

⁷“If he cannot afford a lamb, he is to bring two doves or two young pigeons to the LORD as a penalty for his sin—one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. ⁸He is to bring them to the priest, who shall first offer the one for the sin offering. He is to wring its head from its neck, not severing it completely, and is to sprinkle some of the blood of the sin offering against the side of the altar; the rest of the blood must be drained out at the base of the altar. It is a sin offering. ¹⁰The priest shall then offer the other as a burnt offering in the prescribed way and make atonement for him for the sin he has committed, and he will be forgiven.

¹¹“If, however, he cannot afford two doves or two young pigeons, he is to bring as an offering for his sin a tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering. He must not put oil or incense on it, because it is a sin offering. ¹²He is to bring it to the priest, who shall take a handful of it as a memorial portion and burn it on the altar on top of the offerings made to the LORD by fire. It is a sin offering. ¹³In this way the priest will make atonement for him for any of these sins he has committed, and he will be forgiven. The rest of the offering will belong to the priest, as in the case of the grain offering.”

*11 That is, probably about 2 quarts (about 2 liters)

The Guilt Offering

The Lord said to Moses: ¹⁵"When a person commits a violation and sins unintentionally in regard to any of the LORD's holy things, he is to bring to the LORD as a penalty a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value in silver according to the sanctuary shekel. It is a guilt offering. He must make restitution for what he has done in regard to the holy things, add a fifth of the value to that and give it all to the priest,

about 2/5 ounce (about 11.5 grams)

who will make atonement for him with the ram as a guilt offering, and he will be forgiven.

¹⁷"If a person sins and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD's commands, even though he does not know it, he is guilty and will be held responsible. ¹⁸He is to bring to the priest as a guilt offering a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value. In this way the priest will make atonement for him for the wrong he has committed unintentionally, and he will be for-

INSIGHT

The Reason for Sacrifice

Justice: someone has to pay

In this way the priest will make atonement for him for the sin he has committed, and he will be forgiven. 4:35

When you commit a crime, you don't get off in court just by saying "Sorry, I'll try not to do it again." Justice requires that you pay for what you did.

The Israelites, therefore, could not just march into God's presence to fellowship with him. They had to bring sacrifices to pay, or "atone," for their inadequacies.

These sacrifices cost dearly. To subsistence farmers, a bull or goat represented a sizable contribution. Very poor people could give less—a pair of doves, or some flour. But, in all cases, a person would feel the cost, cost in terms of something he had worked for, something grown on his own farm.

Up in Smoke

A good portion of the national economy went up in smoke each year: hundreds of animals and a lot of manpower to gather wood, keep the fire lit, and offer sacrifices. Since the Tent of Meeting stood at the center of the camp, the smell of the two-a-day sacrifices always hung over the Israelites. They rarely could afford meat, but every day they smelled the aroma of barbecue dedicated to God.

Offerings fell into three broad types. The guilt and sin offerings were usually offered first: they cleansed people from sin. Then came the burnt offerings, in which whole animals were burnt to ashes. Made at least twice a day, these sacrifices evidently expressed complete dedication to God. The final sacrifice was the fellowship offering, essentially a family meal shared in the presence of God. (The grain offerings were usually given along with one of the other offerings.)

The sequence of the offerings—forgiveness of sins, then total dedication, then fellowship—shows that their goal was fellowship with God. To reach that goal, forgiveness of sin and complete dedication to God were necessary.

Leviticus, however, does not explain this underlying philosophy: it reads more like an instruction manual on how to make sacrifices exactly the way God wanted. The exactness helped produce a proper attitude. You couldn't approach God carelessly. You had to be very careful to do just what he said, to obey him in every detail.

Can an Animal Really Pay?

The whole scene—with its concern for blood, priests, ritual—is strange to modern people. Just how can killing a goat make things right between God and people? Is the sacrifice of an animal really enough to "pay for" our mistakes? We may forget that throughout history, people have intuitively felt that sacrifice was needed to appease God. Many religions around the world still sacrifice today.

For us these sacrifices seem outmoded primarily because one great sacrifice—that of God's own son—outdid them all. The animal sacrifices were not enough, ultimately, to pay for human sin. They prepared the way for a sacrifice that was.

The cost of an animal was substantial, but the true cost, even for us, is infinitely greater. Yet we don't have to pay the cost. Jesus paid it all.

Life Questions Do you think of God as requiring sacrifice? How does the picture of God in Leviticus fit with your ideas?

given. ¹⁹It is a guilt offering; he has been guilty of wrongdoing against the LORD."

6 The LORD said to Moses: ²"If anyone sins and is unfaithful to the LORD by deceiving his neighbor about something entrusted to him or left in his care or stolen, or if he cheats him, ³or if he finds lost property and lies about it, or if he swears falsely, or if he commits any such sin that people may do— ⁴when he thus sins and becomes guilty, he must return what he has stolen or taken by extortion, or what was entrusted to him, or the lost property he found, ⁵or whatever it was he swore falsely about. He must make restitution in full, add a fifth of the value to it and give it all to the owner on the day he presents his guilt offering. ⁶And as a penalty he must bring to the priest, that is, to the LORD, his guilt offering, a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value. ⁷In this way the priest will make atonement for him before the LORD, and he will be forgiven for any of these things he did that made him guilty."

The Burnt Offering

⁸The LORD said to Moses: ⁹"Give Aaron and his sons this command: 'These are the regulations for the burnt offering: The burnt offering is to remain on the altar hearth throughout the night, till morning, and the fire must be kept burning on the altar. ¹⁰The priest shall then put on his linen clothes, with linen undergarments next to his body, and shall remove the ashes of the burnt offering that the fire has consumed on the altar and place them beside the altar. ¹¹Then he is to take off these clothes and put on others, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a place that is ceremonially clean. ¹²The fire on the altar must be kept burning; it must not go out. Every morning the priest is to add firewood and arrange the burnt offering on the fire and burn the fat of the fellowship offerings^b on it. ¹³The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out.'

The Grain Offering

¹⁴"These are the regulations for the grain offering: Aaron's sons are to bring it before the LORD, in front of the altar. ¹⁵The priest is to take a handful of fine flour and oil, together with all the incense on the grain offering, and burn the memorial portion on the altar as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. ¹⁶Aaron and his sons shall eat the rest of it, but it is to be eaten without yeast in a holy place; they are to eat it in the courtyard of the Tent of Meeting. ¹⁷It must not be baked with yeast; I have given it as their share of the offerings made to me by fire. Like the sin offering and the guilt offering, it is most holy. ¹⁸Any male descendant of Aaron may eat it. It is his regular share of the offerings made to the LORD by fire for the generations to come. Whatever touches them will become holy."^c

¹⁹The LORD also said to Moses, ²⁰"This is the offering Aaron and his sons are to bring to the LORD on the day he^d is anointed: a tenth of an ephah^e of fine flour as a regular grain offering,

half of it in the morning and half in the evening. ²¹Prepare it with oil on a griddle, bring it well-mixed and present the grain offering broken^f in pieces as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. ²²The son who is to succeed him as anointed priest shall prepare it. It is the LORD's regular share and is to be burned completely. ²³Every grain offering of a priest shall be burned completely; it must not be eaten."

The Sin Offering

²⁴The LORD said to Moses, ²⁵"Say to Aaron and his sons: 'These are the regulations for the sin offering. The sin offering is to be slaughtered before the LORD in the place the burnt offering is slaughtered; it is most holy. ²⁶The priest who offers it shall eat it; it is to be eaten in a holy place, in the courtyard of the Tent of Meeting. ²⁷Whatever touches any of the flesh will become holy, and if any of the blood is spattered on a garment, you must wash it in a holy place. ²⁸The clay pot the meal is cooked in must be broken, but if it is cooked in a bronze pot, the pot is to be scoured and rinsed with water. ²⁹Any male in a priest's family may eat it; it is most holy. ³⁰But any sin offering whose blood is brought into the Tent of Meeting to make atonement in the Holy Place must not be eaten; it must be burned.

The Guilt Offering

7 "These are the regulations for the guilt offering, which is most holy. ²The guilt offering is to be slaughtered in the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered, and its blood is to be sprinkled against the altar on all sides. ³All its fat shall be offered: the fat tail and the fat that covers the inner parts, ⁴both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the covering of the liver, which is to be removed with the kidneys. ⁵The priest shall burn them on the altar as an offering made to the LORD by fire. It is a guilt offering. ⁶Any male in a priest's family may eat it, but it must be eaten in a holy place; it is most holy.

⁷"The same law applies to both the sin offering and the guilt offering. They belong to the priest who makes atonement with them. ⁸The priest who offers a burnt offering for anyone may keep its hide for himself. ⁹Every grain offering baked in an oven or cooked in a pan or on a griddle belongs to the priest who offers it, ¹⁰and every grain offering, whether mixed with oil or dry, belongs equally to all the sons of Aaron.

The Fellowship Offering

¹¹"These are the regulations for the fellowship offering: a person may present to the LORD

¹²"If he offers it as an expression of thankfulness, then along with this thank offering he is to offer cakes of bread made without yeast and mixed with oil, waters made without yeast and spread with oil, and cakes of fine flour well-kneaded and mixed with oil. ¹³Along with his fellowship offering of thanksgiving he is to present an offering

^a19 Or has made full expiation for his
verse 27

^b20 Or each

^c12 Traditionally peace offerings

^d20 That is, probably about 2 quarts (about 2 liters)

^e11 Traditionally peace offering, also in verses 13-17

^f18 Or Whatever touches them must be holy, similarly in

²¹ The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is

with cakes of bread made with yeast. ¹⁴He is to bring one of each kind as an offering, a contribution to the Lord. It belongs to the priest who sprinkles the blood of the fellowship offerings. ¹⁵The meat of his fellowship offering of thanksgiving must be eaten on the day it is offered; he must not leave any of it till morning.

If, however, his offering is the result of a vow or is a freewill offering, the sacrifice shall be eaten on the day he offers it, but anything left over may be eaten on the next day. ¹⁷Any meat of the offering left over till the third day must be burned up. ¹⁸If any meat of the fellowship offering is eaten on the third day, it will not be accepted. It will not be credited to the one who offered it, for it is impure; the person who eats any of it will be held responsible.

¹⁹Meat that touches anything ceremonially unclean must not be eaten; it must be burned up. As for other meat, anyone ceremonially clean may eat it. ²⁰But if anyone who is unclean eats any meat of the fellowship offering belonging to the Lord, that person must be cut off from his people. ²¹If anyone touches something unclean—whether human uncleanness or an unclean animal or any unclean, detestable thing—and then eats any of the meat of the fellowship offering belonging to the Lord, that person must be cut off from his people.

Eating Fat and Blood Forbidden

²²The Lord said to Moses, ²³"Say to the Israelites: 'Do not eat any of the fat of cattle, sheep or goats. ²⁴The fat of an animal found dead or torn by wild animals may be used for any other purpose, but you must not eat it. ²⁵Anyone who eats the fat of an animal from which an offering by fire may be made to the Lord must be cut off from his people. ²⁶And wherever you live, you must not eat the blood of any bird or animal. ²⁷If anyone eats blood, that person must be cut off from his people.'"

The Priests' Share

²⁸The Lord said to Moses, ²⁹"Say to the Israelites: 'Anyone who brings a fellowship offering to the Lord is to bring part of it as his sacrifice to the Lord. ³⁰With his own hands he is to bring the offering made to the Lord by fire; he is to bring the fat, together with the breast, and wave the breast before the Lord as a wave offering. ³¹The priest shall burn the fat on the altar, but the breast belongs to Aaron and his sons. ³²You are to give the right thigh of your fellowship offerings to the priest as a contribution. ³³The son of Aaron who offers the blood and the fat of the fellowship offering shall have the right thigh as his share. ³⁴From the fellowship offerings of the Israelites, I have taken the breast that is waved and the thigh that is presented and have given them to Aaron the priest and his sons as their regular share from the Israelites.

³⁵This is the portion of the offerings made to the Lord by fire that were allotted to Aaron and his

sons on the day they were presented to serve the Lord as priests. ³⁶On the day they were anointed, the Lord commanded that the Israelites give this to them as their regular share for the generations to come.

³⁷These, then, are the regulations for the burnt offering, the grain offering, the sin offering, the guilt offering, the ordination offering, and the fellowship offering, which the Lord gave Moses on Mount Sinai on the day he commanded the Israelites to bring their offerings to the Lord, in the Desert of Sinai.

The Ordination of Aaron and His Sons

8 The Lord said to Moses, ²"Bring Aaron and his sons, their garments, the anointing oil, the bull for the sin offering, the two rams and the basket containing bread made without yeast, and gather the entire assembly at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting." ⁴Moses did as the Lord commanded him, and the assembly gathered at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

⁵Moses said to the assembly, "This is what the Lord has commanded to be done." ⁶Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and washed them with water. ⁷He put the tunic on Aaron, tied the sash around him, clothed him with the robe and put the ephod on him. He also tied the ephod to him by its skillfully woven waistband, so it was fastened on him. ⁸He placed the breastpiece on him and put the Urim and Thummim in the breastpiece. ⁹Then he placed the turban on Aaron's head and set the gold plate, the sacred diadem, on the front of it, as the Lord commanded Moses.

¹⁰Then Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and everything in it, and so consecrated them. ¹¹He sprinkled some of the oil on the altar seven times, anointing the altar and all its utensils and the basin with its stand, to consecrate them. ¹²He poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him. ¹³Then he brought Aaron's sons forward, put tunics on them, tied sashes around them and put headbands on them, as the Lord commanded Moses.

¹⁴He then presented the bull for the sin offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head. ¹⁵Moses slaughtered the bull and took some of the blood, and with his finger he put it on all the horns of the altar to purify the altar. He poured out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. So he consecrated it to make atonement for it. ¹⁶Moses also took all the fat around the inner parts, the covering of the liver, and both kidneys and their fat, and burned it on the altar. ¹⁷But the bull with its hide and its flesh and its offal he burned up outside the camp, as the Lord commanded Moses.

¹⁸He then presented the ram for the burnt offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head. ¹⁹Then Moses slaughtered the ram and sprinkled the blood against the altar on all sides. ²⁰He cut the ram into pieces and burned the head, the pieces and the fat. ²¹He washed the inner parts and the legs with water and burned the whole ram

on the altar as a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the LORD by fire, as the LORD commanded Moses.

²²He then presented the other ram, the ram for the ordination, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head. ²³Moses slaughtered the ram and took some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. ²⁴Moses also brought Aaron's sons forward and put some of the blood on the lobes of their right ears, on the thumbs of their right hands and on the big toes of their right feet. Then he sprinkled blood against the altar on all sides. ²⁵He took the fat, the fat tail, all the fat around the inner parts, the covering of the liver, both kidneys and their fat and the right thigh. ²⁶Then from the basket of bread made without yeast, which was before the LORD, he took a cake of bread, and one made with oil, and a wafer; he put these on the fat portions and on the right thigh. ²⁷He put all these in the hands of Aaron and his sons and waved them before the LORD as a wave offering. ²⁸Then Moses took them from their hands and burned them on the altar on top of the burnt offering as an ordination offering, a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the LORD by fire. ²⁹He also took the breast—Moses' share of the ordination ram—and waved it before the LORD as a wave offering, as the LORD commanded Moses.

³⁰Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood from the altar and sprinkled them on Aaron and his garments and on his sons and their garments. So he consecrated Aaron and his garments and his sons and their garments.

³¹Moses then said to Aaron and his sons, "Cook the meat at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and eat it there with the bread from the basket of ordination offerings, as I commanded, saying, 'Aaron and his sons are to eat it.' ³²Then burn up the rest of the meat and the bread. ³³Do not leave the entrance to the Tent of Meeting for seven days, until the days of your ordination are completed, for your ordination will last seven days. ³⁴What has been done today was commanded by the LORD to make atonement for you. ³⁵You must stay at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting day and night for seven days and do what the LORD requires, so you will not die; for that is what I have been commanded." ³⁶So Aaron and his sons did everything the LORD commanded through Moses.

The Priests Begin Their Ministry

9 On the eighth day Moses summoned Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel. ²He said to Aaron, "Take a bull calf for your sin offering and a ram for your burnt offering, both without defect, and present them before the LORD. ³Then say to the Israelites: 'Take a male goat for a sin offering, a calf and a lamb—both a year old and without defect—for a burnt offering, and an ox³¹ and a ram for a fellowship offering³² to sacrifice before the LORD together with a grain offering mixed with oil. For today the LORD will appear to you.'"

³They took the things Moses commanded to the

front of the Tent of Meeting, and the entire assembly came near and stood before the LORD. ⁴Then Moses said, "This is what the LORD has commanded you to do, so that the glory of the LORD may appear to you."

⁵Moses said to Aaron, "Come to the altar and sacrifice your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and the people, sacrifice the offering that is for the people and make atonement for them, as the LORD has commanded."

⁶So Aaron came to the altar and slaughtered the calf as a sin offering for himself. ⁷His sons brought the blood to him, and he dipped his finger into the blood and put it on the horns of the altar, the rest of the blood he poured out at the base of the altar. ⁸On the altar he burned the fat, the kidneys and the covering of the liver from the sin offering, as the LORD commanded Moses; ⁹the flesh and the hide he burned up outside the camp.

¹⁰Then he slaughtered the burnt offering. His sons handed him the blood, and he sprinkled it against the altar on all sides. ¹¹They handed him the burnt offering piece by piece, including the head, and he burned them on the altar. ¹²He washed the inner parts and the legs and burned them on top of the burnt offering on the altar.

¹³Aaron then brought the offering that was for the people. He took the goat for the people's sin offering and slaughtered it and offered it for a sin offering as he did with the first one.

¹⁴He brought the burnt offering and offered it in the prescribed way. ¹⁵He also brought the grain offering, took a handful of it and burned it on the altar in addition to the morning's burnt offering.

¹⁶He slaughtered the ox and the ram as the fellowship offering for the people. His sons handed him the blood, and he sprinkled it against the altar on all sides. ¹⁷But the fat portions of the ox and the ram—the fat tail, the layer of fat, the kidneys and the covering of the liver—¹⁸these they laid on the breasts, and then Aaron burned the fat on the altar. ¹⁹Aaron waved the breasts and the right thigh before the LORD as a wave offering, as Moses commanded.

²⁰Then Aaron lifted his hands toward the people and blessed them. And having sacrificed the sin offering, the burnt offering and the fellowship offering, he stepped down.

²¹Moses and Aaron then went into the Tent of Meeting. When they came out, they blessed the people; and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. ²²Fire came out from the presence of

9:23 The Glory of the Lord

Israelites were familiar with the brilliant glory of the Lord, but they had seen it only from a distance, on Mount Sinai. Even from that distance it had frightened them (Exodus 19:16-22). Now this glory had come to the Tent of Meeting itself, in the camp's center. They were indeed "close to God."

³¹ Or 1 bull commanded

³² The Hebrew word can include both male and female, also in verses 18 and 19

³³ Traditionally

the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown.

The Death of Nadab and Abihu

10 Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense, and they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, contrary to his command. ²So fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. ³Moses then said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke of when he said

Among those who approach me
I will show myself holy;
in the sight of all the people
I will be honored."

Aaron remained silent.

⁴Moses summoned Mishael and Elzaphan, sons of Aaron's uncle Uzziel, and said to them, "Come here, carry your cousins outside the camp, away from the front of the sanctuary." ⁵So they came and carried them, still in their tunics, outside the camp, as Moses ordered.

⁶Then Moses said to Aaron and his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, "Do not let your hair become unkempt,^a and do not tear your clothes, or you will die and the LORD will be angry with the whole community. But your relatives, all the house of Israel, may mourn for those the LORD has destroyed by fire. ⁷Do not leave the entrance to the Tent of Meeting or you will die, because the LORD's anointing oil is on you." So they did as Moses said.

⁸Then the LORD said to Aaron, ⁹"You and your sons are not to drink wine or other fermented drink whenever you go into the Tent of Meeting, or you will die. This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. ¹⁰You must distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean, ¹¹and you must teach the Israelites all the decrees the LORD has given them through Moses."

¹²Moses said to Aaron and his remaining sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, "Take the grain offering left over from the offerings made to the LORD by fire and eat it prepared without yeast beside the altar, for it is most holy. ¹³Eat it in a holy place, because it is your share and your sons' share of the offerings made to the LORD by fire; for so I have been commanded. ¹⁴But you and your sons and your daughters may eat the breast that was waved and the thigh that was presented. Eat them in a ceremonially clean place; they have been given to you and your children as your share of the Israelites' fellowship offerings.^b ¹⁵The thigh that was presented and the breast that was waved must be brought with the fat portions of the offerings made by fire, to be waved before the LORD as a wave offering. This will be the regular share for you and your children, as the LORD has commanded."

¹⁶When Moses inquired about the goat of the sin offering and found that it had been burned up, he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's re-

maining sons, and asked, ¹⁷"Why didn't you eat the sin offering in the sanctuary area? It is most holy; it was given to you to take away the guilt of the community by making atonement for them before the LORD. ¹⁸Since its blood was not taken into the Holy Place, you should have eaten the goat in the sanctuary area, as I commanded."

¹⁹Aaron replied to Moses, "Today they sacrificed their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD, but such things as this have happened to me. Would the LORD have been pleased if I had eaten the sin offering today?" ²⁰When Moses heard this, he was satisfied.

Clean and Unclean Food

11 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ²"Say to the Israelites: 'Of all the animals that live on land, these are the ones you may eat: ³You may eat any animal that has a split hoof completely divided and that chews the cud.

⁴"There are some that only chew the cud or only have a split hoof, but you must not eat them. The camel, though it chews the cud, does not have a split hoof; it is ceremonially unclean for you. ⁵The coney,^c though it chews the cud, does not have a split hoof; it is unclean for you. ⁶The rabbit, though it chews the cud, does not have a split hoof; it is unclean for you. ⁷And the pig, though it has a split hoof completely divided, does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you. ⁸You must not eat their meat or touch their carcasses; they are unclean for you.

⁹"Of all the creatures living in the water of the seas and the streams, you may eat any that have fins and scales. ¹⁰But all creatures in the seas or streams that do not have fins and scales—whether among all the swarming things or among all the other living creatures in the water—you are to detest. ¹¹And since you are to detest them, you must not eat their meat and you must detest their carcasses. ¹²Anything living in the water that does not have fins and scales is to be detestable to you.

¹³"These are the birds you are to detest and not eat because they are detestable: the eagle, the vulture, the black vulture, ¹⁴the red kite, any kind of black kite, ¹⁵any kind of raven, ¹⁶the horned owl, the screech owl, the gull, any kind of hawk, ¹⁷the little owl, the cormorant, the great owl, ¹⁸the white owl, the desert owl, the osprey, ¹⁹the stork, any kind of heron, the hoopoe and the bat.^d

²⁰"All flying insects that walk on all fours are to be detestable to you. ²¹There are, however, some winged creatures that walk on all fours that you may eat: those that have jointed legs for hopping on the ground. ²²Of these you may eat any kind of locust, katydid, cricket or grasshopper. ²³But all other winged creatures that have four legs you are to detest.

²⁴"You will make yourselves unclean by these; whoever touches their carcasses will be unclean till evening. ²⁵Whoever picks up one of their carcasses must wash his clothes, and he will be unclean till evening.

²⁶"Every animal that has a split hoof not com-

^a Do not uncover your heads

^b Traditionally peace offerings

^c That is, the hyrax or rock badger

^d The precise

identification of some of the birds, insects and animals in this chapter is uncertain.

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

1. The first step is to identify the problem. This involves understanding the situation, gathering information, and defining the problem clearly.

1. התאמה - התאמה בין המצב
 2. התאמה - התאמה בין המצב
 3. התאמה - התאמה בין המצב
 4. התאמה - התאמה בין המצב
 5. התאמה - התאמה בין המצב
 6. התאמה - התאמה בין המצב
 7. התאמה - התאמה בין המצב
 8. התאמה - התאמה בין המצב
 9. התאמה - התאמה בין המצב
 10. התאמה - התאמה בין המצב

INSIGHT

An Invisible Danger

Taking precautions like a surgeon preparing a patient

1. The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the plane was the cold. It was a sharp contrast to the warm, humid air of the tropics. I shivered slightly, pulling my jacket closer. The ground below was a vast, flat expanse of white sand, stretching out to the horizon. In the distance, a line of dark, jagged mountains rose against a pale blue sky. The air was still, and the only sound was the soft rustle of my clothing. I took a deep breath, feeling the cool air fill my lungs. It was a strange sensation, being so close to nature yet so far from home. I looked down at my feet, which were still in the same old shoes I had worn for years. They felt like they were from another life, a life that was now behind me. I took a step forward, feeling the sand beneath my feet. It was soft and yielding, like a giant's foot. I took another step, and then another. I was walking towards the mountains, towards the unknown. I felt a sense of adventure, a sense of freedom. I was no longer just a person in a suit and tie, I was a explorer, a adventurer. I was out there, in the wild, and I was feeling alive.

May 26 1964

[illegible]

Why All the Hype?

[illegible]

ture that moves about on the ground. ⁴⁵I am the LORD who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God, therefore be holy, because I am holy.

⁴⁶"These are the regulations concerning animals, birds, every living thing that moves in the water and every creature that moves about on the ground. ⁴⁷You must distinguish between the unclean and the clean, between living creatures that may be eaten and those that may not be eaten."

Purification After Childbirth

12 The LORD said to Moses, ²"Say to the Israelites: 'A woman who becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son will be ceremonially unclean for seven days, just as she is unclean during her monthly period. ³On the eighth day the boy is to be circumcised. ⁴Then the woman must wait thirty-three days to be purified from her bleeding. She must not touch anything sacred or go to the sanctuary until the days of her purification are over. ⁵If she gives birth to a daughter, for two weeks the woman will be unclean, as during her period. Then she must wait sixty-six days to be purified from her bleeding.

⁶"When the days of her purification for a son or daughter are over, she is to bring to the priest at

the entrance to the Tent of Meeting a year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a dove for a sin offering. ⁷He shall offer them before the LORD to make atonement for her, and then she will be ceremonially clean from her flow of blood.

"These are the regulations for the woman who gives birth to a boy or a girl. ⁸If she cannot afford a lamb, she is to bring two doves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. In this way the priest will make atonement for her, and she will be clean."

Regulations About Infectious Skin Diseases

13 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ²"When anyone has a swelling or a rash or a bright spot on his skin that may become an infectious

12:8 For Poor People

This alternate offering enabled poor women to live up to their duty to God. Mary offered such a sacrifice after Jesus' birth (see Luke 2:24)—an indication that Jesus' family was not well off.

Others say that dietary laws were meant to keep the Israelites apart from their neighbors. Pigs were prominent in Canaanite worship; therefore the Israelites were not to eat them. A different dietary standard would keep the two groups from mixing socially, for a meal was always part of Middle Eastern hospitality.

Still other scholars suggest that the uncleanness rules simply fit into what Israelites intuitively thought proper. God was reinforcing a natural sense of repulsion toward creeping insects, scavenger birds, bodily emissions, and skin diseases.

The Habit of Carefulness

All these explanations have merit, but the underlying basis of clean and unclean was religious. Being unclean was not dangerous or wrong. In fact, you could hardly avoid it. Practically everyone became "unclean" from time to time. But you could not worship God in the Tent of Meeting while you were unclean, nor bring anything unclean into the presence of God. His holiness would destroy it—and you (Leviticus 15:31).

So Leviticus trains God's people to watch their lives as carefully as surgeons watch their sterile technique. They must develop the habit of carefulness, even about something they cannot see or feel. They must think about preparing themselves for God, not just do whatever "feels right."

It was not a question of how they felt about God, any more than a surgeon's concern is how he "feels" about germs. Clear, absolute standards laid out what could be acceptable to a God who is perfectly clean, absolute, unchanging. Just as surgeons had to struggle to take germs seriously, so God's people must learn to "purify themselves" for God.

Touching the Unclean

The uncleanness rules of Leviticus are outmoded because of Jesus' declaration that all things are clean (Mark 7:19; see also Acts 10:9-16). But the lessons behind these rules remain valid. God still may not be approached carelessly. Each person must examine his or her life, to be certain that God's purity is not violated.

Until Jesus' day, the slow spread of uncleanness seemed irreversible. You could avoid it, but you could not get rid of it. Contact with anything unclean made you unclean yourself. Naturally, certain diseases, notably leprosy, were twice cursed: they were both dangerous and unclean. You kept away from leprosy, absolutely.

Then Jesus touched a man with leprosy, and he became clean. Jesus touched a woman suffering from internal bleeding, and she was healed. For the first time, cleanness rather than uncleanness spread. The rules of Leviticus tell how to avoid uncleanness. Contact with Jesus, however, changes the unclean to clean.

Life Questions. Suppose sin were visible—small green spots that come out on the skin. Do you think it would help people to take sin more seriously?

skin disease,⁴ he must be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons⁵ who is a priest. ³The priest is to examine the sore on his skin, and if the hair in the sore has turned white and the sore appears to be more than skin deep,⁶ it is an infectious skin disease. When the priest examines him, he shall pronounce him ceremonially unclean. ⁴If the spot on his skin is white but does not appear to be more than skin deep and the hair in it has not turned white, the priest is to put the infected person in isolation for seven days. ⁵On the seventh day the priest is to examine him, and if he sees that the sore is unchanged and has not spread in the skin, he is to keep him in isolation another seven days. ⁶On the seventh day the priest is to examine him again, and if the sore has faded and has not spread in the skin, the priest shall pronounce him clean; it is only a rash. The man must wash his clothes, and he will be clean. ⁷But if the rash does spread in his skin after he has shown himself to the priest to be pronounced clean, he must appear before the priest again. ⁸The priest is to examine him, and if the rash has spread in the skin, he shall pronounce him unclean; it is an infectious disease.

⁹When anyone has an infectious skin disease, he must be brought to the priest. ¹⁰The priest is to examine him, and if there is a white swelling in the skin that has turned the hair white and if there is raw flesh in the swelling, ¹¹it is a chronic skin disease and the priest shall pronounce him unclean. He is not to put him in isolation, because he is already unclean.

¹²If the disease breaks out all over his skin and, so far as the priest can see, it covers all the skin of the infected person from head to foot, ¹³the priest is to examine him, and if the disease has covered his whole body, he shall pronounce that person clean. Since it has all turned white, he is clean. ¹⁴But whenever raw flesh appears on him, he will be unclean. ¹⁵When the priest sees the raw flesh, he shall pronounce him unclean. The raw flesh is unclean, he has an infectious disease. ¹⁶Should the raw flesh change and turn white, he must go to the priest. ¹⁷The priest is to examine him, and if the sores have turned white, the priest shall pronounce the infected person clean; then he will be clean.

¹⁸When someone has a boil on his skin and it heals, ¹⁹and in the place where the boil was, a white swelling or reddish-white spot appears, he must present himself to the priest. ²⁰The priest is to examine it, and if it appears to be more than skin deep and the hair in it has turned white, the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It is an infectious skin disease that has broken out where the boil was. ²¹But if, when the priest examines it, there is no white hair in it and it is not more than skin deep and has faded, then the priest is to put him in isolation for seven days. ²²If it is spreading in the skin, the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is infectious. ²³But if the spot is unchanged and has not spread, it is only a scar from the boil, and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

²⁴When someone has a burn on his skin and a reddish-white or white spot appears in the raw flesh of the burn, ²⁵the priest is to examine the spot, and if the hair in it has turned white, and it appears to be more than skin deep, it is an infectious disease that has broken out in the burn. The priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is an infectious skin disease. ²⁶But if the priest examines it and there is no white hair in the spot and if it is not more than skin deep and has faded, then the priest is to put him in isolation for seven days. ²⁷On the seventh day the priest is to examine him, and if it is spreading in the skin, the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is an infectious skin disease. ²⁸If, however, the spot is unchanged and has not spread in the skin but has faded, it is a swelling from the burn, and the priest shall pronounce him clean; it is only a scar from the burn.

²⁹If a man or woman has a sore on the head or on the chin, ³⁰the priest is to examine the sore, and if it appears to be more than skin deep and the hair in it is yellow and thin, the priest shall pronounce that person unclean, it is an itch, an infectious disease of the head or chin. ³¹But if, when the priest examines this kind of sore, it does not seem to be more than skin deep and there is no black hair in it, then the priest is to put the infected person in isolation for seven days. ³²On the seventh day the priest is to examine the sore, and if the itch has not spread and there is no yellow hair in it and it does not appear to be more than skin deep, ³³he must be shaved except for the diseased area, and the priest is to keep him in isolation another seven days. ³⁴On the seventh day the priest is to examine the itch, and if it has not spread in the skin and appears to be no more than skin deep, the priest shall pronounce him clean. He must wash his clothes, and he will be clean. ³⁵But if the itch does spread in the skin after he is pronounced clean, ³⁶the priest is to examine him, and if the itch has spread in the skin, the priest does not need to look for yellow hair; the person is unclean. ³⁷If, however, in his judgment it is unchanged and black hair has grown in it, the itch is healed. He is clean, and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

³⁸When a man or woman has white spots on the skin, ³⁹the priest is to examine them, and if the spots are dull white, it is a harmless rash that has broken out on the skin; that person is clean.

⁴⁰When a man has lost his hair and is bald, he is clean. ⁴¹If he has lost his hair from the front of his scalp and has a bald forehead, he is clean. ⁴²But if he has a reddish-white sore on his bald head or forehead, it is an infectious disease breaking out on his head or forehead. ⁴³The priest is to examine him, and if the swollen sore on his head or forehead is reddish-white like an infectious skin disease, ⁴⁴the man is diseased and is unclean. The priest shall pronounce him unclean because of the sore on his head.

⁴⁵The person with such an infectious disease must wear torn clothes, let his hair be unkempt,⁴

⁴2 Traditionally *leprosy*, the Hebrew word was used for various diseases affecting the skin—not necessarily leprosy also elsewhere in this chapter. ⁵2 Or *descendants* ³3 Or *be lower than the rest of the skin*, also elsewhere in this chapter ⁴45 Or *clothes; uncover his head*

cover the lower part of his face and cry out, 'Unclean! Unclean!' ⁴⁶As long as he has the infection he remains unclean. He must live alone; he must live outside the camp.

Regulations About Mildew

¹ If any clothing is contaminated with mildew—any woolen or linen clothing, ⁴⁰any woven or knitted material of linen or wool, any leather or anything made of leather—⁴⁹and if the contamination in the clothing, or leather, or woven or knitted material, or any leather article, is greenish or reddish, it is a spreading mildew and must be shown to the priest. ⁵⁰The priest is to examine the mildew and isolate the affected article for seven days. ⁵¹On the seventh day he is to examine it, and if the mildew has spread in the clothing, or the woven or knitted material, or the leather, whatever its use, it is a destructive mildew, the article is unclean. ⁵²He must burn up the clothing, or the woven or knitted material of wool or linen, or any leather article that has the contamination in it, because the mildew is destructive, the article must be burned up.

⁵³But if, when the priest examines it, the mildew has not spread in the clothing, or the woven or knitted material, or the leather article, ⁵⁴he shall order that the contaminated article be washed. Then he is to isolate it for another seven days. ⁵⁵After the affected article has been washed, the priest is to examine it, and if the mildew has not changed its appearance, even though it has not spread, it is unclean. Burn it with fire, whether the mildew has affected one side or the other. ⁵⁶If, when the priest examines it, the mildew has faded after the article has been washed, he is to tear the contaminated part out of the clothing, or the leather, or the woven or knitted material. ⁵⁷But if it reappears in the clothing, or in the woven or knitted material, or in the leather article, it is spreading, and whatever has the mildew must be burned with fire. ⁵⁸The clothing, or the woven or knitted material, or any leather article that has been washed and is rid of the mildew, must be washed again, and it will be clean."

⁵⁹These are the regulations concerning contamination by mildew in woolen or linen clothing, woven or knitted material, or any leather article, for pronouncing them clean or unclean.

Cleansing From Infectious Skin Diseases

14 The LORD said to Moses, ²"These are the regulations for the diseased person at the time of his ceremonial cleansing, when he is brought to the priest: ³The priest is to go outside the camp and examine him. If the person has been healed of his infectious skin disease,^a ⁴the priest shall order that two live clean birds and some cedar wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop be brought for the one to be cleansed. ⁵Then the priest shall order that one of the birds be killed over fresh water in a clay pot. ⁶He is then to take the live bird and dip it, together with the cedar wood, the scarlet yarn and the hyssop, into the blood of the bird that was

killed over the fresh water. ⁷Seven times he shall sprinkle the one to be cleansed of the infectious disease and pronounce him clean. Then he is to release the live bird in the open fields.

⁸"The person to be cleansed must wash his clothes, shave off all his hair and bathe with water; then he will be ceremonially clean. After this he may come into the camp, but he must stay outside his tent for seven days. ⁹On the seventh day he must shave off all his hair; he must shave his head, his beard, his eyebrows and the rest of his hair. He must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water, and he will be clean.

¹⁰"On the eighth day he must bring two male lambs and one ewe lamb a year old, each without defect, along with three-tenths of an ephah^b of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, and one log^c of oil. ¹¹The priest who pronounces him clean shall present both the one to be cleansed and his offerings before the LORD at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

¹²"Then the priest is to take one of the male lambs and offer it as a guilt offering, along with the log of oil; he shall wave them before the LORD as a wave offering. ¹³He is to slaughter the lamb in the holy place where the sin offering and the burnt offering are slaughtered. Like the sin offering, the guilt offering belongs to the priest; it is most holy. ¹⁴The priest is to take some of the blood of the guilt offering and put it on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. ¹⁵The priest shall then take some of the log of oil, pour it in the palm of his own left hand, ¹⁶dip his right forefinger into the oil in his palm, and with his finger sprinkle some of it before the LORD seven times. ¹⁷The priest is to put some of the oil remaining in his palm on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot, on top of the blood of the guilt offering. ¹⁸The rest of the oil in his palm the priest shall put on the head of the one to be cleansed and make atonement for him before the LORD.

¹⁹"Then the priest is to sacrifice the sin offering and make atonement for the one to be cleansed from his uncleanness. After that, the priest shall slaughter the burnt offering ²⁰and offer it on the altar, together with the grain offering, and make atonement for him, and he will be clean.

²¹"If, however, he is poor and cannot afford

14:7 A Bird Set Free

It is difficult to assign definite symbolic meaning to all the details in this ceremony for cleansing skin diseases. Many scholars suggest that the bird that was killed represented purification by sacrifice, while the bird set free represented new liberty after a long quarantine. When Jesus healed a man with leprosy (Matthew 8:4), he told him to follow these instructions.

^a Traditionally leprosy; the Hebrew word was used for various diseases affecting the skin—not necessarily leprosy, also elsewhere in this chapter. ^b That is, probably about 6 quarts (about 6.5 liters). ^c That is, probably about 2/3 pint (about 0.3 liter), also in verses 12, 15, 21 and 24.

these he must take one male lamb as a guilt offering to be waved to make atonement for him, together with a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, a log of oil, and two doves or two young pigeons, which he can afford, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering.

23^a In the eighth day he must bring them for his cleansing to the priest at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, before the Lord. 24 The priest is to take the lamb for the guilt offering, together with the log of oil, and wave them before the Lord as a wave offering. 25 He shall slaughter the lamb for the guilt offering and take some of its blood and put it on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. 26 The priest is to pour some of the oil into the palm of his own left hand, and with his right forefinger sprinkle some of the oil from his palm seven times before the Lord. 27 Some of the oil in his palm he is to put on the same places he put the blood of the guilt offering—on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. 28 The rest of the oil in his palm the priest shall put on the head of the one to be cleansed, to make atonement for him before the Lord. 29 Then he shall sacrifice the doves or the young pigeons, which the person can afford, 30 one^b as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, together with the grain offering. In this way the priest will make atonement before the Lord on behalf of the one to be cleansed."

32 These are the regulations for anyone who has an infectious skin disease and who cannot afford the regular offerings for his cleansing.

Cleansing From Mildew

33 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 34 "When you enter the land of Canaan, which I am giving you as your possession, and I put a spreading mildew in a house in that land, 35 the owner of the house must go and tell the priest, 'I have seen something that looks like mildew in my house.' 36 The priest is to order the house to be emptied before he goes in to examine the mildew, so that nothing in the house will be pronounced unclean. After this the priest is to go in and inspect the house. 37 He is to examine the mildew on the walls, and if it has greenish or reddish depressions that appear to be deeper than the surface of the wall, 38 the priest shall go out the doorway of the house and close it up for seven days. 39 On the seventh day the priest shall return to inspect the house. If the mildew has spread on the walls, 40 he is to order that the contaminated stones be torn out and thrown into an unclean place outside the town. 41 He must have all the inside walls of the house scraped and the material that is scraped off dumped into an unclean place outside the town. 42 Then they are to take other stones to replace these and take new clay and plaster the house.

43 "If the mildew reappears in the house after the stones have been torn out and the house scraped

and plastered, 44 the priest is to go and examine it and, if the mildew has spread still a second time, it is to be torn down. Its stones, timbers and all the plaster—and taken out of the town to an unclean place.

45 "Anyone who goes into the house while it is closed up will be unclean till evening. 46 Anyone who sleeps or eats in the house must wash his clothes.

47 "But if the priest comes to examine it and the mildew has not spread after the house has been plastered, he shall pronounce the house clean, to cause the mildew to go. 48 To purify the house he is to take two birds and some cedar wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop. 49 He shall kill one of the birds over fresh water in a clay pot. 50 Then he is to take the cedar wood, the hyssop, the scarlet yarn, and the live bird, dip them into the blood of the dead bird and the fresh water, and sprinkle the house seven times. 51 He shall purify the house with the cedar wood, the fresh water, the live bird, the cedar blood, the hyssop and the scarlet yarn. 52 Then he is to release the live bird in the open fields outside the town. In this way he will make atonement for the house, and it will be clean."

53 These are the regulations for any infectious skin disease, for an itch, 54 for mildew in clothing or in a house, 55 and for a swelling, a rash or a bright spot, 56 to determine when something is clean or unclean.

These are the regulations for infectious skin diseases and mildew.

Discharges Causing Uncleaness

15 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 2 "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When any man has a bodily discharge, the discharge is unclean. 3 Whether it continues flowing from his body or is blocked, it will make him unclean. This is how his discharge will bring about uncleanness:

4 "Any bed the man with a discharge lies on will be unclean, and anything he sits on will be unclean. 5 Anyone who touches his bed must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening. 6 Whoever sits on anything that the man with a discharge sat on must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening.

7 "Whoever touches the man who has a discharge must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening.

8 "If the man with the discharge spits on someone who is clean, that person must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening.

9 "Everything the man sits on when riding will be unclean, 10 and whoever touches any of the things that were under him will be unclean till evening; whoever picks up those things must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening.

11 "Anyone the man with a discharge touches without rinsing his hands with water must wash

^a21 That is, probably about 2 quarts (about 2 liters)

^b31 Septuagint and Syriac; Hebrew ³²such as the person can afford one

his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening.

12^a A clay pot that the man touches must be broken, and any wooden article is to be rinsed with water.

13^a When a man is cleansed from his discharge, he is to count off seven days for his ceremonial cleansing; he must wash his clothes and bathe himself with fresh water, and he will be clean.

14^a On the eighth day he must take two doves or two young pigeons and come before the Lord to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and give them to the priest. 15^a The priest is to sacrifice them: the one a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. In this way he will make atonement before the Lord for the man because of his discharge.

16^a When a man has an emission of semen, he must bathe his whole body with water, and he will be unclean till evening. 17^a Any clothing of leather that has semen on it must be washed with water, and it will be unclean till evening. 18^a When a man lies with a woman and there is an emission of semen, both must bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening.

19^a When a woman has her regular flow of blood, the impurity of her monthly period will last seven days, and anyone who touches her will be unclean till evening.

20^a Anything she lies on during her period will be unclean, and anything she sits on will be unclean. 21^a Whoever touches her bed must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening. 22^a Whoever touches anything she sits on must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening. 23^a Whether it is the bed or anything she was sitting on, when anyone touches it, he will be unclean till evening.

24^a If a man lies with her and her monthly flow touches him, he will be unclean for seven days, any bed he lies on will be unclean.

25^a When a woman has a discharge of blood for many days at a time other than her monthly period or has a discharge that continues beyond her period, she will be unclean as long as she has the discharge, just as in the days of her period. 26^a Any bed she lies on while her discharge continues will be unclean, as is her bed during her monthly period, and anything she sits on will be unclean, as during her period. 27^a Whoever touches them will be unclean; he must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening.

28^a When she is cleansed from her discharge, she must count off seven days, and after that she will be ceremonially clean. 29^a On the eighth day she must take two doves or two young pigeons and bring them to the priest at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. 30^a The priest is to sacrifice one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. In this way he will make atonement for her before the Lord for the uncleanness of her discharge.

31^a You must keep the Israelites separate from things that make them unclean, so they will not die

in their uncleanness for defiling my dwelling place, which is among them.

^aThese are the regulations for a man with a discharge: for anyone made unclean by an emission of semen, for a woman with a discharge, and for a man who lies with a woman who is ceremonially unclean.

The Day of Atonement

16 The Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron who died when they approached the Lord. 2^a The Lord said to Moses: Tell your brother Aaron not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die, because I appear in the cloud over the atonement cover.

3^a This is how Aaron is to enter the sanctuary area with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. 4^a He is to put on the sacred linen tunic, with linen undergarments next to his body; he is to tie the linen sash around him and put on the linen turban. These are sacred garments, so he must bathe himself with water before he puts them on. 5^a From the Israelite community he is to take two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.

6^a Aaron is to offer the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household. 7^a Then he is to take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. 8^a He is to cast lots for the two goats—one lot for the Lord and the other for the scapegoat. 9^a Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the Lord and sacrifice it for a sin offering. 10^a But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord to be used for making atonement by sending it into the desert as a scapegoat.

11^a Aaron shall bring the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household, and he is to slaughter the bull for his own sin offering. 12^a He is to take a censer full of burning coals from the altar before the Lord and two handfuls of finely ground fragrant incense and take them behind the curtain. 13^a He is to put the incense on the fire before the Lord, and the smoke of the incense will conceal the atonement cover above the Testimony, so that he will not die. 14^a He is to take some of the bull's blood and with his finger sprinkle it on the front of the atonement cover; then he shall sprinkle some of it with his finger seven times before the atonement cover.

15^a He shall then slaughter the goat for the sin offering for the people and take its blood behind the curtain and do with it as he did with the bull's blood: He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it. 16^a In this way he will make atonement for the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been. He is to do the same for the Tent of Meeting, which is among them in the midst of their uncleanness. 17^a No one is to be in the Tent

^a31 Or my tabernacle

^a8 That is, the goat of removal; Hebrew azazel, also in verses 10 and 26

16:18-20 At the time Aaron goes in to make atonement in the Most Holy Place until he comes out, he shall make atonement for himself, his family and the whole community of Israel. 16:19-21 He shall come out to the altar that is before the LORD and make atonement for it. He shall take some of the bull's blood and some of the goat's blood and put it on all the horns of the altar. 16:22-23 He shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times to cleanse it and to consecrate it from the uncleanness of the Israelites.

16:24-26 Then Aaron has finished making atonement in the Most Holy Place, the Tent of Meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. 16:27-28 He shall lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess to the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins—and put them on the goat. 16:29-30 Then he shall send the goat away into the wilderness in the care of a man appointed for the task. 16:31-32 The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a barren place, and the man shall release it in the wilderness.

16:33-35 Then Aaron is to go into the Tent of Meeting and take on the linen garments he put on before he entered the Most Holy Place, and he is to leave there. 16:36-37 He shall bathe himself with water in the laver and put on his regular garments. Then he shall come out and sacrifice the burnt offering for himself and the burnt offering for the people, to make atonement for himself and for the people. 16:38-39 He shall also burn the fat of the sin offering on the altar.

16:40-41 The man who releases the goat as a scapegoat must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water; afterward he may come into the camp. 16:42-43 The bull and the goat for the sin offerings, whose blood was brought into the Most Holy Place to make atonement, must be taken outside the camp; their hides, flesh and offal are to be burned up. 16:44-45 The man who burns them must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water; afterward he may come into the camp.

16:46-47 This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: On the tenth day of the seventh month you must deny yourselves and not do any work—whether native-born or an alien living among you—²⁸because on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you. Then, before the LORD, you will be clean from all your sins. ²⁹It is a sabbath of rest, and you must deny yourselves; it is a lasting ordinance. ³⁰The priest who is anointed and ordained to succeed his father as high priest is to make atonement. He is to put on the sacred linen gar-

ments and make atonement for the Most Holy Place for the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and for the priests and all the people of the community.

³¹This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: Atonement is to be made once a year for all the sins of the Israelites.

And it was done as the LORD commanded Moses.

Eating Blood Forbidden

17 The LORD said to Moses: ¹Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites and say to them: 'This is what the LORD has commanded: ²Any Israelite who sacrifices an ox,^a a lamb or a goat in the camp or outside of it ³instead of bringing it to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting to present it as an offering to the LORD in front of the tabernacle of the LORD—that man shall be considered guilty of bloodshed; he has shed blood and must be cut off from his people. ⁴This is so the Israelites will bring to the LORD the sacrifices they are now making in the open fields. They must bring them to the priest, that is, to the LORD, at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and sacrifice them as fellowship offerings. ⁵The priest is to sprinkle the blood against the altar of the LORD at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and burn the fat as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. ⁶They must no longer offer any of their sacrifices to the goat idols^d to whom they prostitute themselves. This is to be a lasting ordinance for them and for the generations to come.'

⁷'Say to them: 'Any Israelite or any alien living among them who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice ⁸and does not bring it to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting to sacrifice it to the LORD—that man must be cut off from his people.

⁹'Any Israelite or any alien living among them who eats any blood—I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from his people. ¹⁰For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life. ¹¹Therefore I say to the Israelites, "None of you may eat blood, nor may an alien living among you eat blood."

¹²'Any Israelite or any alien living among you who hunts any animal or bird that may be eaten must drain out the blood and cover it with earth,

17:10 Kosher

To this day many Jews avoid meat unless it has been carefully drained of blood. Blood, which represented the life of living creatures, was to make atonement for, or to "cover up," sins. Thus Jesus' blood, signifying his death, has special significance to Christians. It is the blood of the ultimate sacrifice for sin.

The first Christians debated how much of the law should be required of non-Jews who became Christians (Acts 15). Of the four requirements they settled on, two were "kosher."

16:20 Scapegoat

The English word *scapegoat* (escape goat) was formed to capture the essence of this crucial ceremony in which a goat symbolically carried all the sins of Israel into the wilderness. Today the word is applied to anyone who takes the blame for something other people did.

^a The Hebrew word can include both male and female.

^d The Hebrew word can include both male and female.

^e Traditionally peace offerings.



A National Law Library

Setting Israel apart from its neighbors

You are to be holy to me because I, the Lord, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own. 20:26

The laws of most nations would fill a library. Elaborate indexes guide lawyers where to look when dealing with a particular issue. No one person can know even a fraction of all the laws of his or her nation.

If the Old Testament laws recorded in Leviticus (and Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) seem dull and long-winded, keep them in perspective. These—just over 600 in all—were the entire set of laws for a nation, as far as we know. Their most striking feature, to a lawyer, is brevity and simplicity. You don't have to go to law school to understand them.

The laws are listed in no particular order. A law against witchcraft is followed by a law against improper haircuts, which is followed by a law against tattoos, which in turn is followed by a law against making your daughter into a prostitute. This mixing reveals an important feature of Old Testament thinking. Life is not analyzed in separate components, but seen as a whole.

For the Israelites every aspect of life—politics, family life, diet, economics—concerned God. Even the Ten Commandments (in Exodus 20) show this, for they include laws regarding our relationship to both God and our neighbor. The two cannot be separated.

Remarkable Features

In comparison with laws from other countries at that time, the Old Testament made a considerable advance. (Indeed, these laws have greatly influenced laws for our day.) Some of the remarkable features:

- *People were more important than property.* For instance, there was never a death penalty for a crime against someone's property. Also, slaves were treated as human beings, not property. This was not true of many other legal codes of that time.
- *There was no class system.* In many ancient countries, a noble was treated far differently from a commoner. Not so in Israel: everybody stood on the same level before the law. Even a foreigner had defined rights.
- *The punishment fit the crime.* No "cruel and unusual punishment" was allowed. "An eye for an eye" (Leviticus 24:20) ensured that no privileged character was "let off" for a crime, while at the same time it limited revenge.
- *Sexuality mattered.* In most countries, the law little cared whether you slept with your neighbor's wife. In Israel, sexual immorality got stern treatment.
- *The poor and weak had protection.* Specific provisions protected their rights from the powerful and wealthy. "Welfare" offered them a way to keep alive, such as the right to glean the fields." In chapter 19, verses 9, 13, 14, 15, 32, and 33 gave protection to various groups that could not defend themselves.
- *Attitudes, as well as actions, mattered.* For instance, Leviticus 19:18 contains the famous law to "love your neighbor as yourself." Living up to the letter of the law was not enough. The law aimed to develop loving relationships.

Designed to Be Different

While we do not understand the reasons for some of the laws (many may have been designed simply to keep the Israelites "different" from their pagan neighbors), their overall impact is clear. These rules were intended to form a nation of compassionate, consistent, fair-minded people. They insisted that each person act positively and lovingly toward his or her neighbor—and particularly toward those in need. The reason? God lived with them. Since he is both just and merciful, his people must be too.

Life Questions: Everybody has a code to live by. Does your personal rulebook show as much concern for the poor and defenseless as Leviticus's?

When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your field a second time or pick up the grapes that have been fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God.

Do not abuse one another.

Do not swear by my name and so profane it, for I am the LORD. Do not defraud your neighbor or rob him. Do not hold back the wages of a hired man.

Do not curse the dead or put a stumbling block before the blind, but fear your God. I am the LORD.

Do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge fairly.

Do not spread slander among your people.

Do not do anything that endangers your life, for I am the LORD.

Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in his guilt.

Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

Keep my decrees.

Do not mate different kinds of animals.

Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed.

Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material.

If a man sleeps with a woman who is a slave to another man but who has not been redeemed or given her freedom, there must be punishment. Yet they are not to be put to death, because she had not been freed. The man, however, must bring a ram to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting as a guilt offering to the LORD. The priest is to take the guilt offering the man has made, and his sin will be forgiven.

When you enter the land and plant any kind of tree, regard its fruit as forbidden.^a For three years you are to consider it forbidden. It is not to be eaten. In the fourth year all its fruit is to be holy, an offering of praise to the LORD.

But in the fifth year you may eat its fruit. In this way your harvest will be increased. I am the LORD your God.

Do not eat any meat with the blood still in it.

Do not practice divination or sorcery.

Do not cut the hair at the sides of your head or clip off the edges of your beard.

Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the LORD.

Do not degrade your daughter by making her a prostitute, or the land will turn to prostitution and be filled with wickedness.

Observe my Sabbaths and have reverence for my sanctuary. I am the LORD.

Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God.

Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the LORD.

When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight or quantity. Use honest scales and honest weights, an honest ephah^b and an honest hin.^c I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt.

Keep all my decrees and all my laws and follow them. I am the LORD.

Punishments for Sin

20 The LORD said to Moses, ² Say to the Israelites: Any Israelite or any alien living in Israel who gives any of his children to Molech must be put to death. The people of the community are to stone him. ³ I will set my face against that man and I will cut him off from his people; for by giving his children to Molech, he has defiled my sanctuary and profaned my holy name. ⁴ If the people of the community close their eyes when that man gives one of his children to Molech and they fail to put him to death, ⁵ I will set my face against that man and his family and will cut off from their people both him and all who follow him in prostituting themselves to Molech.

⁶ I will set my face against the person who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute himself by following them, and I will cut him off from his people.

⁷ Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the LORD your God. ⁸ Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the LORD, who makes you holy.^d

⁹ If anyone curses his father or mother, he must be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother, and his blood will be on his own head.

¹⁰ If a man commits adultery with another man's wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death.

¹¹ If a man sleeps with his father's wife, he has

19:9 Help for the Poor

God's law was persistently concerned with the welfare of the poor. Everyday farming was to be done in such a way that poor and foreign people could fend for themselves. The reasons for such care are given: we are to imitate the holy character of God (verse 1), who cares for the poor, and to love our neighbor as ourselves (verse 18).

^averse 2:30. ^b36 An ephah was a dry measure (verses 3 and 4). ^c41 A hin was a liquid measure. ^d42 Or sacrifices, also in

^b36 A hin was a liquid measure.

^d42 Or sacrifices, also in

dishonored his father. Both the man and the woman who have done this must be put to death. They must be put to death, and their blood will be on their heads.

17 If a man has sexual relations with his daughter in law, both of them must be put to death. What they have done is a detestable thing. Their blood will be on their heads.

18 A man lies with a man as one lies with a woman. Both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death. Their blood will be on their heads.

19 If a man marries both a woman and her mother, it is wicked. Both he and they must be put to death. Their blood will be on their heads.

20 A man has sexual relations with an animal. He must be put to death, and you must kill the animal.

21 A woman approaches an animal to have sexual relations with it. You must kill both the woman and the animal. Their blood will be on their heads.

22 A man marries his sister, the daughter of either his father or his mother, and they have sexual relations. It is a disgrace. They must be cut off before the eyes of their people. He has dishonored his sister and will be held responsible.

23 If a man lies with a woman during her monthly period and has sexual relations with her, he has exposed the source of her flow, and she has also uncovered it. Both of them must be cut off from their people.

24 Do not have sexual relations with the sister of either your mother or your father, for that would dishonor a close relative. Both of you would be held responsible.

25 If a man sleeps with his aunt, he has dishonored his uncle. They will be held responsible; they will be childless.

26 If a man marries his brother's wife, it is an act of impurity. He has dishonored his brother. They will be childless.

27 Keep all my decrees and laws and follow them, so that the land where I am bringing you to live may not vomit you out. 28 You must not live according to the customs of the nations I am going to drive out before you. Because they did all these things, I abhorred them. 29 But I said to you, "You will possess their land; I will give it to you as an inheritance, a land flowing with milk and honey." I am the LORD your God, who has set you apart from the nations.

30 You must therefore make a distinction between clean and unclean animals and between unclean and clean birds. Do not defile yourselves by any animal or bird or anything that moves along the ground—those which I have set apart as unclean for you. 31 You are to be holy to me, because I, the LORD, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own.

32 "A man or woman who is a medium or spiritist among you must be put to death. You are to

destroy them. Their blood will be on their heads.

Rules for Priests

21 The LORD said to Moses: "Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: A priest must not make himself unclean, especially not about his own or his people who are except for a close relative, such as his mother or father, his sister or daughter, his brother. So an unmarried sister who is dependent on him since she has no husband—no, he may make himself unclean. He must not make himself unclean for people related to him by marriage, and so defile himself.

22 Priests must not shave their heads or shave off the edges of their beards or cut their bodies. They must be holy to their God and must not profane the name of their God. Because they present the offerings made to the LORD by fire, the head of their God, they are to be holy.

23 They must not marry women defiled by prostitution or divorced from their husbands, because priests are holy to their God. 24 Regard them as holy, because they offer up the food of your God. Consider them holy, because I, the LORD, am holy. I who make you holy.

25 If a priest's daughter defiles herself by becoming a prostitute, she disgraces her father. She must be burned in the fire.

26 The high priest, the one among his brothers who has had the anointing oil poured on his head and who has been ordained to wear the priestly garments, must not let his hair become unkempt or tear his clothes. 27 He must not enter a place where there is a dead body. He must not make himself unclean, even for his father or mother, 28 nor leave the sanctuary of his God or desecrate it, because he has been dedicated by the anointing oil of his God. I am the LORD.

29 The woman he marries must be a virgin. 30 He must not marry a widow, a divorced woman, or a woman defiled by prostitution, but only a virgin from his own people. 31 So he will not defile his offspring among his people. I am the LORD, who makes him holy."

32 The LORD said to Moses, 1 "Say to Aaron: 'For the generations to come none of your descendants who has a defect may come near to offer the food of his God. 18 No man who has any defect may come near: no man who is blind or lame, disfigured or deformed, 19 no man with a crippled foot or hand, 20 or who is hunchbacked or dwarfed, or who has any eye defect, or who has festering or running sores or damaged testicles. 21 No descendant of Aaron the priest who has any defect is to come near to present the offerings made to the LORD by fire. He has a defect; he must not come near to offer the food of his God. 22 He may eat the most holy food of his God, as well as the holy food, 23 yet because of his defect he must not go near the curtain or approach the altar, and so desecrate my sanctuary. I am the LORD, who makes them holy.'"

26 Or he may defile himself by uncovering his head
any

24 Or unclean as a leader among his people
25 Or who sanctifies him, or who sets him apart as holy

18 Or who sanctifies you, or who sets you apart as holy

21 Or who sanctifies them, or who sets them apart as holy

410 Or

...the LORD said to Moses, ...

...the LORD said to Moses, ...

...the LORD said to Moses, ...

...the LORD said to Moses, ...

...the LORD said to Moses, ...

...the LORD said to Moses, ...

...the LORD said to Moses, ...

...the LORD said to Moses, ...

...the LORD said to Moses, ...

The LORD said to Moses, 18 Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites and say to them 'If any of you—either an Israelite or an alien living in Israel—presents a gift for a burnt offering to the LORD either to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering, 19 you must present a male without defect from the cattle, sheep or goats in order that it may be accepted on your behalf. 20 Do not bring anything with a defect, because it will not be accepted on your behalf. 21 When anyone brings from the

Unacceptable Sacrifices

18 Traditionally saying the Hebrew word was used for various diseases affecting the skin—now it usually signifies uncleanliness. 19 Or who sanctifies you, or who sets you apart as holy. 20 Or who sanctifies you, or who sets you apart as holy.

...the LORD said to Moses, ...

...the LORD said to Moses, ...

...the LORD said to Moses, ...

...the LORD said to Moses, ...

...the LORD said to Moses, ...

...the LORD said to Moses, ...

...the LORD said to Moses, ...

...the LORD said to Moses, ...

22:19 The Very Best for God
For the Israelite farmers, a farm animal represented a considerable contribution. It would have been tempting to cull out their weakest animals. Instead, they were commanded to give their very best. Similarly, at every harvest they were to bring their very first grain to the Lord (23:10). These practices reminded them again and again of God's place in their lives.

22 (b) who sanctifies you, or who sets you apart as holy. 23 Traditionally pass offering. 24 The Hebrew word can include both male and female. 25 Or who sanctifies you, or who sets you apart as holy.

must eat bread made without yeast. ²⁰On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. ²¹For seven days present an offering made to the Lord by fire. And on the seventh day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.

Firstfruits

²²The Lord said to Moses, ²³"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. ²⁴He is to wave the sheaf before the Lord so it will be accepted on your behalf. The priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath. ²⁵On the day you wave the sheaf, you must sacrifice as a burnt offering to the Lord a lamb a year old without

defect. ²⁶Together with it grain—measure of two tenths of an ephah²³ of fine flour—with oil an offering made to the Lord, a pleasing aroma—and its drink offering, a measure of a hin²⁴ of wine. ²⁷You must not eat any bread, or roasted or new grain, until the day after you bring this offering to your God. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live.

Feast of Weeks

²⁸"From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. ²⁹Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the Lord. ³⁰From

²³ That is, probably about 4 quarts (about 4.5 liters); also in verse 17.

²⁴ That is, probably about 1 quart (about 1 liter).

INSIGHT

In Celebration of God

Jewish holidays focused on one thing

Rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days. 23:40

The people in every nation love holidays, celebrations, and feasts. The Israelites were no exception. Leviticus describes five feasts, all focusing on God. Each was marked by special sacrifices to God and a sacred assembly in the Tent of Meeting where God had "pitched his tent." Rather than giving gifts to each other, the Israelites gave gifts to God.

Sometimes they rejoiced: during the Feast of Tabernacles everyone camped out to "rejoice before the Lord" for a solid week (23:40). On other occasions, such as the Day of Atonement, they were sober and solemn (chapter 16, 23:26-32). But always their orientation was God-ward.

God over Money

Nobody worked on Israelite feast days, but their "days off" had a different motive than ours. An Israelite farmer never got a paid holiday. In fact, a holiday could cost him—it might fall on a day perfect for harvesting. But God took priority over work. The weekly Sabbath day reinforced the same idea. You had to stop working to worship.

God mattered more than wealth. This fundamental belief showed itself even more in the sabbath year and in the Year of Jubilee (chapter 25). Every seventh year, people did not farm at all. They lived off whatever the land produced by itself, and dedicated themselves to God. This would be like our closing all businesses and factories for a year.

After 49 years—seven sabbath years—the Year of Jubilee came. This time, people went for two years straight without planting. All land bought or sold during the previous 49 years went back to its original family ownership. Since the land had originally been equally distributed, this meant that no family would ever become either totally destitute or overwhelmingly rich. Any Israelites who had sold themselves as slaves would also be freed in that year.

Prosperity Came from God

Hard work and the resulting abundance were never scorned in Israel. But prosperity always came ultimately from God, not from hard work or clever dealings alone. The feasts and Sabbaths, set aside as special days, helped people remember and praise the God who had given them so much.

So far as we know, no Year of Jubilee was ever actually practiced. Some of the feasts were forgotten for long periods of time. But such failure is not surprising. After all, think what we have done to the holy day of Christmas! The feast days described in Leviticus give us a good idea of what God wanted Israel to be. Sadly, reality did not often match the ideal.

Life Questions: If someone examined the way you spend your holidays and weekends, what would he or she conclude about your priorities?

wherever you live, bring two loaves made of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour, baked with yeast, as a wave offering of firstfruits to the LORD. ¹⁸Present with this bread seven male lambs, each a year old and without defect, one young bull and two rams. They will be a burnt offering to the LORD, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings—an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD. ¹⁹Then sacrifice one male goat for a sin offering and two lambs, each a year old, for a fellowship offering. ²⁰The priest is to wave the two lambs before the LORD as a wave offering, together with the bread of the firstfruits. They are a sacred offering to the LORD for the priest. ²¹On that same day you are to proclaim a sacred assembly and do no regular work. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live.

²² When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God.”

Feast of Trumpets

²³The LORD said to Moses, ²⁴“Say to the Israelites: ‘On the first day of the seventh month you are to have a day of rest, a sacred assembly commemorated with trumpet blasts.’ ²⁵Do no regular work, but present an offering made to the LORD by fire.”

Day of Atonement

²⁶The LORD said to Moses, ²⁷“The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. Hold a sacred assembly and deny yourselves,^a and present an offering made to the LORD by fire. ²⁸Do no work on that day, because it is the Day of Atonement, when atonement is made for you before the LORD your God. ²⁹Anyone who does not deny himself on that day must be cut off from his people. ³⁰I will destroy from among his people anyone who does any work on that day. ³¹You shall do no work at all. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live. ³²It is a sabbath of rest for you, and you must deny yourselves. From the evening of the ninth day of the month until the following evening you are to observe your sabbath.”

Feast of Tabernacles

³³The LORD said to Moses, ³⁴“Say to the Israelites: ‘On the fifteenth day of the seventh month the LORD’s Feast of Tabernacles begins, and it lasts for seven days. ³⁵The first day is a sacred assembly; do no regular work. ³⁶For seven days present offerings made to the LORD by fire, and on the eighth day hold a sacred assembly and present an offering made to the LORD by fire. It is the closing assembly; do no regular work.’

³⁷“These are the LORD’s appointed feasts, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies for bringing offerings made to the LORD by fire—the burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings required for each day. ³⁸These of-

ferings are in addition to those for the LORD’s Sabbaths and^c in addition to your gifts and whatever you have vowed and all the freewill offerings you give to the LORD.)

³⁹“So beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to the LORD for seven days; the first day is a day of rest, and the eighth day also is a day of rest. ⁴⁰On the first day you are to take choice fruit from the trees, and palm fronds, leafy branches and poplars, and rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. ⁴¹Celebrate this as a festival to the LORD for seven days each year. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come; celebrate it in the seventh month. ⁴²Live in booths for seven days: All native-born Israelites are to live in booths ⁴³so your descendants will know that I had the Israelites live in booths when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.”

⁴⁴So Moses announced to the Israelites the appointed feasts of the LORD.

Oil and Bread Set Before the LORD

24 The LORD said to Moses, ²“Command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning continually. ³Outside the curtain of the Testimony in the Tent of Meeting, Aaron is to tend the lamps before the LORD from evening till morning, continually. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. ⁴The lamps on the pure gold lampstand before the LORD must be tended continually.

⁵Take fine flour and bake twelve loaves of bread, using two-tenths of an ephah^d for each loaf. ⁶Set them in two rows, six in each row, on the table of pure gold before the LORD. ⁷Along each row put some pure incense as a memorial portion to represent the bread and to be an offering made to the LORD by fire. ⁸This bread is to be set out before the LORD regularly, Sabbath after Sabbath, on behalf of the Israelites, as a lasting covenant. ⁹It belongs to Aaron and his sons, who are to eat it in a holy place, because it is a most holy part of their regular share of the offerings made to the LORD by fire.”

A Blasphemer Stoned

¹⁰Now the son of an Israelite mother and an Egyptian father went out among the Israelites, and a fight broke out in the camp between him and an Israelite. ¹¹The son of the Israelite woman blasphemed the Name with a curse; so they brought him to Moses. (His mother’s name was Shelomith,

23:40 Seven Days of Rejoicing

Though the worship of God was a serious business, it was also joyful. Every year, for instance, the Israelites were to hold this weeklong campout and celebration, filled with rejoicing.

^a19 Traditionally *peace offering* and these offerings are

^b27 Or *and fast*, also in verses 29 and 32

^c45 That is, probably about 4 quarts (about 4.5 liters)

^d38 Or *These feasts are in addition to the LORD’s Sabbaths*.

the daughter of Dabhi the Nubite. 15 They put him in custody until the will of the Lord should be made clear to them.

16 Then the Lord said to Moses: 17 Take the blasphemer outside the camp. All those who heard him are to lay their hands on his head, and the entire assembly is to stone him. 18 Say to the Israelites: If anyone curses his God, he will be held responsible. Anyone who blasphemes the name of the Lord must be put to death. The entire assembly must stone him. Whether an alien or native-born, when he blasphemes the Name, he must be put to death.

19 Anyone who takes the life of a human being, he must be put to death. 20 A woman who takes the life of someone is a murderer; must make restitution for the life. 21 Anyone who injures his neighbor, whatever he has done must be done to him: fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. As he has injured the other, so he is to be injured. 22 Whoever kills an animal must make restitution, but whoever kills a man must be put to death. 23 You are to have the same law for the alien and the native-born. I am the Lord your God."

24 Then Moses spoke to the Israelites, and they took the blasphemer outside the camp and stoned him. The Israelites did as the Lord commanded Moses.

The Sabbath Year

25 The Lord said to Moses on Mount Sinai: 2 Speak to the Israelites and say to them: When you enter the land I am going to give you, the land itself must observe a sabbath to the Lord. 3 For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. 4 But in the seventh year the land is to have a sabbath of rest, a sabbath to the Lord. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards. 5 Do not reap what grows or glean or harvest the grapes of your untended vines. The land is to have a year of rest. 6 Whatever the land yields during the sabbath year will be food for you—for yourself, your manservant and maid-servant, and the hired worker and temporary resident who live among you, 7 as well as for your livestock and the wild animals in your land. Whatever the land produces may be eaten.

The Year of Jubilee

8 Count off seven sabbaths of years—seven times seven years—so that the seven sabbaths of years amount to a period of forty-nine years. 9 Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on

the tenth day of the seventh month, on the Day of Atonement, sound the trumpet throughout your land. 10 Announce the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each to his own clan. 11 The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; do not sow and do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the untended vines. 12 For it is a jubilee and is to be holy for you; eat only what is taken directly from the fields.

13 In this Year of Jubilee everyone is to return to his own property.

14 If you sell land to one of your countrymen or buy any from him, do not take advantage of each other. 15 You are to buy from your countryman on the basis of the number of years since the Jubilee. And he is to sell to you on the basis of the number of years left for harvesting crops. 16 When the years are many, you are to increase the price; and when the years are few, you are to decrease the price, because what he is really selling you is the number of crops. 17 Do not take advantage of each other, but fear your God. I am the Lord your God.

18 Follow my decrees and be careful to obey my laws, and you will live safely in the land. 19 Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and live there in safety. 20 You may ask, "What will we eat in the seventh year if we do not plant or harvest our crops?" 21 I will send you such a blessing in the sixth year that the land will yield enough for three years. 22 While you plant during the eighth year, you will eat from the old crop and will continue to eat from it until the harvest of the ninth year comes in.

23 The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants. 24 Throughout the country that you hold as a possession, you must provide for the redemption of the land.

25 If one of your countrymen becomes poor and sells some of his property, his nearest relative is to come and redeem what his countryman has sold. 26 If, however, a man has no one to redeem it for him but he himself prospers and acquires sufficient means to redeem it, 27 he is to determine the value for the years since he sold it and refund the balance to the man to whom he sold it; he can then go back to his own property. 28 But if he does not acquire the means to repay him, what he sold will remain in the possession of the buyer until the Year of Jubilee. It will be returned in the Jubilee, and he can then go back to his property.

29 If a man sells a house in a walled city, he retains the right of redemption a full year after its

24:20 An Eye for an Eye

Jesus, speaking of this law in Matthew 5:38, told his followers not to resist evil people. Apparently people had been taking "an eye for an eye" as a basis for private vengeance—as some do today. The law's original intent, however, was to set a standard for punishment in court. It limited vengeance and made certain that both rich and poor, native and foreigner, would pay the same price for their crimes.

25:28 Property Rights

God's law provided for a kind of redistribution of wealth every 50 years, when all land would revert to its original owners. The tendency for the rich to buy up all the property (which originally had been divided equally among families) was reversed in the Year of Jubilee. In essence, you could not sell your land—only lease it out.

ask. During that time he may redeem it. ³⁸If it is not redeemed before a full year has passed, the house in the walled city shall belong permanently to the buyer and his descendants. It is not to be returned in the jubilee. ³⁹But houses in villages without walls around them are to be considered as open country. They can be redeemed, and they are to be returned in the jubilee.

⁴⁰The Levites always have the right to redeem their houses in the Levitical towns, which they possess. ⁴¹Also the property of the Levites is redeemable—that is, a house sold in any town they hold—and is to be returned in the jubilee, because the houses in the towns of the Levites are their property among the Israelites. ⁴²But the pasture land belonging to their towns must not be sold; it is their permanent possession.

⁴³If one of your countrymen becomes poor and is unable to support himself among you, help him as you would an alien or a temporary resident, so he can continue to live among you. ⁴⁴Do not take interest of any kind^a from him, but fear your God, so that your countryman may continue to live among you. ⁴⁵You must not lend him money at interest or sell him food at a profit. ⁴⁶I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God.

⁴⁷If one of your countrymen becomes poor among you and sells himself to you, do not make him work as a slave. ⁴⁸He is to be treated as a hired worker or a temporary resident among you; he is to work for you until the Year of Jubilee. ⁴⁹Then he and his children are to be released, and he will go back to his own clan and to the property of his forefathers. ⁵⁰Because the Israelites are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt, they must not be sold as slaves. ⁵¹Do not rule over them ruthlessly, but fear your God.

⁵²Your male and female slaves are to come from the nations around you, from them you may buy slaves. ⁵³You may also buy some of the temporary residents living among you and members of their clans born in your country, and they will become your property. ⁵⁴You can will them to your children as inherited property and can make them slaves for life, but you must not rule over your fellow Israelites ruthlessly.

⁵⁵If an alien or a temporary resident among you becomes rich and one of your countrymen becomes poor and sells himself to the alien living among you or to a member of the alien's clan, ⁵⁶he retains the right of redemption after he has sold himself. One of his relatives may redeem him: ⁵⁷An uncle or a cousin or any blood relative in his clan may redeem him. Or if he prospers, he may redeem himself. ⁵⁸He and his buyer are to count the time from the year he sold himself up to the Year of Jubilee. The price for his release is to be based on the rate paid to a hired man for that number of years. ⁵⁹If many years remain, he must pay for his redemption a larger share of the price paid for him. ⁶⁰If only a few years remain until the Year of Jubilee, he is to compute that and pay for his redemption accordingly. ⁶¹He is to be treated

as a man hired from year to year; you must see to it that his owner does not rule over him ruthlessly.

⁶²Even if he is not redeemed in any of these ways, he and his children are to be released in the Year of Jubilee. ⁶³After the Levites belong to me as servants. They are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.

Reward for Obedience

26 Do not make idols or set up an image or a sacred stone for yourselves, and do not place a carved stone in your land to bow down before it. I am the Lord your God.

¹Observe my Sabbaths and have reverence for my sanctuary. I am the Lord.

²If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands, I will send you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees of the field their fruit. ³Your threshing will continue until grape harvest and the grape harvest will continue until planting, and you will eat all the food you want and live in safety in your land.

⁴I will grant peace in the land, and you will lie down and no one will make you afraid. I will remove savage beasts from the land, and the sword will not pass through your country. ⁵You will pursue your enemies, and they will fall by the sword before you. ⁶Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall by the sword before you.

⁷I will look on you with favor and make you fruitful and increase your numbers, and I will keep my covenant with you. ⁸You will still be eating last year's harvest when you will have to move it out to make room for the new. ⁹I will put my dwelling place^b among you, and I will not abhor you. ¹⁰I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people. ¹¹I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt so that you would no longer be slaves to the Egyptians; I broke the bars of your yoke and enabled you to walk with heads held high.

Punishment for Disobedience

¹⁴But if you will not listen to me and carry out all these commands, ¹⁵and if you reject my decrees and abhor my laws and fail to carry out all my commands and so violate my covenant, ¹⁶then I will do this to you: I will bring upon you sudden terror, wasting diseases and fever that will destroy your sight and drain away your life. You will plant seed in vain, because your enemies will eat it. ¹⁷I will set my face against you so that you will be defeated by your enemies; those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee even when no one is pursuing you.

¹⁸If after all this you will not listen to me, I will punish you for your sins seven times over. ¹⁹I will break down your stubborn pride and make the sky above you like iron and the ground beneath you like bronze. ²⁰Your strength will be spent in vain, because your soil will not yield its crops, nor will the trees of the land yield their fruit.

²¹If you remain hostile toward me and refuse

^a36 Or take excessive interest, similarly in verse 37

^b11 Or my tabernacle

[illegible]

I am sure that you will accept
 the suggestion and I am sure
 that you will be able to
 do so. I am sure that you
 will be able to do so. I am
 sure that you will be able to
 do so. I am sure that you will
 be able to do so. I am sure
 that you will be able to do so.
 I am sure that you will be able
 to do so. I am sure that you
 will be able to do so. I am
 sure that you will be able to
 do so. I am sure that you will
 be able to do so. I am sure
 that you will be able to do so.

The first part of the book is a history of the city of New York from its founding in 1624 to the present. It covers the Dutch period, the British period, and the American period. The second part is a description of the city's geography, climate, and population. The third part is a description of the city's economy, culture, and politics. The fourth part is a description of the city's transportation system. The fifth part is a description of the city's education system. The sixth part is a description of the city's health care system. The seventh part is a description of the city's social services. The eighth part is a description of the city's housing. The ninth part is a description of the city's environment. The tenth part is a description of the city's future.

“...and those who are left I will make
...of their enemies
...and I will put them
...the
...one is
...one an
...even
...I will not
...You will
...my ene-
...who are left
...their enemies be-
...of their fathers’

...and will oppress their sons and the
...—their treachery against me
...ward me which made me
...that I sent them into the
...—then when their uncircum-
...are humbled and they pay for their
...covenant with Jacob and
my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with

[illegible]

These are the decrees, the laws and the regulations that the Lord established on Mount Sinai between himself and the Israelites through Moses.

Redeeming What Is the Lord's

27 The Lord said to Moses: "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'If anyone makes a special vow to dedicate persons to the Lord by giving equivalent values, set the value of a male between the ages of twenty and sixty at fifty shekels of silver according to the sanctuary shekel; and if it is a female, set her value at thirty shekels. If it is a person between the ages of five and twenty, set the value of a male at twenty shekels and of a female at ten shekels. If it is a person between one month and five years, set the value of a male at five shekels of silver and that of a female at three shekels of silver. If it is a person sixty years old or more, set the value of a male at fifteen shekels and of a female at ten shekels. If anyone making the vow is too poor to pay the specified amount, he is to present the person to the priest, who will set the value for him according to what the man making the vow can afford.

9 If what he vowed is an animal that is acceptable as an offering to the LORD, such an animal given to the LORD becomes holy. 10 He must not exchange it or substitute a good one for a bad one, or a bad one for a good one. If he should substitute one animal for another, both it and the substitute become holy. 11 If what he vowed is a ceremonially

26:41 Uncircumcised Hearts

Circumcision was the ritual that made a man into a Jew, so to speak. But this reference to uncircumcised hearts shows that, right from the beginning, the inward attitude, as well as the physical operation, was crucial. Six hundred years later Jeremiah accused the Israelites of being uncircumcised in heart (Jeremiah 9:26); another 600 years after him Stephen made the same complaint (Acts 7:51). On the basis of this Paul wrote, "A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is a circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit" (Romans 2:28,29). Leviticus offered more than a legal system; these laws appealed to a person's relationship with God.

[Faint handwritten notes at the bottom of the page]

100 mg/kg (about 0.3 mg/kg)

45 That is, about 8 ounces (about 0.2 kilogram).

1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2679, 26

* This is about 2 ounces about 55 grams.

4e That is about 11.4 ounces (about 35 grams)

There is about 4 ounces about 175 grams.

*3 That is about 2.5 ounce (about 11.5 grams) also in verse 25

15 That is about 4 ounces

46 That is about 114 ounces (about 35 grams)

NUMBERS

INTRODUCTION

Forty Years of Misery

A joyous adventure comes to a tragic end

Now the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of the LORD, and when he heard them his anger was aroused. 11:1

As Numbers opens, the Israelites are getting ready for a great adventure. Free at last from the chains of slavery, they are headed for the promised land. Yet the book that begins with a bang ends with a whimper. Weeks, months, and then years in a hostile desert have seemed to melt the spirit of adventure. The Israelites act like people who have lost their moorings. In relentless detail, Numbers records a whole sequence of grumblings and rebellions.

Forty-Year Detour

Stomachs complained first, as the Israelites began to long for the spices of Egypt. Soon, the great mob of people became restless. At least ten times they lashed out in despair or rose up in open rebellion. They plotted against their leaders and denounced God. Revolt spread to the priests, to the top military scouts, to Moses' family, and finally to Moses himself.

The original Hebrew title of this book was not "Numbers" but rather "In the desert," and this cryptic phrase expresses a little of the Israelites' futility. Surrounded by hostile nations, they had to march under the broiling sun in a desert plagued by snakes, scorpions, and drought. Even today, visitors to the Sinai Desert marvel that an entire nation wandered that ground for so long.

A march through the desert should have taken about two weeks. Instead, it took almost 40 years. Numbers spans the years of wandering and ends where the trek began: at the very spot (Kadesh) where the Israelites' faith had failed. Of the many thousands who left Egypt, only two adults, Joshua and Caleb, would make it into the promised land.

A Different Kind of History

Most ancient histories sound very different from this book. They tell of heroic exploits by mighty warriors and unblemished leaders. With an almost numbing monotony, Numbers presents a far more realistic picture. It shows the early symptoms, the full progression, and the tragic end of grumbling and unbelief.

The Israelites lost faith not only in themselves, but in their God. Because of that, a whole generation of them lies buried in the peninsula known as Sinai.

References to the "desert wanderings" crop up again and again in the Bible. The period of rebellion left an indelible mark on the Jewish people. Exactly what went wrong? The book of Numbers is given to tell us. The apostle Paul points out that these failures "happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!" (1 Corinthians 10:11-12)

How to Read Numbers

People who read straight through Numbers very often come away confused or discouraged. The book begins with a long description of a census and proceeds into lists of laws and rituals. These were the official records of a nation, and each word had great significance for the Israelites.

Yet, unlike Leviticus, Numbers does not consist mainly of these long descriptions. Rather, it focuses on stories, with laws and rituals sprinkled in at various points. The stories are exciting, and some, such as the story of Balaam, are quite remarkable.

The action in Numbers takes place in three different settings: (1) Chapters 1-14 begin in the same place Exodus ended: at the foot of Mount Sinai. (2) Chapters 15-19 cover a period of 37 years, the time of the desert wanderings. Moses' summary in chapter 33 lists 42 stops in the

wilderness, but Numbers details very few of them. (3) Chapters 20-36 concern a whole new generation of Israelites, who were making final preparations before the invasion.

As you read Numbers, it will help to have a major theme in mind, such as grumbling and rebellion. Work through the book looking at examples of this problem. Major outbreaks occur in chapters 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 20, and 21—at least ten incidents in all. Notice the cause of each rebellion, and also God's response. Can you see parallels to the Israelites' experience in your own life?

Numbers also offers insight into the leadership of Moses by showing his response to each crisis. One illustration of his prominence: over 80 times the book says that "the Lord said to Moses." Look for the qualities, both positive and negative, that made him an effective leader.

Other parts of the Bible often refer to Numbers. Some of the historical psalms, such as Psalms 105 and 136, recast these events in poetry.

PLANS FOR READING NUMBERS

PLAN 1: An Overview of Numbers in 2 Days

- Day 1. Read the introduction to Numbers and then chapter 11, which shows a typical Israelite response to hardship.
- Day 2. Read chapter 14, the hinge chapter of Numbers.

PLAN 2: All of Numbers in 35 Days

- ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17
- ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28 ☐ 29 ☐ 30 ☐ 31
- ☐ 32 ☐ 33 ☐ 34 ☐ 35 ☐ 36

The Census

1 The Lord spoke to Moses in the Tent of Meeting in the Desert of Sinai on the first day of the second month of the second year after the Israelites came out of Egypt. He said: ²"Take a census of the whole Israelite community by their clans and families, listing every man by name, one by one. ³You and Aaron are to number by their divisions all the men in Israel twenty years old or more who are able to serve in the army. ⁴One man from each tribe, each the head of his family, is to help you. ⁵These are the names of the men who are to assist you

from Reuben, Elizur son of Shedeur;

⁶from Simeon, Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai;

⁷from Judah, Nahshon son of Amminadab;

⁸from Issachar, Nethanel son of Zuar;

⁹from Zebulun, Eliab son of Helon;

¹⁰from the sons of Joseph:

from Ephraim, Elishama son of Ammihud;

from Manasseh, Gamaliel son of Pedahzur;

¹¹from Benjamin, Abidan son of Gideoni;

¹²from Dan, Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai;

¹³from Asher, Pagiel son of Ocran;

¹⁴from Gad, Eliasaph son of Deuel;

¹⁵from Naphtali, Ahira son of Enan."

¹⁶These were the men appointed from the community, the leaders of their ancestral tribes. They were the heads of the clans of Israel.

¹⁷Moses and Aaron took these men whose names had been given, ¹⁸and they called the whole community together on the first day of the second month. The people indicated their ancestry by their clans and families, and the men twenty years old or more were listed by name, one by one, ¹⁹as the Lord commanded Moses. And so he counted them in the Desert of Sinai:

²⁰From the descendants of Reuben the firstborn son of Israel:

All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, one by one, according to the records of their clans and families. ²¹The number from the tribe of Reuben was 46,500.

²²From the descendants of Simeon:

All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were counted and listed by name, one by one, according to the records of their clans and families. ²³The number from the tribe of Simeon was 59,300.

²⁴From the descendants of Gad:

All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. ²⁵The number from the tribe of Gad was 45,650.

²⁶From the descendants of Judah:

All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. ²⁷The number from the tribe of Judah was 74,600.

²⁸From the descendants of Issachar:

All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. ²⁹The number from the tribe of Issachar was 54,400.

³⁰From the descendants of Zebulun:

All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. ³¹The number from the tribe of Zebulun was 57,400.

³²From the sons of Joseph

From the descendants of Ephraim:

All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. ³³The number from the tribe of Ephraim was 40,500.

³⁴From the descendants of Manasseh:

All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. ³⁵The number from the tribe of Manasseh was 32,200.

³⁶From the descendants of Benjamin:

All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. ³⁷The number from the tribe of Benjamin was 35,400.

³⁸From the descendants of Dan

All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. ³⁹The number from the tribe of Dan was 62,700.

⁴⁰From the descendants of Asher:

All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. ⁴¹The number from the tribe of Asher was 41,500.

⁴²From the descendants of Naphtali:

All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. ⁴³The number from the tribe of Naphtali was 53,400.

⁴⁴These were the men counted by Moses and Aaron and the twelve leaders of Israel, each one representing his family. ⁴⁵All the Israelites twenty years old or more who were able to serve in Israel's army were counted according to their families. ⁴⁶The total number was 603,550.

⁴⁷The families of the tribe of Levi, however, were not counted along with the others. ⁴⁸The LORD had said to Moses: ⁴⁹"You must not count the tribe of Levi or include them in the census of the other Israelites. ⁵⁰Instead, appoint the Levites to be in charge of the tabernacle of the Testimony—over all its furnishings and everything belonging to it. They are to carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings; they are to take care of it and encamp around it. ⁵¹Whenever the tabernacle is to move, the Levites are to take it down, and whenever the tabernacle is to be set up, the Levites shall do it. Anyone else who goes near it shall be put to death. ⁵²The Israelites are to set up their tents by divisions, each man in his own camp under his own standard. ⁵³The Levites, however, are to set up their tents around the tabernacle of the Testimony so that wrath will not fall on the Israelite community. The Levites are to be responsible for the care of the tabernacle of the Testimony."

⁵⁴The Israelites did all this just as the LORD commanded Moses.

The Arrangement of the Tribal Camps

2 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron: ²"The Israelites are to camp around the Tent of Meeting some distance from it, each man under his standard with the banners of his family."

³On the east, toward the sunrise, the divisions of the camp of Judah are to encamp under their standard. The leader of the people of Judah is Nahshon son of Amminadab. ⁴His division numbers 74,600.

⁵The tribe of Issachar will camp next to them. The leader of the people of Issachar is Nethanel son of Zuar. ⁶His division numbers 54,400.

⁷The tribe of Zebulun will be next. The leader of the people of Zebulun is Eliab son of Helon. ⁸His division numbers 57,400.

⁹All the men assigned to the camp of Judah, according to their divisions, number 186,400. They will set out first.

¹⁰On the south will be the divisions of the camp of Reuben under their standard. The leader of the people of Reuben is Elizur son of Shedeur. ¹¹His division numbers 46,500.

¹²The tribe of Simeon will camp next to them. The leader of the people of Simeon is Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai. ¹³His division numbers 59,300.

¹⁴The tribe of Gad will be next. The leader of the people of Gad is Eliasaph son of Deuel. ¹⁵His division numbers 45,650.

¹⁶All the men assigned to the camp of Reuben, according to their divisions, number 151,450. They will set out second.

¹⁷Then the Tent of Meeting and the camp of the Levites will set out in the middle of the camps. They will set out in the same order as they encamp, each in his own place under his standard.

¹⁴ Many manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, Samaritan Pentateuch and Vulgate (see also Num. 1:14), most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text: Reuel

¹⁸In the west will be the divisions of the camp of Ephraim under their standard. The leader of the people of Ephraim is Elishama son of Ammihud. ¹⁹His division numbers 40,500.

²⁰The tribe of Manasseh will be next to them. The leader of the people of Manasseh is Gamaliel son of Pedahzur. ²¹His division numbers 32,200.

The tribe of Benjamin will be next. The leader of the people of Benjamin is Abidan son of Gedeon. ²⁴His division numbers 35,400.

²⁵All the men assigned to the camp of Ephraim according to their divisions, number 108,100. They will set out third.

²⁶In the north will be the divisions of the camp of Dan, under their standard. The leader of the people of Dan is Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai. ²⁸His division numbers 62,700.

The tribe of Asher will camp next to them. The leader of the people of Asher is Pagiel son of Okran. ²⁹His division numbers 41,500.

³⁰The tribe of Naphtali will be next. The leader of the people of Naphtali is Ahira son of Enan. ³¹His division numbers 53,400.

³²All the men assigned to the camp of Dan number 157,600. They will set out last, under their standards.

³³These are the Israelites, counted according to their families. All those in the camps, by their divisions, number 603,550. ³⁴The Levites, however, were not counted along with the other Israelites, as the Lord commanded Moses.

³⁵So the Israelites did everything the Lord commanded Moses; that is the way they encamped under their standards, and that is the way they set out, each with his clan and family.

The Levites

3 This is the account of the family of Aaron and Moses at the time the Lord talked with Moses on Mount Sinai.

²The names of the sons of Aaron were Nadab the firstborn and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. ³Those were the names of Aaron's sons, the anointed priests, who were ordained to serve as priests. ⁴Nadab and Abihu, however, fell dead before the Lord when they made an offering with unauthorized fire before him in the Desert of Sinai. They had no sons; so only Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests during the lifetime of their father Aaron.

⁵The Lord said to Moses, ⁶"Bring the tribe of Levi and present them to Aaron the priest to assist him. ⁷They are to perform duties for him and for the whole community at the Tent of Meeting by doing the work of the tabernacle. ⁸They are to take care of all the furnishings of the Tent of Meeting, fulfilling the obligations of the Israelites by doing the work of the tabernacle. ⁹Give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they are the Israelites who are to be given wholly to him. ¹⁰Appoint Aaron and his sons to serve as priests; anyone else who approaches the sanctuary must be put to death."

¹¹The Lord also said to Moses, ¹²"I have taken the Levites from among the Israelites in place of the first male offspring of every Israelite woman. The Levites are mine, ¹³for all the firstborn are mine. When I struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, I set apart for myself every firstborn in Israel, whether man or animal. They are to be mine. I am the Lord."

¹⁴The Lord said to Moses in the Desert of Sinai, ¹⁵"Count the Levites by their families and clans. Count every male a month old or more." ¹⁶So Moses counted them, as he was commanded by the word of the Lord.

¹⁷These were the names of the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari.

¹⁸These were the names of the Gershonite clans:

Libni and Shimei.

¹⁹The Kohathite clans:

Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel.

²⁰The Merarite clans:

Mahli and Mushi.

These were the Levite clans, according to their families.

²¹To Gershon belonged the clans of the Libnites and Shimeites; these were the Gershonite clans.

²²The number of all the males a month old or more who were counted was 7,500. ²³The Gershonite clans were to camp on the west, behind the tabernacle. ²⁴The leader of the families of the Gershonites was Eliasaph son of Lael. ²⁵At the Tent of Meeting the Gershonites were responsible for the care of the tabernacle and tent, its coverings, the curtain at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, ²⁶the curtains of the courtyard, the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard surrounding the taber-

2:32 How Many Israelites?

Numbers reports that there could have been as many as two-and-one-half million Israelites wandering in the desert. How could that many people survive for forty years in the wilderness? Some point out that the climate of the desert might have been different than it is now. Others say that the numbers might not be as great as we interpret them to be, for the Hebrews had a different way of counting and "thousand" could have had a different meaning to them than to us. All are agreed, however, on two things: first, the number of Israelites was extremely large—too large to be kept alive all those years by ordinary means. Second, God provided for his people through miraculous means by giving them manna and fresh water.

¹⁹ Most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text; some manuscripts of the Masoretic Text; Samaritan Pentateuch and Septuagint (see also Num. 8:16) to me.

NUMBERS 3:27

nacle and altar, and the ropes—and everything related to their use

²⁷To Kohath belonged the clans of the Amramites, Izharites, Hebronites and Uzzielites; these were the Kohathite clans. ²⁸The number of all the males a month old or more was 8,600.^a The Kohathites were responsible for the care of the sanctuary. ²⁹The Kohathite clans were to camp on the south side of the tabernacle. ³⁰The leader of the families of the Kohathite clans was Elizaphan son of Uzziel. ³¹They were responsible for the care of the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, the articles of the sanctuary used in ministering, the curtain, and everything related to their use. ³²The chief leader of the Levites was Eleazar son of Aaron, the priest. He was appointed over those who were responsible for the care of the sanctuary.

³³To Merari belonged the clans of the Mahlites and the Mushites, these were the Merarite clans. ³⁴The number of all the males a month old or more who were counted was 6,200. ³⁵The leader of the families of the Merarite clans was Zuriel son of Abihail; they were to camp on the north side of the tabernacle. ³⁶The Merarites were appointed to take care of the frames of the tabernacle, its crossbars, posts, bases, all its equipment, and everything related to their use, ³⁷as well as the posts of the surrounding courtyard with their bases, tent pegs and ropes.

³⁸Moses and Aaron and his sons were to camp to the east of the tabernacle, toward the sunrise, in front of the Tent of Meeting. They were responsible for the care of the sanctuary on behalf of the Israelites. Anyone else who approached the sanctuary was to be put to death.

³⁹The total number of Levites counted at the LORD's command by Moses and Aaron according to their clans, including every male a month old or more, was 22,000.

⁴⁰The LORD said to Moses, "Count all the firstborn Israelite males who are a month old or more and make a list of their names. ⁴¹Take the Levites for me in place of all the firstborn of the Israelites, and the livestock of the Levites in place of all the firstborn of the livestock of the Israelites. I am the LORD.

⁴²So Moses counted all the firstborn of the Israelites, as the LORD commanded him. ⁴³The total number of firstborn males a month old or more, listed by name, was 22,273.

⁴⁴The LORD also said to Moses, ⁴⁵"Take the Levites in place of all the firstborn of Israel, and the livestock of the Levites in place of their livestock. The Levites are to be mine. I am the LORD. ⁴⁶To redeem the 273 firstborn Israelites who exceed the number of the Levites, ⁴⁷collect five shekels^b for each one, according to the sanctuary shekel, which weighs twenty gerahs. ⁴⁸Give the money for the

redemption of the additional Israelites to Aaron and his sons."

⁴⁹So Moses collected the redemption money from those who exceeded the number redeemed by the Levites. ⁵⁰From the firstborn of the Israelites he collected silver weighing 1 3/5 shekels,^c according to the sanctuary shekel. ⁵¹Moses gave the redemption money to Aaron and his sons, as he was commanded by the word of the LORD.

The Kohathites

⁴The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ²"Take a census of the Kohathite branch of the Levites by their clans and families. ³Count all the men from thirty to fifty years of age who come to serve in the work in the Tent of Meeting.

⁴"This is the work of the Kohathites in the Tent of Meeting: the care of the most holy things. ⁵When the camp is to move, Aaron and his sons are to go in and take down the shielding curtain and cover the ark of the Testimony with it. ⁶Then they are to cover this with hides of sea cows,^d spread a cloth of solid blue over that and put the poles in place.

⁷"Over the table of the Presence they are to spread a blue cloth and put on it the plates, dishes and bowls, and the jars for drink offerings; the bread that is continually there is to remain on it. ⁸Over these they are to spread a scarlet cloth, cover that with hides of sea cows and put its poles in place.

⁹"They are to take a blue cloth and cover the lampstand that is for light, together with its lamps, its wick trimmers and trays, and all its jars for the oil used to supply it. ¹⁰Then they are to wrap it and all its accessories in a covering of hides of sea cows and put it on a carrying frame.

¹¹"Over the gold altar they are to spread a blue cloth and cover that with hides of sea cows and put its poles in place.

¹²"They are to take all the articles used for ministering in the sanctuary, wrap them in a blue cloth, cover that with hides of sea cows and put them on a carrying frame.

¹³"They are to remove the ashes from the bronze altar and spread a purple cloth over it. ¹⁴Then they are to place on it all the utensils used for ministering at the altar, including the firepans, meat forks, shovels and sprinkling bowls. Over it they are to spread a covering of hides of sea cows and put its poles in place.

3:45 A Tribe of Priests

God appointed a special tribe (group) of Israelites to be set aside, with their livestock, to serve as priests. They were charged with leading Israel in worship. They offered sacrifices for the nation.

^a28 Hebrew, some Septuagint manuscripts 8,300 (about 15 5 kilograms)

^b47 That is, about 2 ounces (about 55 grams)

^c46 That is, dugongs, also in verses 8, 10, 11, 12, 14 and 25

^d50 That is, about 35 pounds

period of his separation and must bring a year-old male lamb as a burnt offering. The previous days do not count because he became defiled during his separation.

13 Now this is the law for the Nazirite when the period of his separation is over. He is to be brought to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. 14 There he is to present his offerings to the LORD: a year-old male lamb without defect for a burnt offering, a year-old ewe lamb without defect for a sin offering, a ram without defect for a fellowship offering,¹⁴ together with their grain offerings and drink offerings, and a basket of bread made without yeast—cakes made of fine flour mixed with oil, and wafers spread with oil.

16 The priest is to present them before the LORD and make the sin offering and the burnt offering. 17 He is to present the basket of unleavened bread and is to sacrifice the ram as a fellowship offering to the LORD, together with its grain offering and drink offering.

18 Then at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, the Nazirite must shave off the hair that he dedicated. He is to take the hair and put it in the fire that is under the sacrifice of the fellowship offering.

19 After the Nazirite has shaved off the hair of his dedication, the priest is to place in his hands a boiled shoulder of the ram, and a cake and a wafer from the basket, both made without yeast. 20 The priest shall then wave them before the LORD as a wave offering; they are holy and belong to the priest, together with the breast that was waved and the thigh that was presented. After that, the Nazirite may drink wine.

21 This is the law of the Nazirite who vows his offering to the LORD in accordance with his separation, in addition to whatever else he can afford. He must fulfill the vow he has made, according to the law of the Nazirite."

The Priestly Blessing

22 The LORD said to Moses, 23 Tell Aaron and his sons, This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them

24 "The LORD bless you and keep you,

25 the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you,

26 the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace."

27 So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them."

6:21 Well-known Nazirites

Samson and John the Baptist are two of the most famous Nazirites in the Bible. The apostle Paul took a Nazirite vow in Jerusalem (Acts 21:21-29) to demonstrate his conformity to Jewish law.

Offerings at the Dedication of the Tabernacle

7 When Moses finished setting up the tabernacle, he anointed it and consecrated it and all its furnishings. He also anointed and consecrated the altar and all its utensils. 2 Then the leaders of Israel, the heads of families who were the tribal leaders in charge of those who were counted, made offerings. 3 They brought as their gifts before the LORD six covered carts and twelve oxen—an ox from each leader and a cart from every two. These they presented before the tabernacle.

4 The LORD said to Moses, 5 Accept these from them, that they may be used in the work at the Tent of Meeting. Give them to the Levites as each man's work requires.

6 So Moses took the carts and oxen and gave them to the Levites. 7 He gave two carts and four oxen to the Gershonites, as their work required, and he gave four carts and eight oxen to the Merarites, as their work required. They were all under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron, the priest. 8 But Moses did not give any to the Kohathites, because they were to carry on their shoulders the holy things, for which they were responsible.

9 When the altar was anointed, the leaders brought their offerings for its dedication and presented them before the altar. 10 For the LORD had said to Moses, "Each day one leader is to bring his offering for the dedication of the altar."

12 The one who brought his offering on the first day was Nahshon son of Amminadab of the tribe of Judah.

13 His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels,¹³ and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels,¹⁴ both according to the sanctuary shekel, each filled with fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; 14 one gold dish weighing ten shekels¹⁵ filled with incense, 15 one young bull, one ram and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering, 16 one male goat for a sin offering; 17 and two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five male lambs a year old, to be sacrificed as a fellowship offering.¹⁶ This was the offering of Nahshon son of Amminadab.

18 On the second day Nethanel son of Zuar, the leader of Issachar, brought his offering.

19 The offering he brought was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels, both according to the sanctuary shekel, each filled with fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; 20 one gold dish weighing ten shekels, filled with incense, 21 one young bull, one ram and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 22 one male goat for a sin offering; 23 and two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five male lambs a year old, to be sacrificed as a fellowship offering. This was

¹⁴ Traditionally *peace offering*, also in verses 17 and 18

¹³ That is, about 1.34 pounds (about 0.8 kilogram), also elsewhere in this chapter

¹⁴ That is, about 6 ounces (about 170 grams), also elsewhere in this chapter

¹⁵ That is, about 3 1/4 pounds (about 1.5 kilograms), also elsewhere in this chapter

¹⁶ Traditionally *peace offering*, also elsewhere in this chapter

NUMBERS 7:24

the offering of Nethanel son of Zuar
 On the third day Ehab son of Heleai the leader
 of the people of Zebulun brought his offering
 His offering was one silver plate weighing a
 hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver
 sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels,
 both according to the sanctuary shekel, each
 filled with fine flour mixed with oil as a grain
 offering. One gold dish weighing ten
 shekels, filled with incense, one young bull,
 one ram and one male lamb a year old, for a
 burnt offering. One male goat for a sin offer-
 ing. And two oxen, five rams, five male goats
 and five male lambs a year old, to be sacrificed
 as a fellowship offering. This was the offering
 of Ehab son of Heleai.

On the fourth day Elizur son of Shedeir the
 leader of the people of Reuben brought his offer-
 ing.

His offering was one silver plate weighing a
 hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver
 sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels,
 both according to the sanctuary shekel, each

filled with fine flour mixed with oil as a grain
 offering. One gold dish weighing ten
 shekels, filled with incense. One young bull,
 one ram and one male lamb a year old, for a
 burnt offering. One male goat for a sin offer-
 ing. And two oxen, five rams, five male goats
 and five male lambs a year old, to be sacrificed
 as a fellowship offering. This was the offering
 of Elizur son of Shedeir.

On the fifth day Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai,
 the leader of the people of Simeon, brought his
 offering.

This offering was one silver plate weighing a
 hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver
 sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels,
 both according to the sanctuary shekel, each
 filled with fine flour mixed with oil as a grain
 offering. One gold dish weighing ten
 shekels, filled with incense, one young bull,
 one ram and one male lamb a year old, for a
 burnt offering. One male goat for a sin offer-
 ing. And two oxen, five rams, five male goats
 and five male lambs a year old, to be sacrificed

INSIGHT

National Reminders

Built-in object lessons for the Israelites

Aaron is to present the Levites before the LORD as a wave offering from the Israelites, so that they may be ready to do the work of the LORD. 8:11

Although parts of Numbers may seem strange to a modern reader, it clearly expresses two of the Israelites' chief values: purity and holiness. They had to become pure before they could approach God. And they were called to demonstrate God's holiness before other nations. The need for purity and holiness was reflected in what the Israelites ate and wore, and how they acted each day.

Visual Reminders

God set aside certain groups of people as a visual reminder of purity and holiness. The Levites, who somewhat parallel the fulltime clergy of our day, took care of formal religious duties (chapters 3-4-8). One of their clans packed up the holy objects for moving, while other clans carried the tabernacle curtains and covers and structural parts.

Numbers describes a second group: the Nazirites (chapter 6). These ordinary laymen dedicated themselves to an extra regimen of purity. They drank no wine and let their hair grow long. They stood out from the majority in their dress and style.

Holiness was not left to special groups, though. Every Israelite participated in the daily offerings, sacrifices, and occasional festivals. When a family brought a whole bull and saw it skinned, butchered, and then burned on the altar, they were forced to reflect. Sin was serious, and a great guilt was fixed between them and God. In some way, either through story, ritual, or visual symbol, Numbers expresses that separateness on almost every page. In approaching God, the Israelites had to use great care.

Bridging the Gulf

The New Testament would later speak of a God who is our Father, who can be approached at any time, who is interested in the personal details of our individual lives. But Numbers serves as an important background to that kind of relationship. It shows graphically just how great was the gulf between people and God, and helps us fully appreciate all that Jesus Christ did in providing a way across that gulf.

Life Questions: Words like *holiness* and *purity* are not heard in many churches today. Do you think we take God for granted and approach him too casually?

is a fellowship offering. This was the offering of Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai

On the sixth day Shaphan son of Deuel, the leader of the people of Dan, brought his offering. His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels, both according to the sanctuary shekel, each filled with fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; ⁶⁴one gold dish weighing ten shekels, filled with incense; ⁶⁵one young bull, one ram and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ⁶⁶one male goat for a sin offering; ⁶⁷and two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five male lambs a year old, to be sacrificed as a fellowship offering. This was the offering of Shaphan son of Deuel.

On the seventh day Elishama son of Ammihud, the leader of the people of Ephraim, brought his offering.

His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels, both according to the sanctuary shekel, each filled with fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; ⁶⁹one gold dish weighing ten shekels, filled with incense; ⁷⁰one young bull, one ram and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ⁷¹one male goat for a sin offering; ⁷²and two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five male lambs a year old, to be sacrificed as a fellowship offering. This was the offering of Elishama son of Ammihud.

On the eighth day Gamaliel son of Pedahzur, the leader of the people of Manasseh, brought his offering.

His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels, both according to the sanctuary shekel, each filled with fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; ⁷³one gold dish weighing ten shekels, filled with incense; ⁷⁴one young bull, one ram and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ⁷⁵one male goat for a sin offering; ⁷⁶and two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five male lambs a year old, to be sacrificed as a fellowship offering. This was the offering of Gamaliel son of Pedahzur.

On the ninth day Abidan son of Gideoni, the leader of the people of Benjamin, brought his offering.

His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels, both according to the sanctuary shekel, each filled with fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; ⁷⁷one gold dish weighing ten shekels, filled with incense; ⁷⁸one young bull, one ram and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ⁷⁹one male goat for a sin offering; ⁸⁰and two oxen, five rams, five male goats

and five male lambs a year old, to be sacrificed as a fellowship offering. This was the offering of Abidan son of Gideoni.

On the tenth day Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai, the leader of the people of Dan, brought his offering.

His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels, both according to the sanctuary shekel, each filled with fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; ⁸¹one gold dish weighing ten shekels, filled with incense; ⁸²one young bull, one ram and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ⁸³one male goat for a sin offering; ⁸⁴and two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five male lambs a year old, to be sacrificed as a fellowship offering. This was the offering of Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai.

On the eleventh day Pagiel son of Ocran, the leader of the people of Asher, brought his offering.

His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels, both according to the sanctuary shekel, each filled with fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; ⁸⁵one gold dish weighing ten shekels, filled with incense; ⁸⁶one young bull, one ram and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ⁸⁷one male goat for a sin offering; ⁸⁸and two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five male lambs a year old, to be sacrificed as a fellowship offering. This was the offering of Pagiel son of Ocran.

On the twelfth day Ahira son of Enan, the leader of the people of Naphtali, brought his offering.

His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels, both according to the sanctuary shekel, each filled with fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; ⁸⁹one gold dish weighing ten shekels, filled with incense; ⁹⁰one young bull, one ram and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; ⁹¹one male goat for a sin offering; ⁹²and two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five male lambs a year old, to be sacrificed as a fellowship offering. This was the offering of Ahira son of Enan.

These were the offerings of the Israelite leaders for the dedication of the altar when it was anointed: twelve silver plates, twelve silver sprinkling bowls and twelve gold dishes. ⁹³Each silver plate weighed a hundred and thirty shekels, and each sprinkling bowl seventy shekels. Altogether, the silver dishes weighed two thousand four hundred shekels, ^a according to the sanctuary shekel. ⁹⁴The twelve gold dishes filled with incense weighed ten shekels each, according to the sanctuary shekel. Altogether, the gold dishes weighed a hundred and twenty shekels. ^b ⁹⁵The total number of animals for the burnt offering came to twelve

^a That is, about 60 pounds (about 28 kilograms) ^b That is, about 3 pounds (about 1.4 kilograms)

NUMBERS 7:88

young bulls, twelve rams and twelve male lambs a year old, together with their grain offering. Twelve male goats were used for the sin offering. ⁸⁸The total number of animals for the sacrifice of the fellowship offering came to twenty-four oxen, sixty rams, sixty male goats and sixty male lambs a year old. These were the offerings for the dedication of the altar after it was anointed.

⁸⁹When Moses entered the Tent of Meeting to speak with the LORD, he heard the voice speaking to him from between the two cherubim above the atonement cover on the ark of the Testimony. And he spoke with him.

Setting Up the Lamps

8 The LORD said to Moses, ²"Speak to Aaron and say to him, 'When you set up the seven lamps, they are to light the area in front of the lampstand.'

³Aaron did so; he set up the lamps so that they faced forward on the lampstand, just as the LORD commanded Moses. ⁴This is how the lampstand was made: It was made of hammered gold—from its base to its blossoms. The lampstand was made exactly like the pattern the LORD had shown Moses.

The Setting Apart of the Levites

⁵The LORD said to Moses: ⁶"Take the Levites from among the other Israelites and make them ceremonially clean. ⁷To purify them, do this: Sprinkle the water of cleansing on them, then have them shave their whole bodies and wash their clothes, and so purify themselves. ⁸Have them take a young bull with its grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil; then you are to take a second young bull for a sin offering. ⁹Bring the Levites to the front of the Tent of Meeting and assemble the whole Israelite community. ¹⁰You are to bring the Levites before the LORD, and the Israelites are to lay their hands on them. ¹¹Aaron is to present the Levites before the LORD as a wave offering from the Israelites, so that they may be ready to do the work of the LORD.

¹²"After the Levites lay their hands on the heads of the bulls, use the one for a sin offering to the LORD and the other for a burnt offering, to make atonement for the Levites. ¹³Have the Levites stand in front of Aaron and his sons and then present them as a wave offering to the LORD. ¹⁴In this way you are to set the Levites apart from the other Israelites, and the Levites will be mine.

¹⁵"After you have purified the Levites and presented them as a wave offering, they are to come to do their work at the Tent of Meeting. ¹⁶They are the Israelites who are to be given wholly to me. I have taken them as my own in place of the firstborn, the first male offspring from every Israelite woman. ¹⁷Every firstborn male in Israel, whether man or animal, is mine. When I struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, I set them apart for myself. ¹⁸And I have taken the Levites in place of all the firstborn sons in Israel. ¹⁹Of all the Israelites I have given the Levites as gifts to Aaron and his sons to do the work at the Tent of Meeting on behalf of the Israelites and to make atonement for

them so that no plague will strike the Israelites when they go near the sanctuary."

²⁰Moses, Aaron and the whole Israelite community did with the Levites just as the LORD commanded Moses. ²¹The Levites purified themselves and washed their clothes. Then Aaron presented them as a wave offering before the LORD and made atonement for them to purify them. ²²After that, the Levites came to do their work at the Tent of Meeting under the supervision of Aaron and his sons. They did with the Levites just as the LORD commanded Moses.

²³The LORD said to Moses, ²⁴"This applies to the Levites: Men twenty-five years old or more shall come to take part in the work at the Tent of Meeting, ²⁵but at the age of fifty, they must retire from their regular service and work no longer. ²⁶They may assist their brothers in performing their duties at the Tent of Meeting, but they themselves must not do the work. This, then, is how you are to assign the responsibilities of the Levites."

The Passover

9 The LORD spoke to Moses in the Desert of Sinai in the first month of the second year after they came out of Egypt. He said, ¹"Have the Israelites celebrate the Passover at the appointed time. ²Celebrate it at the appointed time, at twilight on the fourteenth day of this month, in accordance with all its rules and regulations."

³So Moses told the Israelites to celebrate the Passover, and they did so in the Desert of Sinai at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. The Israelites did everything just as the LORD commanded Moses.

⁴But some of them could not celebrate the Passover on that day because they were ceremonially unclean on account of a dead body. So they came to Moses and Aaron that same day and said to Moses, "We have become unclean because of a dead body, but why should we be kept from presenting the LORD's offering with the other Israelites at the appointed time?"

⁵Moses answered them, "Wait until I find out what the LORD commands concerning you."

⁶Then the LORD said to Moses, ⁷"Tell the Israelites: 'When any of you or your descendants are unclean because of a dead body or are away on a journey, they may still celebrate the LORD's Passover. ⁸They are to celebrate it on the fourteenth day of the second month at twilight. They are to eat the lamb, together with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. ⁹They must not leave any of it till morning or break any of its bones. When they celebrate the Passover, they must follow all the regulations. ¹⁰But if a man who is ceremonially clean and not on a journey fails to celebrate the Passover, that person must be cut off from his people because he did not present the LORD's offering at the appointed time. That man will bear the consequences of his sin.

¹¹"An alien living among you who wants to celebrate the LORD's Passover must do so in accordance with its rules and regulations. You must have the same regulations for the alien and the native-born."

The Cloud Above the Tabernacle

the tabernacle the Tent of the cloud covered it. From above the tabernacle how it continued to move. At night it looked like a cloud from above the tabernacle. Whenever the cloud moved, the Israelites moved. At the LORD's command, they set out, and at his command, they camped. As the cloud stayed over the tabernacle, the Israelites remained in camp. Whenever the cloud moved, the Israelites moved. Sometimes the cloud would stay only a few days at the LORD's command, and then at his command they would set out. Sometimes the cloud would stay from evening till morning, and then in the morning they set out. Sometimes the cloud would stay by night, and then at his command they set out. Whether the cloud stayed over the tabernacle for two days or a month or a year, the Israelites would remain in camp and not move. Whenever the cloud moved, they would set out. At the LORD's command, they encamped, and at the LORD's command, they set out. They obeyed the LORD, in accordance with his command through Moses.

The Silver Trumpets

10 The LORD said to Moses: "Make two trumpets of hammered silver, and use them for calling the community together and for having the community assemble before you at the Tent of Meeting. If only one is sounded, the leaders—the heads of the clans of Israel—are to assemble before you. When a trumpet is sounded, the tribes camping on the east are to set out. At the sounding of a second blast, the tribes camping on the south are to set out. The blast will be for setting out. To gather the assembly, however, you are to sound the trumpets, but not with the same blast."

The sons of Aaron, the priests, are to blow the trumpets. This is to be a lasting ordinance for you and the generations to come. When you go into battle in your own land against an enemy who is oppressing you, sound a blast on the trumpets. Then you will be remembered by the LORD your God and rescued from your enemies. Also at your times of rejoicing—your appointed feasts and New Moon festivals—you are to sound the trum-

pets over your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, and they will be a memorial for you before your God. I am the LORD your God."

The Israelites Leave Sinai

On the twentieth day of the second month of the second year, the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle of the Testimony. Then the Israelites set out from the Desert of Sinai and traveled from place to place until the cloud came to rest in the Desert of Paran. They set out, this first time, at the LORD's command through Moses.

The divisions of the camp of Judah went first, under their standard. Nahshon son of Amminadab was in command. Nethanel son of Zuar was over the division of the tribe of Issachar, and Eliab son of Helon was over the division of the tribe of Zebulun. Then the tabernacle was taken down, and the Gershonites and Merarites, who carried it, set out.

The divisions of the camp of Reuben went next, under their standard. Elizur son of Shedeur was in command. Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai was over the division of the tribe of Simeon, and Eliasaph son of Deuel was over the division of the tribe of Gad. Then the Kohathites set out, carrying the holy things. The tabernacle was to be set up before they arrived.

The divisions of the camp of Ephraim went next, under their standard. Elishama son of Ammihud was in command. Gamaliel son of Pedahzur was over the division of the tribe of Manasseh, and Abidan son of Gideoni was over the division of the tribe of Benjamin.

Finally, as the rear guard for all the units, the divisions of the camp of Dan set out, under their standard. Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai was in command. Pagiel son of Ocran was over the division of the tribe of Asher, and Ahira son of Enan was over the division of the tribe of Naphtali. This was the order of march for the Israelite divisions as they set out.

Now Moses said to Hobab son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place about which the LORD said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us and we will treat you well, for the LORD has promised good things to Israel."

He answered, "No, I will not go; I am going back to my own land and my own people."

But Moses said, "Please do not leave us. You know where we should camp in the desert, and you can be our eyes. If you come with us, we will share with you whatever good things the LORD gives us."

So they set out from the mountain of the LORD and traveled for three days. The ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them during those three days to find them a place to rest. The cloud of the LORD was over them by day when they set out from the camp.

Whenever the ark set out, Moses said,

"Rise up, O LORD!

May your enemies be scattered;

9:22 Unmistakable Guidance

This passage describes a remarkable fact of the desert experience: the Israelites knew exactly whether and how far God wanted them to move each day. Although they disobeyed God in almost every other way, they usually followed his specific guidance on location.

*10 Traditionally peace offerings

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO, ILL.

1960

THE TOP THE JUNE

11

From the [redacted]

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions, including sales, purchases, and expenses. It emphasizes the need for a systematic approach to record-keeping, such as using a ledger or accounting software, to ensure that all financial data is properly documented and organized.

2. The second part of the document focuses on the importance of regular financial statements, such as the balance sheet, income statement, and cash flow statement. It explains how these statements provide a clear picture of the company's financial health and performance over a specific period, allowing management to make informed decisions and identify areas for improvement.

3. The third part of the document discusses the importance of budgeting and financial forecasting. It highlights the need to set realistic financial goals and create a budget that outlines the expected income and expenses for a given period. This process helps management anticipate potential financial challenges and develop strategies to manage them effectively.

4. The fourth part of the document addresses the importance of financial control and monitoring. It emphasizes the need to regularly review financial data and compare it against the budget and financial goals. This allows management to identify any variances and take corrective action as needed to ensure that the company remains on track financially.

5. The fifth part of the document discusses the importance of financial reporting and transparency. It explains how providing accurate and timely financial reports to stakeholders, such as investors, creditors, and regulatory bodies, is essential for building trust and maintaining the company's reputation. It also highlights the importance of disclosing any potential risks or uncertainties associated with the company's financial position.

The first of these is the fact that the
 government has been unable to raise the
 necessary funds to meet its obligations.
 This is due to a combination of factors,
 including a decline in tax revenue and
 an increase in government spending.
 The second factor is the high level of
 inflation, which has eroded the value of
 the government's assets and liabilities.
 Finally, the government has been unable to
 implement effective policies to reduce
 its debt and improve its financial position.

[illegible]

“We must start it where ‘Bring the Seventh of
November’s’ started with one student in your classroom
and others among the people. Have them come

24-24 Faintest Prayers

unlike graves is still regarded as Jewish services until the soul of the man is returned from its wander. Another grave from numbers the reading of 6:24-26 is quoted both in Jewish and Christian services. In ancient thought, a person's name stood for his character including all his virtues and sins, and the inscription in 6:27 demands "ALL JOINING THE NAME OF" the deceased.

in the "Spirit of Mission" that they may stand there with you. I will come down and speak with you there and will take of the spirit and the word and put the spirit in them. Then will they carry the burden of the people in that way and will not have to carry it alone.

[illegible]

"I am asking so hum-
bly and you say I will
kill them? For 2 white men?" "I could
kill as many as I like and birds were slaugh-
tered every day. They have enough if all the
time it was used for them."

Is the LORD's arm
to whom you will now see whether or not what I
say will come true. THE WORD

They then went out and told the people what the Lord had said. He brought together seventy of the elders and had them stand around the Tent. Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took of the Spirit that was upon him and put the Spirit on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but they did not do so again.*

24: However, two men, whose names were Eldad and Medad, had remained in the camp. They were taking among the elders, but did not go out to the Tent, for the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp. 25 A young man ran and told Moses: "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp."

Phineas son of Nissim, who had been Moses' aide
and youth, spoke up and said, "Moses, my lord,
save them!"

18 Then Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake?" While all the LORD's people were prophesying, and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them, then Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

Now a wind went out from the Lord and drove quail in from the sea. It brought them:

11:29 Burdens of Leadership

In this striking conversation with God, Moses confessed the terrible burden involved in leading a winning, complaining band of "rabble." Although his patience neared the breaking point, he still showed mercy toward rivals. His response to other prophets here resembles Jesus' attitude toward other workers (Mark 9:38-41), as well as Paul's (Philippians 1:18).

NUMBERS 13:27

whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land. ²⁷They gave Moses this account: "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. ²⁸But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. ²⁹The Amalekites live in the Negev, the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan."

³⁰Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it."

³¹But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." ³²And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. ³³We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them."

The People Rebel

14 That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. ²All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert! ³Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" ⁴And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

⁵Then Moses and Aaron fell facedown in front of the whole Israelite assembly gathered there. ⁶Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes ⁷and said to the entire Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. ⁸If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. ⁹Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we

will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them."

¹⁰But the whole assembly talked about stoning them. Then the glory of the LORD appeared at the Tent of Meeting to all the Israelites. ¹¹The LORD said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed among them? ¹²I will strike them down with a plague and destroy them, but I will make you into a nation greater and stronger than they."

¹³Moses said to the LORD, "Then the Egyptians will hear about it! By your power you brought these people up from among them." ¹⁴And they will tell the inhabitants of this land about it. They have already heard that you, O LORD, are with these people and that you, O LORD, have been seen face to face, that your cloud stays over them, and that you go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. ¹⁵If you put these people to death all at one time, the nations who have heard this report about you will say, "The LORD was not able to bring these people into the land he promised them on oath; so he slaughtered them in the desert."

¹⁷"Now may the LORD's strength be displayed, just as you have declared: ¹⁸The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation." ¹⁹In accordance with your great love, forgive the sin of these people, just as you have pardoned them from the time they left Egypt until now."

²⁰The LORD replied, "I have forgiven them, as you asked. ²¹Nevertheless, as surely as I live and as surely as the glory of the LORD fills the whole earth, ²²not one of the men who saw my glory and the miraculous signs I performed in Egypt and in the desert but who disobeyed me and tested me ten times—²³not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their forefathers. No one who has treated me with contempt will ever see it. ²⁴But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it. ²⁵Since the Amalekites and Canaanites are living in the valleys, turn back tomorrow and set out toward the desert along the route to the Red Sea."

14:1 The Worst Rebellion

Chapter 14 records the tragic watershed of Numbers. Despite numerous proofs of God's power on their behalf, the Israelites trembled at the spies' report from Canaan. Fear led to open rebellion, and the nation plotted mutiny against Moses. At the very border of the promised land, theirs for the taking, they lost faith and turned away. In the face of such rebellion, God decided to wait for a whole new generation of Israelites; the original slaves would not cross into the promised land. All of them over the age of 20 were destined to fall as carcasses in the desert.

²⁶The LORD said to Moses and Aaron: ²⁷"How long will this wicked community grumble against me? I have heard the complaints of these grumbling Israelites. ²⁸So tell them, 'As surely as I live, declares the LORD, I will do to you the very things I heard you say: ²⁹In this desert your bodies will fall—every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. ³⁰Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. ³¹As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to

²⁵ Hebrew Yam Suph, that is, Sea of Reeds

know the land you have rejected. ³²But you—your bodies will fall in this desert. ³³Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness until the last of your bodies lies in the desert. ³⁴For forty years—one year for each of the forty days you explored the land—you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you. ³⁵I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will surely do these things to this whole rebellious community, which has banded together against me. They will meet their end in this desert, here they will die.

So the men Moses had sent to explore the land, who returned and made the whole community grumble against him by spreading a bad report about it—³⁷these men responsible for spreading the bad report about the land were struck down and died of a plague before the LORD. ³⁸Of the men who went to explore the land, only Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh survived.

³⁹When Moses reported this to all the Israelites, they mourned bitterly. ⁴⁰Early the next morning they went up toward the high hill country. "We have sinned," they said. "We will go up to the place the LORD promised."

⁴¹But Moses said, "Why are you disobeying the LORD's command? This will not succeed! ⁴²Do not go up, because the LORD is not with you. You will be defeated by your enemies, ⁴³for the Amalekites and Canaanites will face you there. Because you have turned away from the LORD, he will not be with you and you will fall by the sword."

⁴⁴Nevertheless, in their presumption they went up toward the high hill country, though neither Moses nor the ark of the LORD's covenant moved from the camp. ⁴⁵Then the Amalekites and Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down and attacked them and beat them down all the way to Hormah.

Supplementary Offerings

15 The LORD said to Moses, ²"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'After you enter the land I am giving you as a home ³and you present to the LORD offerings made by fire, from the herd or the flock, as an aroma pleasing to the LORD—whether burnt offerings or sacrifices, for special vows or freewill offerings or festival offerings—⁴then the one who brings his offering shall present to the LORD a grain offering of a tenth of an ephah^a of fine flour mixed with a quarter of a hin^b of oil. ⁵With each lamb for the burnt offering or the sacrifice, prepare a quarter of a hin of wine as a drink offering.

⁶"With a ram prepare a grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah^c of fine flour mixed with a third of a hin^d of oil, ⁷and a third of a hin of wine as a drink offering. Offer it as an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

⁸"When you prepare a young bull as a burnt offering or sacrifice, for a special vow or a fellowship offering^e to the LORD, ⁹bring with the bull a

grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah^f of fine flour mixed with half a hin^g of oil. ¹⁰Also bring half a hin of wine as a drink offering. It will be an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD. ¹¹Each bull or ram, each lamb or young goat, is to be prepared in this manner. ¹²Do this for each one, for as many as you prepare.

¹³"Everyone who is native-born must do these things in this way when he brings an offering made by fire as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. ¹⁴For the generations to come, whenever an alien or anyone else living among you presents an offering made by fire as an aroma pleasing to the LORD, he must do exactly as you do. ¹⁵The community is to have the same rules for you and for the alien living among you, this is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. You and the alien shall be the same before the LORD. ¹⁶The same laws and regulations will apply both to you and to the alien living among you."

¹⁷The LORD said to Moses, ¹⁸"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land to which I am taking you ¹⁹and you eat the food of the land, present a portion as an offering to the LORD. ²⁰Present a cake from the first of your ground meal and present it as an offering from the threshing floor. ²¹Throughout the generations to come you are to give this offering to the LORD from the first of your ground meal.

Offerings for Unintentional Sins

²²"Now if you unintentionally fail to keep any of these commands the LORD gave Moses—²³any of the LORD's commands to you through him, from the day the LORD gave them and continuing through the generations to come—²⁴and if this is done unintentionally without the community being aware of it, then the whole community is to offer a young bull for a burnt offering as an aroma pleasing to the LORD, along with its prescribed grain offering and drink offering, and a male goat for a sin offering. ²⁵The priest is to make atonement for the whole Israelite community, and they will be forgiven, for it was not intentional and they have brought to the LORD for their wrong an offering made by fire and a sin offering. ²⁶The whole Israelite community and the aliens living among them will be forgiven, because all the people were involved in the unintentional wrong.

²⁷"But if just one person sins unintentionally, he must bring a year-old female goat for a sin offering. ²⁸The priest is to make atonement before the LORD for the one who erred by sinning unintentionally, and when atonement has been made for him, he will be forgiven. ²⁹One and the same law applies to everyone who sins unintentionally, whether he is a native-born Israelite or an alien.

³⁰"But anyone who sins defiantly, whether native-born or alien, blasphemes the LORD, and that person must be cut off from his people. ³¹Because he has despised the LORD's word and broken his

^a That is, probably about 2 quarts (about 2 liters).

^b That is, probably about 1 quart (about 1 liter); also in verse 5.

^c That is,

probably about 4 quarts (about 4.5 liters).

^d That is, probably about 1.4 quarts (about 1.2 liters); also in verse 7.

^e Traditionally peace offering.

^f That is, probably about 6 quarts (about 6.5 liters).

^g That is, probably about 2 quarts (about

liters); also in verse 10.

they go down alive into the grave,⁴ then you will know that these men have treated the Lord with contempt.

¹¹As soon as he finished saying all this, the ground under them split apart ¹²and the earth with and swallowed them, with their families and all Korah's men and all their possessions.

¹³They went down alive into the earth with everything they owned; the earth closed over them, and they perished and were removed from the community. ¹⁴At their cries, all the Israelites around them fled, shouting, "The earth is going to swallow us too!"

¹⁵And fire came out from the Lord and consumed the 250 men who were offering the incense.

¹⁶The Lord said to Moses, ¹⁷"Tell Eleazar son of Aaron, the priest, to take the censers out of the smoldering remains and scatter the coals some distance away, for the censers are holy— ¹⁸the censers of the men who sinned at the cost of their lives. Hammer the censers into sheets to overlay the altar, for they were presented before the Lord and have become holy. Let them be a sign to the Israelites."

¹⁹So Eleazar the priest collected the bronze censers brought by those who had been burned up, and he had them hammered out to overlay the altar, ²⁰as the Lord directed him through Moses. This was to remind the Israelites that no one except a descendant of Aaron should come to burn incense before the Lord, or he would become like Korah and his followers.

²¹The next day the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. "You have killed the Lord's people," they said.

²²But when the assembly gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron and turned toward the Tent of Meeting, suddenly the cloud covered it and the glory of the Lord appeared. ²³Then Moses and Aaron went to the front of the Tent of Meeting, ²⁴and the Lord said to Moses, ²⁵"Get away from this assembly so I can put an end to them at once." And they fell facedown.

²⁶Then Moses said to Aaron, "Take your censer and put incense in it, along with fire from the altar, and hurry to the assembly to make atonement for them. Wrath has come out from the Lord; the plague has started." ²⁷So Aaron did as Moses said, and ran into the midst of the assembly. The plague had already started among the people, but Aaron offered the incense and made atonement for them. ²⁸He stood between the living and the dead, and the plague stopped. ²⁹But 14,700 people died from the plague, in addition to those who had died because of Korah. ³⁰Then Aaron returned to Moses

at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, for the plague had stopped.

The Budding of Aaron's Staff

17 The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and get twelve staffs from them, one from the leader of each of their ancestral tribes. Write the name of each man on his staff. On the staff of Levi write Aaron's name, for there must be one staff for the head of each ancestral tribe. Place them in the Tent of Meeting in front of the Testimony, where I meet with you. The staff belonging to the man I choose will sprout, and I will rid myself of this constant grumbling against you by the Israelites."

²So Moses spoke to the Israelites, and their leaders gave him twelve staffs, one for the leader of each of their ancestral tribes, and Aaron's staff was among them. Moses placed the staffs before the Lord in the Tent of the Testimony.

³The next day Moses entered the Tent of the Testimony and saw that Aaron's staff, which represented the house of Levi, had not only sprouted but had budded, blossomed and produced almonds. ⁴Then Moses brought out all the staffs from the Lord's presence to all the Israelites. They looked at them, and each man took his own staff.

⁵The Lord said to Moses, "Put back Aaron's staff in front of the Testimony, to be kept as a sign to the rebellious. This will put an end to their grumbling against me, so that they will not die."

⁶Moses did just as the Lord commanded him.

⁷The Israelites said to Moses, "We will die! We are lost, we are all lost! ⁸Anyone who even comes near the tabernacle of the Lord will die. Are we all going to die?"

Duties of Priests and Levites

18 The Lord said to Aaron, "You, your sons and your father's family are to bear the responsibility for offenses against the sanctuary, and you and your sons alone are to bear the responsibility for offenses against the priesthood. ²Bring your fellow Levites from your ancestral tribe to join you and assist you when you and your sons minister before the Tent of the Testimony. ³They are to be responsible to you and are to perform all the duties of the Tent, but they must not go near the furnishings of the sanctuary or the altar, or both they and you will die. ⁴They are to join you and be responsible for the care of the Tent of Meeting—all the work at the Tent—and no one else may come near where you are.

⁵You are to be responsible for the care of the sanctuary and the altar, so that wrath will not fall on the Israelites again. ⁶I myself have selected your fellow Levites from among the Israelites as a gift to you, dedicated to the Lord to do the work at the Tent of Meeting. ⁷But only you and your sons may serve as priests in connection with everything at the altar and inside the curtain. I am giving you the service of the priesthood as a gift. Anyone else

16:49 Thirty-Seven Year Gap

The Bible mentions only two major events that occurred during the years of wandering—the rebellions of chapter 16. Deuteronomy, however (2:7, 8:4, 29:5-6), indicates the people were well cared for and increased in substance and wealth.

⁴30 Hebrew Sheol, also in verse 33

who comes near the sanctuary must be put to death

Offerings for Priests and Levites

⁸Then the LORD said to Aaron, "I myself have put you in charge of the offerings presented to me; all the holy offerings the Israelites give me I give to you and your sons as your portion and regular share. ⁹You are to have the part of the most holy offerings that is kept from the fire. From all the gifts they bring me as most holy offerings, whether grain or sin or guilt offerings, that part belongs to you and your sons. ¹⁰Eat it as something most holy; every male shall eat it. You must regard it as holy.

This also is yours: whatever is set aside from the gifts of all the wave offerings of the Israelites. I give this to you and your sons and daughters as your regular share. Everyone in your household who is ceremonially clean may eat it.

¹¹I give you all the finest olive oil and all the finest new wine and grain they give the LORD as the firstfruits of their harvest. ¹²All the land's firstfruits that they bring to the LORD will be yours. Everyone in your household who is ceremonially clean may eat it.

Everything in Israel that is devoted^a to the LORD is yours. ¹³The first offspring of every womb, both man and animal, that is offered to the LORD is yours. But you must redeem every firstborn son and every firstborn male of unclean animals. ¹⁴When they are a month old, you must redeem them at the redemption price set at five shekels^b of silver according to the sanctuary shekel, which weighs twenty gerahs.

But you must not redeem the firstborn of an ox, a sheep or a goat; they are holy. Sprinkle their blood on the altar and burn their fat as an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

¹⁵Their meat is to be yours, just as the breast of the wave offering and the right thigh are yours.

Whatever is set aside from the holy offerings the Israelites present to the LORD I give to you and your sons and daughters as your regular share. It is an everlasting covenant of salt before the LORD for both you and your offspring."

¹⁶The LORD said to Aaron, "You will have no inheritance in their land, nor will you have any share among them; I am your share and your inheritance among the Israelites.

¹⁷I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do

while serving at the Tent of Meeting. ¹⁸From now on the Israelites must not go near the Tent of Meeting or they will bear the consequences of their sin and will die. ¹⁹It is the Levites who are to do the work at the Tent of Meeting and bear the responsibility for offenses against it. This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. They will receive no inheritance among the Israelites. ²⁰Instead, I give to the Levites as their inheritance the tithes that the Israelites present as an offering to the LORD. That is why I said concerning them: 'They will have no inheritance among the Israelites.'

²¹The LORD said to Moses, ²²"Speak to the Levites and say to them: 'When you receive from the Israelites the tithe I give you as your inheritance, you must present a tenth of that tithe as the LORD's offering. ²³Your offering will be reckoned to you as grain from the threshing floor or juice from the winepress. ²⁴In this way you also will present an offering to the LORD from all the tithes you receive from the Israelites. From these tithes you must give the LORD's portion to Aaron the priest. ²⁵You must present as the LORD's portion the best and holiest part of everything given to you.'

²⁶"Say to the Levites: 'When you present the best part, it will be reckoned to you as the product of the threshing floor or the winepress. ²⁷You and your households may eat the rest of it anywhere, for it is your wages for your work at the Tent of Meeting. ²⁸By presenting the best part of it you will not be guilty in this matter; then you will not defile the holy offerings of the Israelites, and you will not die.'

The Water of Cleansing

19 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ²"This is a requirement of the law that the LORD has commanded: Tell the Israelites to bring you a red heifer without defect or blemish and that has never been under a yoke. ³Give it to Eleazar the priest; it is to be taken outside the camp and slaughtered in his presence. ⁴Then Eleazar the priest is to take some of its blood on his finger and sprinkle it seven times toward the front of the Tent of Meeting. ⁵While he watches, the heifer is to be burned—its hide, flesh, blood and offal. ⁶The priest is to take some cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet wool and throw them onto the burning heifer. ⁷After that, the priest must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water. He may then come into the camp, but he will be ceremonially unclean till evening. ⁸The man who burns it must also wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he too will be unclean till evening.

⁹"A man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and put them in a ceremonially clean place outside the camp. They shall be kept by the Israelite community for use in the water of cleansing; it is for purification from sin. ¹⁰The man who gathers up the ashes of the heifer must also wash his clothes, and he too will be unclean till evening. This will be a lasting ordinance both for the Israelites and for the aliens living among them.

18:20 No Land for Levites

The tribe of Levites got special privileges, but in contrast to the wealthy priestly caste of, say, Egypt, they received no land. God himself was their share and inheritance. For food, they relied largely on offerings from other tribes. Thus the physical survival of "fulltime ministers" depended on how faithful the other Israelites were.

^a14 The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the Lord, often by totally destroying them.
^b16 That is, about 1 ounce, about 55 grams.

Whoever touches the dead body of anyone will be unclean for seven days. ¹²He must purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day; then he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the third and seventh days, he will not be clean. ¹³Whoever touches the dead body of anyone and fails to purify himself defiles the LORD's tabernacle. That person must be cut off from the community because the water of cleansing has not been sprinkled on him; he is unclean, his uncleanness remains on him.

¹⁴This is the law that applies when a person dies in a tent. Anyone who enters the tent and anyone who is in it will be unclean for seven days, and every open container without a lid fastened on it will be unclean.

¹⁵Anyone out in the open who touches someone who has been killed with a sword or someone who has died a natural death, or anyone who touches a human bone or a grave, will be unclean for seven days.

¹⁶For the unclean person, put some ashes from the burned purification offering into a jar and pour fresh water over them. ¹⁷Then a man who is ceremonially clean is to take some hyssop, dip it in the water and sprinkle the tent and all the furnishings and the people who were there. He must also sprinkle anyone who has touched a human bone or a grave or someone who has been killed or someone who has died a natural death. ¹⁸The man who is clean is to sprinkle the unclean person on the third and seventh days, and on the seventh day he is to purify him. The person being cleansed must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and that evening he will be clean. ¹⁹But if a person who is unclean does not purify himself, he must be cut off from the community, because he has defiled the sanctuary of the LORD. The water of cleansing has not been sprinkled on him, and he is unclean. ²⁰This is a lasting ordinance for them.

The man who sprinkles the water of cleansing must also wash his clothes, and anyone who touches the water of cleansing will be unclean till evening. ²¹Anything that an unclean person touches becomes unclean, and anyone who touches it becomes unclean till evening."

Water From the Rock

20 In the first month the whole Israelite community arrived at the Desert of Zin, and they stayed at Kadesh. There Miriam died and was buried.

Now there was no water for the community, and the people gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron. ³They quarreled with Moses and said, "Why did we die when our brothers fell dead before the LORD? Why did you bring the LORD's community into this desert, that we and our livestock should die here? Why did you bring us up from Egypt to this terrible place? It has no grain or grapes or figs or pomegranates. And there is no water to drink!"

Moses and Aaron went from the assembly to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and fell face-

down, and the glory of the LORD appeared to them. The LORD said to Moses, "Take the staff and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink."

⁹So Moses took the staff from the LORD's presence, just as he commanded him. He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, "Listen, you rebels: must we bring you water out of this rock?" Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank.

¹²But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I gave them."

¹³These were the waters of Meribah, where the Israelites quarreled with the LORD and where he showed himself holy among them.

Edom Denies Israel Passage

¹⁴Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom, saying

"This is what your brother Israel says: You know about all the hardships that have come upon us. Our forefathers went down into Egypt, and we lived there many years. The Egyptians mistreated us and our fathers, but when we cried out to the LORD, he heard our cry and sent an angel and brought us out of Egypt."

"Now we are here at Kadesh, a town on the edge of your territory. Please let us pass through your country. We will not go through any field or vineyard, or drink water from any well. We will travel along the king's highway and not turn to the right or to the left until we have passed through your territory."

¹⁶But Edom answered:

20:12 Moses' Sin

After so many displays of loyalty and courage, Moses faltered. Numbers does not specify exactly what Moses did that upset God. Was it striking the rock rather than speaking to it as God commanded? Regardless, Moses lashed out angrily against the Israelites and was faulted for his lack of trust in God (20:12). In Deuteronomy God describes the sin as "breaking faith with me" and tells Moses that he "did not uphold my holiness among the Israelites" (32:51).

The scene at Meribah brought a tragic end to a great man's career: Moses, footsore and weary, was told he too would die in the desert, before the Israelites crossed into the promised land. Deuteronomy 3:23-27 adds a postscript: Moses pled with God to reverse the punishment and, when that failed, he threw the blame back on the Israelites.

“The LORD said to Moses, ‘If you will not listen to the voice of the LORD, you will not enter the land I give you.’”

The Israelites rebelled

“We will go along the main road, and if we find a well, we will drink from it. We will not drink any of your water. We will not turn aside into the land, we only want to pass through your territory.”

Aaron then answered

“You may not pass through.”

“The LORD came out against them with a large cloud and lightning. Edom refused to let them cross their territory, Israel turned away from them.”

The Death of Aaron

“The whole Israelite community set out from Kadesh and came to Mount Hor. At Mount Hor, near the border of Edom, the LORD said to Moses and Aaron: ‘Aaron will be gathered to his people; he will not enter the land I give the Israelites, because both of you rebelled against my command at the waters of Meribah.’ Get Aaron and his son Eleazar and take them up Mount Hor. Remove Aaron’s garments and put them on his son Eleazar, for Aaron will be gathered to his people; he will die there.”

“Moses did as the LORD commanded: They went up Mount Hor in the sight of the whole community. Moses removed Aaron’s garments and put them on his son Eleazar. And Aaron died there on top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain, and when the whole community learned that Aaron had died, the entire house of Israel mourned for him many days.

Arad Destroyed

21 When the Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the Negev, heard that Israel was coming along the road to Atharim, he attacked the Israelites and captured some of them. Then Israel made this vow to the LORD: “If you will deliver these people into our hands, we will totally destroy their cities.” The LORD listened to Israel’s plea and gave the Canaanites over to them. They completely destroyed them and their towns; so the place was named Hormah.^b

The Bronze Snake

“They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea,^c to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way; they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, ‘Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!’”

“Then the LORD sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, ‘We sinned when we spoke against the LORD and against you.

May that the LORD will take the snakes away from us.’ So Moses prayed for the people.”

“The LORD said to Moses, ‘Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.’ So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.”

The Journey to Moab

“The Israelites moved on and camped at Obboth. Then they set out from Obboth and camped in Iye Abrahim in the desert that faces Moab toward the sunrise. From there they moved on and camped in the Zered Valley. They set out from there and camped alongside the Arnon, which is in the desert extending into Amorite territory. The Arnon is the border of Moab between Moab and the Amorites. That is why the Book of the Wars of the LORD says:

“... Waheb in Suphah^d and the ravines,
the Arnon^e and the slopes of the ravines
that lead to the site of Ar
and lie along the border of Moab.”

From there they continued on to Beer, the well where the LORD said to Moses, “Gather the people together and I will give them water.”

Then Israel sang this song.

“Spring up, O well!

Sing about it,

about the well that the princes dug,
that the nobles of the people sank —
the nobles with scepters and staffs.”

Then they went from the desert to Mattanah, from Mattanah to Nahaliel, from Nahaliel to Bamoth, and from Bamoth to the valley in Moab where the top of Pisgah overlooks the wasteland.

Defeat of Sihon and Og

Israel sent messengers to say to Sihon king of the Amorites:

“Let us pass through your country. We will not turn aside into any field or vineyard, or drink water from any well. We will travel along the king’s highway until we have passed through your territory.”

But Sihon would not let Israel pass through his

21:9 Bronze Snake

Jesus chose this incident as one of the examples from Old Testament history that illustrate his own person and work (John 3:14). Through the snake and through Jesus, God provided a way of escape that required only faith from the people. In typical style, the Israelites corrupted the meaning by keeping the bronze snake as an idol to worship. Centuries later, King Hezekiah destroyed this image (2 Kings 18:4).

^a The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them (also in verse 3). ^b Hormah means destruction. ^c Hebrew Yam Suph, that is, Sea of Reeds. ^d The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain. ^e 14:15 (L) I have been given from Suphah and the ravines of the Arnon. ^f 12:1

territory. He mustered his entire army and marched out into the desert against Israel. When he reached Jahaz, he fought with Israel. ²⁴Israel, however, put him to the sword and took over his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, but only as far as the Ammonites, because their border was fortified. ²⁵Israel captured all the cities of the Amorites and occupied them, including Heshbon and all its surrounding settlements. ²⁶Heshbon was the city of Sihon king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab and had taken from him all his land as far as the Arnon.

That is why the poets say

Come to Heshbon and let it be rebuilt
let Sihon's city be restored.

²⁸Fire went out from Heshbon,
a blaze from the city of Sihon.
It consumed Ar of Moab,
the citizens of Arnon's heights.

²⁹Woe to you, O Moab!
You are destroyed. O people of Chemosh!
He has given up his sons as fugitives
and his daughters as captives
to Sihon king of the Amorites.

³⁰But we have overthrown them.
Heshbon is destroyed all the way to Dibon.
We have demolished them as far as Nophah,
which extends to Medeba.

³¹So Israel settled in the land of the Amorites.

³²After Moses had sent spies to Jazer, the Israelites captured its surrounding settlements and drove out the Amorites who were there. ³³Then they turned and went up along the road toward Bashan, and Og king of Bashan and his whole army marched out to meet them in battle at Edrei.

³⁴The LORD said to Moses, "Do not be afraid of him, for I have handed him over to you, with his whole army and his land. Do to him what you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon."

³⁵So they struck him down, together with his sons and his whole army, leaving them no survivors. And they took possession of his land.

Balak Summons Balaam

22 Then the Israelites traveled to the plains of Moab and camped along the Jordan across from Jericho.^a

²Now Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites, ³and Moab was terrified because there were so many people. Indeed, Moab was filled with dread because of the Israelites.

⁴The Moabites said to the elders of Midian, "This horde is going to lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field."

So Balak son of Zippor, who was king of Moab at that time, ⁵sent messengers to summon Balaam son of Beor, who was at Pethor, near the River,^b in his native land. Balak said,

"A people has come out of Egypt; they cover the face of the land and have settled next to me. ⁶Now come and put a curse on these

people, because they are too powerful for me. Perhaps then I will be able to defeat them and drive them out of the country. For I know that those you bless are blessed, and those you curse are cursed."

The elders of Moab and Midian left, taking with them the fee for divination. When they came to Balaam, they told him what Balak had said.

"Spend the night here," Balaam said to them, "and I will bring you back the answer the LORD gives me." So the Moabite princes stayed with him.

⁹God came to Balaam and asked, "Who are these men with you?"

¹⁰Balaam said to God, "Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, sent me this message: 'A people that has come out of Egypt covers the face of the land. Now come and put a curse on them for me. Perhaps then I will be able to fight them and drive them away.'"

¹²But God said to Balaam, "Do not go with them. You must not put a curse on those people, because they are blessed."

¹³The next morning Balaam got up and said to Balak's princes, "Go back to your own country, for the LORD has refused to let me go with you."

¹⁴So the Moabite princes returned to Balak and said, "Balaam refused to come with us."

¹⁵Then Balak sent other princes, more numerous and more distinguished than the first. ¹⁶They came to Balaam and said:

"This is what Balak son of Zippor says: Do not let anything keep you from coming to me, ¹⁷because I will reward you handsomely and do whatever you say. Come and put a curse on these people for me."

¹⁸But Balaam answered them, "Even if Balak gave me his palace filled with silver and gold, I could not do anything great or small to go beyond the command of the LORD my God. ¹⁹Now stay here tonight as the others did, and I will find out what else the LORD will tell me."

²⁰That night God came to Balaam and said, "Since these men have come to summon you, go with them, but do only what I tell you."

Balaam's Donkey

²¹Balaam got up in the morning, saddled his donkey and went with the princes of Moab. ²²But God was very angry when he went, and the angel of the LORD stood in the road to oppose him. Balaam was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him. ²³When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand, she turned off the road into a field. Balaam beat her to get her back on the road.

²⁴Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path between two vineyards, with walls on both sides. ²⁵When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she pressed close to the wall, crushing Balaam's foot against it. So he beat her again.

²⁶Then the angel of the LORD moved on ahead

^a1 Hebrew *Jordan of Jericho*, possibly an ancient name for the Jordan River

^b5 That is, the Euphrates

and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn, either to the right or to the left. ²⁷When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord she lay down under Balaam, and he was angry and beat her with his staff. ²⁸Then the Lord opened the donkey's mouth, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?"

²⁹Balaam answered the donkey, "You have made a fool of me! If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now."

³⁰The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your own donkey, which you have always ridden, to

* The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain

this day? Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?"

"No," he said.

³¹Then the Lord opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road with his sword drawn. So he bowed low and fell facedown.

³²The angel of the Lord asked him, "Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? I have come here to oppose you because your path is a reckless one before me. The donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If she

INSIGHT

Whose Side Is Balaam On?

A balky prophet, a talking donkey, and a furious king

Balak said to Balaam, "What have you done to me? I brought you to curse my enemies, but you have done nothing but bless them!" 23:11

Numbers 22-24 contains one of the most bizarre stories in the entire Bible. It features a donkey speaking fluent Hebrew and showing more insight than a prophet. One man is at the center of the story, the mysterious character named Balaam.

Balaam was evidently a professional magician of a nomadic clan somewhat like the gypsies. He had an impressive reputation: nearby kings alarmed by the Israelites hired him to work magic and get the gods on their side.

Prophet for Hire

Numbers gives enough detail to paint a colorful, dramatic story, but even so, Balaam is cloaked in a fog of mystery. Clearly, God chose to speak through him; he communicated directly to Balaam seven times. Just as clearly, Balaam proved a reluctant prophet, subject to ambition and a handsome bribe. Even his own donkey rebuked him, in the only biblical account of an animal speaking. An angel gave not Balaam, but the donkey, high praise.

Balaam appeared at a solemn occasion designed to curse the Israelites, but instead he pronounced blessings on them and curses on their enemies. He gave four stirring messages, far different in content from what his employer wanted to hear.

"How can I curse those whom God has not cursed?" Balaam asked (23:8). His magnificent prophecies shine out from scenes of comic irony. Balaam grew bolder and bolder, changing from a sorcerer into a prophet with backbone.

Prophet or Traitor?

Numbers 22-24 presents Balaam as an apparent convert. Tragically, the changes in him were only temporary. Balaam next appears in Numbers 31:8, the slain victim of an Israelite raid. Outright condemnations in 2 Peter 2:15, Jude 11, and Revelation 2:14 indicate that Balaam quickly returned to his treacherous ways. Having failed to manipulate the Israelites' God for his purposes, he resorted to manipulating the Israelites themselves. He convinced other nations to seduce them with sex and the worship of false gods. His actions led to the deaths of 24,000 people (25:9).

Some have called Balaam the Judas of the Old Testament, and certain parallels do emerge. Both men came close enough to truth to appear sincere and faithful. For a time, both seemed to serve the true God. But, motivated by ambition and greed, they renounced God and turned against him, with catastrophic results.

Part of a Bigger Battle

Seven books of the Bible refer to Balaam. The importance given to his story implies that it stood as a key event in the Israelites' relationship to pagan cultures. The Israelites were about to enter a land where magic and sorcery were used as national weapons. In a stroke of irony, God selected a spokesman who was both magician and pagan. Through him God rebuked those nations and their false gods.

Life Questions: Have you ever been used by God despite your own reluctance?

had not turned away. I would certainly have killed you by now, but I would have spared her."

¹⁴Balaam said to the angel of the Lord, "I have sinned. I did not realize you were standing in the road to oppose me. Now if you are displeased, I will go back."

¹⁵The angel of the Lord said to Balaam, "Go with the man, but speak only what I tell you." So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

¹⁶When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at the Moabite town on the Arnon border, at the edge of his territory. ¹⁷Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not send you an urgent summons? Why didn't you come to me? Am I really not able to reward you?"

¹⁸"Well, I have come to you now," Balaam replied. "But can I say just anything? I must speak only what God puts in my mouth."

¹⁹Then Balaam went with Balak to Kinath Huzoth. ²⁰Balak sacrificed cattle and sheep, and gave some to Balaam and the princes who were with him. ²¹The next morning Balak took Balaam up to Bamoth Baal, and from there he saw part of the people.

Balaam's First Oracle

23 Balaam said, "Build me seven altars here, and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me." ²⁴Balak did as Balaam said, and the two of them offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

²⁵Then Balaam said to Balak, "Stay here beside your offering while I go aside. Perhaps the Lord will come to meet with me. Whatever he reveals to me I will tell you." Then he went off to a barren height.

²⁶God met with him, and Balaam said, "I have prepared seven altars, and on each altar I have offered a bull and a ram."

²⁷The Lord put a message in Balaam's mouth and said, "Go back to Balak and give him this message."

²⁸So he went back to him and found him standing beside his offering, with all the princes of Moab. ²⁹Then Balaam uttered his oracle.

"Balak brought me from Aram,
the king of Moab from the eastern
mountains

'Come,' he said, 'curse Jacob for me;
come, denounce Israel.'

⁸How can I curse
those whom God has not cursed?

How can I denounce
those whom the Lord has not denounced?

⁹From the rocky peaks I see them,
from the heights I view them.

I see a people who live apart
and do not consider themselves one of the
nations.

¹⁰Who can count the dust of Jacob
or number the fourth part of Israel?

Let me die the death of the righteous,
and may my end be like theirs!"

¹¹Balak said to Balaam, "What have you done to

me? I brought you to curse my enemies, but you have done nothing but bless them!"

¹²He answered, "Must I not speak what the Lord puts in my mouth?"

Balaam's Second Oracle

¹³Then Balak said to him, "Come with me to another place where you can see them, you will see only a part but not all of them. And from there, curse them for me." ¹⁴So he took him to the field of Zippor on the top of Pisgah, and there he built seven altars and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

¹⁵Balaam said to Balak, "Stay here beside your offering while I meet with him over there."

¹⁶The Lord met with Balaam and put a message in his mouth and said, "Go back to Balak and give him this message."

¹⁷So he went to him and found him standing beside his offering, with the princes of Moab. Balak asked him, "What did the Lord say?"

¹⁸Then he uttered his oracle:

"Arise, Balak, and listen,
hear me, son of Zippor

¹⁹God is not a man, that he should lie,
not a son of man, that he should change his
mind

Does he speak and then not act?

Does he promise and not fulfill?

²⁰I have received a command to bless,
he has blessed, and I cannot change it

²¹"No misfortune is seen in Jacob,
no misery observed in Israel.
The Lord their God is with them,
the shout of the King is among them.

²²God brought them out of Egypt;
they have the strength of a wild ox.

²³There is no sorcery against Jacob,
no divination against Israel.
It will now be said of Jacob
and of Israel, 'See what God has done!'

²⁴The people rise like a lioness;
they rouse themselves like a lion
that does not rest till he devours his prey
and drinks the blood of his victims."

²⁵Then Balak said to Balaam, "Neither curse them at all nor bless them at all!"

²⁶Balaam answered, "Did I not tell you I must do whatever the Lord says?"

Balaam's Third Oracle

²⁷Then Balak said to Balaam, "Come, let me take you to another place. Perhaps it will please God to let you curse them for me from there." ²⁸And Balak took Balaam to the top of Peor, overlooking the wasteland.

²⁹Balaam said, "Build me seven altars here, and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me."

³⁰Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

24 Now when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he did not resort to sorcery as at other times, but turned his face

²¹ Or He has not looked on Jacob's offenses / or on the wrongs found in Israel

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

¹⁰The Lord said to Moses, ¹¹"Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, has turned my anger away from the Israelites; for he was as zealous as I am for my honor among them, so that in my zeal I did not put an end to them. ¹²Therefore tell him I am making my covenant of peace with him. ¹³He and his descendants will have a covenant of a lasting priesthood, because he was zealous for the honor of his God and made atonement for the Israelites."

¹⁴The name of the Israelite who was killed with the Midianite woman was Zimri son of Salu, the leader of a Simeonite family. ¹⁵And the name of the Midianite woman who was put to death was Cozbi daughter of Zur, a tribal chief of a Midianite family.

¹⁶The Lord said to Moses, ¹⁷"Treat the Midianites as enemies and kill them, ¹⁸because they treated you as enemies when they deceived you in the affair of Peor and their sister Cozbi, the daughter of a Midianite leader, the woman who was killed when the plague came as a result of Peor."

The Second Census

26 After the plague the Lord said to Moses and Eleazar son of Aaron, the priest, ²"Take a census of the whole Israelite community by families—all those twenty years old or more who are able to serve in the army of Israel." ³So on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho,^a Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke with them and said, ⁴"Take a census of the men twenty years old or more, as the Lord commanded Moses."

These were the Israelites who came out of Egypt:

⁵The descendants of Reuben, the firstborn son of Israel, were:

- through Hanoah, the Hanochite clan;
- through Pallu, the Palluite clan;
- through Hezron, the Hezronite clan;
- through Carmi, the Carmite clan.

⁷These were the clans of Reuben; those numbered were 43,730.

⁸The son of Pallu was Eliab, ⁹and the sons of Eliab were Nemuel, Dathan and Abiram. The same Dathan and Abiram were the community officials who rebelled against Moses and Aaron and were among Korah's followers when they rebelled against the Lord. ¹⁰The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them along with Korah, whose followers died when the fire devoured the 250 men. And they served as a warning sign. ¹¹The line of Korah, however, did not die out.

¹²The descendants of Simeon by their clans were:

- through Nemuel, the Nemuelite clan;
- through Jamin, the Jaminite clan;
- through Jakin, the Jakinite clan;

¹³through Zerah, the Zerahite clan;

- through Shaul, the Shaulite clan.

¹⁴These were the clans of Simeon; there were 22,200 men.

¹⁵The descendants of Gad by their clans were:

- through Zaphan, the Zaphanite clan;
- through Haggi, the Haggiite clan;
- through Shuni, the Shunite clan;
- ¹⁶through Gizi, the Gizite clan;
- through Eri, the Erite clan;
- ¹⁷through Arodi,^b the Aroditite clan;
- through Areli, the Arelite clan.

¹⁸These were the clans of Gad, those numbered were 40,500.

¹⁹Er and Onan were sons of Judah, but they died in Canaan.

²⁰The descendants of Judah by their clans were:

- through Shelah, the Shelanite clan;
- through Perez, the Perezite clan;
- through Zerah, the Zerahite clan.

²¹The descendants of Perez were:

- through Hazzon, the Hazzronite clan;
- through Hamul, the Hamulite clan.

²²These were the clans of Judah; those numbered were 76,500.

²³The descendants of Issachar by their clans were:

- through Tola, the Tolaite clan;
- through Puah, the Puite clan;

²⁴through Jashub, the Jashubite clan;

- through Shimron, the Shimronite clan.

²⁵These were the clans of Issachar; those numbered were 64,300.

²⁶The descendants of Zebulun by their clans were:

- through Sered, the Seredite clan;
- through Elon, the Elonite clan;
- through Jahleel, the Jahleelite clan.

²⁷These were the clans of Zebulun; those numbered were 60,500.

²⁸The descendants of Joseph by their clans through Manasseh and Ephraim were:

²⁹The descendants of Manasseh:

- through Makir, the Makirite clan (Makir was the father of Gilead);
- through Gilead, the Gileadite clan.

³⁰These were the descendants of Gilead:

- through Iezer, the Iezerite clan;
- through Helek, the Helekite clan;

³¹through Asriel, the Asrielite clan;

through Shechem, the Shechemite clan;

³²through Shemida, the Shemidite clan;

- through Hephher, the Hephherite clan.

³³(Zelophehad son of Hephher had no sons; he had only daughters, whose names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah.)

³⁴These were the clans of Manasseh; those numbered were 52,700.

³⁵These were the descendants of Ephraim by their clans:

- through Shuthelah, the Shuthelahite clan;
- through Beker, the Bekerite clan;
- through Tahan, the Tahanite clan.

³⁶These were the descendants of Shuthelah:

- through Eran, the Eranite clan.

^a Hebrew *Jordan of Jericho*, possibly an ancient name for the Jordan River; also in verse 63 (see also Gen. 46:16); Masoretic Text *Arod* (see also 1 Chron. 7:1); Masoretic Text through *Puvah, the Punite*

^b17 Samaritan Pentateuch and Syriac

^c23 Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac (see also 1 Chron. 7:1);

³⁷These were the clans of Ephraim; those numbered were 32,500.

These were the descendants of Joseph by their clans

³⁸The descendants of Benjamin by their clans were:

through Bela, the Belaite clan;

through Ashbel, the Ashbelite clan;

through Ahiram, the Ahiramite clan;

³⁹through Shupham,^a the Shuphamite clan;

through Hupham, the Huphamite clan.

⁴⁰The descendants of Bela through Ard and Naaman were:

through Ard,^b the Ardite clan;

through Naaman, the Naamite clan.

⁴¹These were the clans of Benjamin; those numbered were 45,600.

⁴²These were the descendants of Dan by their clans

through Shuham, the Shuhamite clan.

These were the clans of Dan: ⁴³All of them were Shuhamite clans; and those numbered were 64,400.

⁴⁴The descendants of Asher by their clans were:

through Imnah, the Imnite clan;

through Ishvi, the Ishvite clan,

through Benah, the Benute clan;

⁴⁵and through the descendants of Beriah:

through Heber, the Heberite clan;

through Malkiel, the Malkielite clan.

⁴⁶(Asher had a daughter named Serah.)

⁴⁷These were the clans of Asher; those numbered were 53,400

⁴⁸The descendants of Naphtali by their clans were:

through Jahzeel, the Jahzeelite clan,

through Guni, the Gunite clan;

⁴⁹through Jezer, the Jezerite clan;

through Shillem, the Shillemite clan.

⁵⁰These were the clans of Naphtali; those numbered were 45,400

⁵¹The total number of the men of Israel was 601,730

⁵²The Lord said to Moses, ⁵³"The land is to be allotted to them as an inheritance based on the number of names. ⁵⁴To a larger group give a larger inheritance, and to a smaller group a smaller one;

26:51 Recount

The two censuses in Numbers (chapter 1 and here) stand like bookends, marking the hopeful beginning and tragic end of the vast numbers of Israelites heading toward freedom. After 40 years, the totals were nearly the same—600,000 men—but only two of the original pilgrims would cross the Jordan River. The nation renewed itself like a human body, which looks the same but replaces all its cells every few years.

each is to receive its inheritance according to the number of those listed. ⁵⁵Be sure that the land is distributed by lot. What each group inherits will be according to the names for its ancestral tribe. ⁵⁶Each inheritance is to be distributed by lot among the larger and smaller groups.

⁵⁷These were the Levites who were counted by their clans:

through Gershon, the Gershonite clan,

through Kohath, the Kohathite clan,

through Merari, the Merarite clan.

⁵⁸These also were Levite clans:

the Libnite clan,

the Hebronite clan,

the Mahlite clan,

the Mushite clan,

the Korahite clan.

(Kohath was the forefather of Amram, ⁵⁹the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, a descendant of Levi, who was born to the Levites in Egypt. To Amram she bore Aaron, Moses and their sister Miriam. ⁶⁰Aaron was the father of Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. ⁶¹But Nadab and Abihu died when they made an offering before the Lord with unauthorized fire.)

⁶²All the male Levites a month old or more numbered 23,000. They were not counted along with the other Israelites because they received no inheritance among them.

⁶³These are the ones counted by Moses and Eleazar the priest when they counted the Israelites on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho. ⁶⁴Not one of them was among those counted by Moses and Aaron the priest when they counted the Israelites in the Desert of Sinai. ⁶⁵For the Lord had told those Israelites they would surely die in the desert, and not one of them was left except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

Zelophehad's Daughters

27 The daughters of Zelophehad son of He-pher, the son of Gilead, the son of Makir, the son of Manasseh, belonged to the clans of Manasseh son of Joseph. The names of the daughters were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah. They approached ²the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the leaders and the whole assembly, and said, ³"Our father died in the desert. He was not among Korah's followers, who banded together against the Lord, but he died for his own sin and left no sons. ⁴Why should our father's name disappear from his clan because he had no son? Give us property among our father's relatives."

⁵So Moses brought their case before the Lord and the Lord said to him, ⁶"What Zelophehad's daughters are saying is right. You must certainly give them property as an inheritance among their

^a 39 A few manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, Samaritan Pentateuch, Vulgate and Syriac (see also Septuagint); most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text Shupham. ^b 40 Samaritan Pentateuch and Vulgate (see also Septuagint); Masoretic Text does not have through Ard.

⁵⁹ Or Jochebed, a daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi.

"The
... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..

Techniques to Survive the Storm

[illegible]

I have to say the town the
 we all gathered around a man
 who got out and down in the
 who will find them out and bring
 the town will be the
 the town

And he said to Moses, "Take Joshua son
of Nave, thy minister, and lay your
hand upon him, and stand before Eleazar the
priest, and all the congregation and communion
of Israel. And thou shalt give unto him some of your
charge, so that the whole Israeli community will
obey him." He is to stand before Eleazar the
priest, and his decisions for him by inquiry
of the Urim and Thummim. Look! At his command
the congregation of the Israeliites will
come in.

21 Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, as the Lord

Daily Offerings

28 And say to Moses, Give this commandment to the Levites and say to them, See that you present to me at the appointed time the offerings made by fire, as an aroma pleasing to me! Say to them, This is the offering which you are to present to the Lord: one year old without defect, as a regular offering each day. Prepare one lamb in the morning and the other at twilight, together with a offering of a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with a quarter of a hin of oil from pressed olives. This is the regular burnt offering instituted in Mount Sinai as a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the Lord by fire. The accompanying drink offering is to be a quarter of a hin of fermented wine with each lamb. Pour out the drink offer-

[illegible]

Saturn (Continued)

On the Sabbath day, make an offering of two lambs, a roasted without blood, together with its drink offering and a grain offering of two tenths of a shekel, of fine flour mixed with oil, to be the burnt offering to you, in addition to the regular burnt offering and its drink offering.

Monthly Offerings

17 And in the first of every month, present to the Lord a burnt offering of two young bulls, one ram and seven male lambs a year old, all without defect. 18 With each bull there is to be a grain offering of three tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; with the ram, a grain offering of two tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; and with each lamb, a grain offering of a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil. This is for a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the Lord by fire. 19 With each bull there is to be a drink offering of half a hin of wine, with the ram, a third of a hin, and with each lamb, a quarter of a hin. This is the monthly burnt offering to be made at each new moon during the year. 20 Besides the regular burnt offering with its drink offering, one male goat is to be presented to the Lord as a sin offering.

The Passover

16th On the fourteenth day of the first month the LORD's Passover is to be held. 17th On the fifteenth day of this month there is to be a festival; for seven days eat bread made without yeast. 18th On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. 19th Present to the LORD an offering made by fire, a burnt offering of two young bulls, one ram and seven male lambs a year old— all without defect. 20th With each bull prepare a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; with the ram, two-tenths; 21st and with each of the seven lambs— one-tenth. 22nd Include one male goat as a sin offering to make atonement for you. 23rd Prepare these in addition to the regular morning burnt offering. 24th In this way prepare the food for the offering made by fire every day for seven days as an aroma pleasing to the LORD; it is to be prepared in addition to the regular burnt offering and its drink offering. 25th On the seventh day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.

Feast of Weeks

20 "On the day of firstfruits, when you present
to the Lord an offering of new grain during the
Feast of Weeks, hold a sacred assembly and do no
regular work. 21 Present a burnt offering of two
young bulls, one ram and seven male lambs a year

* That is probably about 1

12. This is probably about 4 quarts, about 4 liters! also in verses 12, 20 and 28

¹³ That is, probably about 0.5 quart (about 0.5 liter), also in verses 20 and 25. ¹⁴ That is, probably about 2 quarts (about 2 liters).

● 中国书画函授大学肇庆分校建校二十周年纪念册

old as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. ²⁸With each bull there is to be a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, with the ram, two-tenths; ²⁹and with each of the seven lambs, one-tenth. ³⁰Include one male goat to make atonement for you. ³¹Prepare these together with their drink offerings, in addition to the regular burnt offering and its grain offering. Be sure the animals are without defect.

Feast of Trumpets

29 "On the first day of the seventh month hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. It is a day for you to sound the trumpets. ²As an aroma pleasing to the LORD, prepare a burnt offering of one young bull, one ram and seven male lambs a year old, all without defect. ³With the bull prepare a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah^a of fine flour mixed with oil; with the ram, two-tenths^b; ⁴and with each of the seven lambs, one-tenth.^c ⁵Include one male goat as a sin offering to make atonement for you. ⁶These are in addition to the monthly and daily burnt offerings with their grain offerings and drink offerings as specified. They are offerings made to the LORD by fire—a pleasing aroma.

Day of Atonement

⁷"On the tenth day of this seventh month hold a sacred assembly. You must deny yourselves^d and do no work. ⁸Present as an aroma pleasing to the LORD a burnt offering of one young bull, one ram and seven male lambs a year old, all without defect. ⁹With the bull prepare a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; with the ram, two-tenths; ¹⁰and with each of the seven lambs, one-tenth. ¹¹Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the sin offering for atonement and the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings.

Feast of Tabernacles

¹²"On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. Celebrate a festival to the LORD for seven days. ¹³Present an offering made by fire as an aroma pleasing to the LORD, a burnt offering of thirteen young bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. ¹⁴With each of the thirteen bulls prepare a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; with each of the two rams, two-tenths; ¹⁵and with each of the fourteen lambs, one-tenth. ¹⁶Include

one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering.

¹⁷"On the second day prepare twelve young bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. ¹⁸With the bulls, rams and lambs, prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. ¹⁹Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings.

²⁰"On the third day prepare eleven bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. ²¹With the bulls, rams and lambs, prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. ²²Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering.

²³"On the fourth day prepare ten bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. ²⁴With the bulls, rams and lambs, prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. ²⁵Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering.

²⁶"On the fifth day prepare nine bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. ²⁷With the bulls, rams and lambs, prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. ²⁸Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering.

²⁹"On the sixth day prepare eight bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. ³⁰With the bulls, rams and lambs, prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. ³¹Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering.

³²"On the seventh day prepare seven bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. ³³With the bulls, rams and lambs, prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. ³⁴Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering.

³⁵"On the eighth day hold an assembly and do no regular work. ³⁶Present an offering made by fire as an aroma pleasing to the LORD, a burnt offering of one bull, one ram and seven male lambs a year old, all without defect. ³⁷With the bull, the ram and the lambs, prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. ³⁸Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering.

³⁹"In addition to what you vow and your free-will offerings, prepare these for the LORD at your

29:1 Interruptions of the Story

Numbers periodically interrupts its history with lists of rules or rituals, such as in this section, chapters 28-30. Usually, they relate to what appears just before or afterward. The instructions here were not new, but God saw a need to review them just as the nation was about to enter the promised land.

^a That is, probably about 6 quarts (about 6.5 liters); also in verses 9 and 14 also in verses 9 and 14.

^b That is, probably about 2 quarts (about 2 liters); also in verses 10 and 15.

^c That is, probably about 4 quarts (about 4.5 liters).

^d Or must fast.

appointed leaders your burnt offerings, grain offerings, drink offerings and fellowship offerings . . ."

"Moses told the Israelites all that the Lord commanded him.

Vows

30 "When a man makes a vow to the Lord or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said.

"When a young woman still living in her father's house makes a vow to the Lord or obligates herself by a pledge and her father hears about her vow or pledge but says nothing to her, then all her vows and every pledge by which she obligated herself will stand. But if her father forbids her when he hears about it, none of her vows or the pledges by which she obligated herself will stand, the Lord will release her because her father has forbidden her.

"If she marries after she makes a vow or after her lips utter a rash promise by which she obligates herself and her husband hears about it but says nothing to her, then her vows or the pledges by which she obligated herself will stand. But if her husband forbids her when he hears about it, he nullifies the vow that obligates her or the rash promise by which she obligates herself, and the Lord will release her.

"Any vow or obligation taken by a widow or divorced woman will be binding on her.

"If a woman living with her husband makes a vow or obligates herself by a pledge under oath and her husband hears about it but says nothing to her and does not forbid her, then all her vows or the pledges by which she obligated herself will stand. But if her husband nullifies them when he hears about them, then none of the vows or pledges that came from her lips will stand. Her husband has nullified them, and the Lord will release her. Her husband may confirm or nullify any vow she makes or any sworn pledge to deny herself. But if her husband says nothing to her about it from day to day, then he confirms all her vows or the pledges binding on her. He confirms them by saying nothing to her when he hears about them. If, however, he nullifies them some time after he hears about them, then he is responsible for her guilt."

"These are the regulations the Lord gave Moses concerning relationships between a man and his wife, and between a father and his young daughter still living in his house.

Vengeance on the Midianites

31 The Lord said to Moses, "Take vengeance on the Midianites for the Israelites. After that, you will be gathered to your people."

So Moses said to the people, "Arm some of your men to go to war against the Midianites and to carry out the Lord's vengeance on them. Send into battle a thousand men from each of the tribes of Israel." So twelve thousand men armed for

battle a thousand from each tribe were supplied from the clans of Israel. Moses sent them into battle a thousand from each tribe, along with Phinehas son of Eleazar the priest, who took with him articles from the sanctuary and the trumpets for signaling.

They fought against Midian, as the Lord commanded Moses, and killed every man. Among their victims were Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur and Reba—the five kings of Midian. They also killed Balaam son of Beor with the sword. The Israelites captured the Midianite women and children and took all the Midianite herds, flocks and goods as plunder. They burned all the towns where the Midianites had settled, as well as all their camps. They took all the plunder and spoils, including the people and animals, and brought the captives, spoils and plunder to Moses and Eleazar the priest and the Israelite assembly at their camp on the plains of Moab, by the Jordan across from Jericho.

Moses, Eleazar the priest and all the leaders of the community went to meet them outside the camp. Moses was angry with the officers of the army—the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds—who returned from the battle.

"Have you allowed all the women to live?" he asked them. They were the ones who followed Balaam's advice and were the means of turning the Israelites away from the Lord in what happened at Peor, so that a plague struck the Lord's people. Now kill all the boys. And kill every woman who has slept with a man, but save for yourselves every girl who has never slept with a man.

All of you who have killed anyone or touched anyone who was killed must stay outside the camp seven days. On the third and seventh days you must purify yourselves and your captives. Purify every garment as well as everything made of leather, goat hair or wood."

Then Eleazar the priest said to the soldiers who had gone into battle, "This is the requirement of the law that the Lord gave Moses: Gold, silver, bronze, iron, tin, lead and anything else that can withstand fire must be put through the fire, and then it will be clean. But it must also be purified with the water of cleansing. And whatever cannot withstand fire must be put through the water. On the seventh day wash your clothes and you will be clean. Then you may come into the camp."

31:19 God's Surgery

Have you ever seen an operation in a hospital? Many people faint at the sight of blood. Surgery looks terrible. So did the wars of Israel. But that was God's way of cutting out sinful influences from the nation of Israel. In cases of spiritual or physical illness, cutting may be necessary. It was not taken lightly—even war heroes were cut through the process of purification.

*19 Traditionally peace offerings

*12 Hebrew Jordan of Jericho possibly an ancient name for the Jordan River

Dividing the Spoils

²⁵The LORD said to Moses, ²⁶"You and Eleazar the priest and the family heads of the community are to count all the people and animals that were captured. ²⁷Divide the spoils between the soldiers who took part in the battle and the rest of the community. ²⁸From the soldiers who fought in the battle, set apart as tribute for the LORD one out of every five hundred, whether persons, cattle, donkeys, sheep or goats. ²⁹Take this tribute from their half share and give it to Eleazar the priest as the LORD's part. ³⁰From the Israelites' half, select one out of every fifty, whether persons, cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats or other animals. Give them to the Levites, who are responsible for the care of the LORD's tabernacle." ³¹So Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the LORD commanded Moses.

³²The plunder remaining from the spoils that the soldiers took was 675,000 sheep, ³³72,000 cattle, ³⁴61,000 donkeys ³⁵and 32,000 women who had never slept with a man.

³⁶The half share of those who fought in the battle was

³⁷337,500 sheep, ³⁷of which the tribute for the LORD was 675;

³⁸36,000 cattle, of which the tribute for the LORD was 72;

³⁹30,500 donkeys, of which the tribute for the LORD was 61;

⁴⁰16,000 people, of which the tribute for the LORD was 32.

⁴¹Moses gave the tribute to Eleazar the priest as the LORD's part, as the LORD commanded Moses.

⁴²The half belonging to the Israelites, which Moses set apart from that of the fighting men—

⁴³the community's half—was 337,500 sheep, ⁴⁴36,000 cattle, ⁴⁵30,500 donkeys ⁴⁶and 16,000 people.

⁴⁷From the Israelites' half, Moses selected one out of every fifty persons and animals, as the LORD commanded him, and gave them to the Levites, who were responsible for the care of the LORD's tabernacle.

⁴⁸Then the officers who were over the units of the army—the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds—went to Moses ⁴⁹and said to him, "Your servants have counted the soldiers under our command, and not one is missing.

⁵⁰"We have brought as an offering to the LORD the gold articles each of us acquired—armlets, bracelets, signet rings, earrings and necklaces—to make atonement for ourselves before the LORD."

⁵¹Moses and Eleazar the priest accepted from them the gold—all the crafted articles. ⁵²All the gold from the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds that Moses and Eleazar presented is a gift to the LORD weighed 16,750 shekels. ⁵³Each soldier had taken plunder for himself. ⁵⁴Moses and Eleazar the priest accepted the gold from the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds and brought it into the Tent of Meeting as a memorial for the Israelites before the LORD.

The Transjordan Tribes

32 The Reubenites and Gadites, who had very large herds and flocks, saw that the lands of Jazer and Gilead were suitable for livestock. ²So they came to Moses and Eleazar the priest and to the leaders of the community and said, "Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo and Beon—the land the LORD subdued before the people of Israel—are suitable for livestock, and your servants have livestock. ³If we have found favor in your eyes," they said, "let this land be given to your servants as our possession. Do not make us cross the Jordan."

⁴Moses said to the Gadites and Reubenites, "Shall your countrymen go to war while you sit here? ⁵Why do you discourage the Israelites from going over into the land the LORD has given them? ⁶This is what your fathers did when I sent them from Kadesh Barnea to look over the land. ⁷After they went up to the Valley of Eschol and viewed the land, they discouraged the Israelites from entering the land the LORD had given them. ⁸The LORD's anger was aroused that day and he swore this oath: ⁹'Because they have not followed me wholeheartedly, not one of the men twenty years old or more who came up out of Egypt will see the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob— ¹²not one except Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua son of Nun, for they followed the LORD wholeheartedly.' ¹³The LORD's anger burned against Israel and he made them wander in the desert forty years, until the whole generation of those who had done evil in his sight was gone.

¹⁴"And here you are, a brood of sinners, standing in the place of your fathers and making the LORD even more angry with Israel. ¹⁵If you turn away from following him, he will again leave all this people in the desert, and you will be the cause of their destruction."

¹⁶Then they came up to him and said, "We would like to build pens here for our livestock and cities for our women and children. ¹⁷But we are ready to arm ourselves and go ahead of the Israelites until we have brought them to their place. Meanwhile our women and children will live in fortified cities, for protection from the inhabitants of the land. ¹⁸We will not return to our homes until every Israelite has received his inheritance. ¹⁹We will not receive any inheritance with them on the other side of the Jordan, because our inheritance has come to us on the east side of the Jordan."

²⁰Then Moses said to them, "If you will do this—if you will arm yourselves before the LORD for battle, ²¹and if all of you will go armed over the Jordan before the LORD until he has driven his enemies out before him— ²²then when the land is subdued before the LORD, you may return and be free from your obligation to the LORD and to Israel. And this land will be your possession before the LORD.

²³But if you fail to do this, you will be sinning against the LORD, and you may be sure that your sin will find you out. ²⁴Build cities for your women

and children, and pens for your flocks, but do what you have promised."

²⁵The Gadites and Reubenites said to Moses, "We your servants will do as our lord commands. ²⁶Our children and wives, our flocks and herds will remain here in the cities of Gilead. ²⁷But your servants every man armed for battle, will cross over to fight before the LORD, just as our lord says."

²⁸Then Moses gave orders about them to Eleazar the priest and Joshua son of Nun and to the family heads of the Israelite tribes. ²⁹He said to them, "If the Gadites and Reubenites, every man armed for battle, cross over the Jordan with you before the LORD, then when the land is subdued before you, give them the land of Gilead as their possession. ³⁰But if they do not cross over with you armed, they must accept their possession with you in Canaan."

³¹The Gadites and Reubenites answered, "Your servants will do what the LORD has said. ³²We will cross over before the LORD into Canaan armed, but the property we inherit will be on this side of the Jordan."

³³Then Moses gave to the Gadites, the Reubenites and the half-tribe of Manasseh son of Joseph the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan—the whole land with its cities and the territory around them.

³⁴The Gadites built up Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer, ³⁵Atroth Shophan, Jazer, Jogbehah, ³⁶Beth Nimrah and Beth Haran as fortified cities, and built pens for their flocks. ³⁷And the Reubenites rebuilt Heshbon, Elealeh and Kiriathaim, ³⁸as well as Nebo and Baal Meon (these names were changed) and Sibmah. They gave names to the cities they rebuilt.

³⁹The descendants of Makir son of Manasseh went to Gilead, captured it and drove out the Amorites who were there. ⁴⁰So Moses gave Gilead to the Makirites, the descendants of Manasseh, and they settled there. ⁴¹Jair, a descendant of Manasseh, captured their settlements and called them Havvoth Jair. ⁴²And Nobah captured Kenath and its surrounding settlements and called it Nobah after himself.

Stages in Israel's Journey

33 Here are the stages in the journey of the Israelites when they came out of Egypt by divisions under the leadership of Moses and Aaron. ²At the LORD's command Moses recorded

32:22 Trouble Ahead

According to Joshua 22:1-6, the two and a half tribes did keep their promise to fight with the others. The land they chose was appealing, with parklike scenery, wide pastures, and lush forests. However, their settlement proved troublesome. With no natural borders, it was open to enemy attack and easy infiltration.

the stages in their journey. This is their journey by stages:

¹The Israelites set out from Rameses on the fifteenth day of the first month, the day after the Passover. They marched out boldly in full view of all the Egyptians, ²who were burying all their firstborn, whom the LORD had struck down among them, for the LORD had brought judgment on their gods.

³The Israelites left Rameses and camped at Succoth.

⁴They left Succoth and camped at Etham, on the edge of the desert.

⁵They left Etham, turned back to Pi Hahiroth, to the east of Baal Zephon, and camped near Migdol.

⁶They left Pi Hahiroth^a and passed through the sea into the desert, and when they had traveled for three days in the Desert of Etham, they camped at Marah.

⁷They left Marah and went to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees, and they camped there.

⁸They left Elim and camped by the Red Sea.

⁹They left the Red Sea and camped in the Desert of Sin.

¹⁰They left the Desert of Sin and camped at Dophkah.

¹¹They left Dophkah and camped at Alush.

¹²They left Alush and camped at Rephidim, where there was no water for the people to drink.

¹³They left Rephidim and camped in the Desert of Sinai.

¹⁴They left the Desert of Sinai and camped at Kibroth Hattaavah.

¹⁵They left Kibroth Hattaavah and camped at Hazeroth.

¹⁶They left Hazeroth and camped at Rithmah.

¹⁷They left Rithmah and camped at Rimmon Perez.

¹⁸They left Rimmon Perez and camped at Libnah.

¹⁹They left Libnah and camped at Rissah.

²⁰They left Rissah and camped at Kehelathah.

²¹They left Kehelathah and camped at Mount Shepher.

²²They left Mount Shepher and camped at Haradah.

²³They left Haradah and camped at Makheloth.

²⁴They left Makheloth and camped at Tahath.

²⁵They left Tahath and camped at Terah.

²⁶They left Terah and camped at Mithcah.

²⁷They left Mithcah and camped at Hashmonah.

²⁸They left Hashmonah and camped at Moseroth.

^a41 Or them the settlements of Jair.

of the Masoretic Text left from before Hahiroth.

^b8 Many manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, Samaritan Pentateuch and Vulgate insert Makheloth.

^c10 Hebrew Yam Saph, that is, Sea of Reeds, also in verse 11.

NUMBERS 33:31

³¹They left Moseroth and camped at Bene Jaakan.

³²They left Bene Jaakan and camped at Hor Haggidgad.

³³They left Hor Haggidgad and camped at Jotbathah.

³⁴They left Jotbathah and camped at Abronah.

³⁵They left Abronah and camped at Ezion Geber.

³⁶They left Ezion Geber and camped at Kadesh, in the Desert of Zin.

³⁷They left Kadesh and camped at Mount Hor, on the border of Edom. ³⁸At the LORD's command Aaron the priest went up Mount Hor, where he died on the first day of the fifth month of the fortieth year after the Israelites came out of Egypt. ³⁹Aaron was a hundred and twenty-three years old when he died on Mount Hor.

⁴⁰The Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the Negev of Canaan, heard that the Israelites were coming.

⁴¹They left Mount Hor and camped at Zalmonah.

⁴²They left Zalmonah and camped at Punon.

⁴³They left Punon and camped at Oboth.

⁴⁴They left Oboth and camped at Iye Abarim, on the border of Moab.

⁴⁵They left Iyim^a and camped at Dibon Gad.

⁴⁶They left Dibon Gad and camped at Almon Diblathaim.

⁴⁷They left Almon Diblathaim and camped in the mountains of Abarim, near Nebo.

⁴⁸They left the mountains of Abarim and camped on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho.^b ⁴⁹There on the plains of Moab they camped along the Jordan from Beth Jeshimoth to Abel Shittim.

⁵⁰On the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho the LORD said to Moses, ⁵¹"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you cross the Jordan into Canaan, ⁵²drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you. Destroy all their carved images and their cast idols, and demolish all their high places. ⁵³Take possession of the land and settle in it, for I have given you the land to possess. ⁵⁴Distribute the land by lot, according to your clans. To a larger group give a larger inheritance, and to a smaller group a smaller one. Whatever

falls to them by lot will be theirs. Distribute it according to your ancestral tribes.

⁵⁵"But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land, those you allow to remain will become barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides. They will give you trouble in the land where you will live. ⁵⁶And then I will do to you what I plan to do to them.'"

Boundaries of Canaan

34 The LORD said to Moses, ²"Command the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter Canaan, the land that will be allotted to you as an inheritance will have these boundaries:

³ 'Your southern side will include some of the Desert of Zin along the border of Edom. On the east, your southern boundary will start from the end of the Salt Sea,^c ⁴cross south of Scorpion^d Pass, continue on to Zin and go south of Kadesh Barnea. Then it will go to Hazar Addar and over to Azmon, ⁵where it will turn, join the Wadi of Egypt and end at the Sea.^e

⁶"Your western boundary will be the coast of the Great Sea. This will be your boundary on the west.

⁷"For your northern boundary, run a line from the Great Sea to Mount Hor^g and from Mount Hor to Lebo^h Hamath. Then the boundary will go to Zedad, ⁹continue to Ziphron and end at Hazar Enan. This will be your boundary on the north.

¹⁰"For your eastern boundary, run a line from Hazar Enan to Shepham. ¹¹The boundary will go down from Shepham to Riblah on the east side of Ain and continue along the slopes east of the Sea of Kinnereth.ⁱ ¹²Then the boundary will go down along the Jordan and end at the Salt Sea.

"This will be your land, with its boundaries on every side.'"

¹³Moses commanded the Israelites: "Assign this land by lot as an inheritance. The LORD has ordered that it be given to the nine and a half tribes, ¹⁴because the families of the tribe of Reuben, the tribe of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance. ¹⁵These two and a half tribes have received their inheritance on the east side of the Jordan of Jericho,^h toward the sunrise."

¹⁶The LORD said to Moses, ¹⁷"These are the names of the men who are to assign the land for you as an inheritance: Eleazar the priest and Joshua son of Nun. ¹⁸And appoint one leader from each tribe to help assign the land. ¹⁹These are their names.

Caleb son of Jephunneh,

from the tribe of Judah;

²⁰Shemuel son of Ammihud,

from the tribe of Simeon;

²¹Elidad son of Kislon,

from the tribe of Benjamin;

²²Bukki son of Jogli,

the leader from the tribe of Dan,

²³Hanniel son of Ephod,

33:50-56 Final Warnings

Just before the dramatic crossing into the promised land, God gave a clear statement of his priorities and a warning of what would happen if the Israelites failed to obey. His words would one day come back to haunt them, for they failed to carry out fully any of his orders.

^a45 That is, Iye Abanin

is, the Dead Sea, also in verse 12

entrance to

^b48 Hebrew *Jordan of Jericho*, possibly an ancient name for the Jordan River, also in verse 50

^c46 Hebrew *Akrabim*

^e45 That is, the Mediterranean, also in verses 6 and 7

ⁱ15 *Jordan of Jericho* was possibly an ancient name for the Jordan River.

³ That

^h8 Or to the

the leader from the tribe of Manasseh son
of Gilead

Shimon son of Shimon

the leader from the tribe of Ephraim son
of Joseph

Shamshon son of Haran

the leader from the tribe of Zebulun

Shimon son of Gilead

the leader from the tribe of Issachar

Shimon son of Shimon

the leader from the tribe of Asher

Shimon son of Shimon

the leader from the tribe of Naphtali

the leader from the tribe of Dan

the leader from the tribe of Gad

the leader

Towns for the Levites

35 The sons of Manasse by the Jordan across
the Jordan, the Lord said to Moses,
the Israelites to give the Levites
from the inheritance the Israelites
possess. And give them pasturelands around
the towns, then they will have towns to live in
and pasturelands for their cattle, flocks and all
their other animals.

The pasturelands around the towns that you
give the Levites will extend out fifteen hundred
cubits from the town wall. Outside the town, mea-
suring four thousand cubits on the east side, three
thousand on the south side, three thousand on the
west and three thousand on the north, with the
town in the center. They will have this area as
pastureland for the towns.

Cities of Refuge

Some of the towns you give the Levites will be
cities of refuge, to which a person who has killed
someone may flee. In addition, give them forty-
two other towns. In all you must give the Levites
forty-eight towns, together with their pasture-
lands. The towns you give the Levites from the
land the Israelites possess are to be given in pro-
portion to the inheritance of each tribe. Take many
towns from a tribe that has many, but few from
one that has few.

The Lord said to Moses: ¹⁰“Speak to the
Israelites and say to them: ‘When you cross the
Jordan into Canaan, ¹¹select some towns to be
your cities of refuge, to which a person who has
killed someone accidentally may flee. ¹²They will

be places of refuge from the avenger, so that a
person accused of murder may not die before he
stands trial before the assembly. ¹³These six towns
you give will be your cities of refuge. Give three
on this side of the Jordan and three in Canaan as
cities of refuge. ¹⁴These six towns will be a place of
refuge for Israelites, aliens and any other people
living among them, so that anyone who has killed
another accidentally can flee there.

¹⁵“If a man strikes someone with an iron object
so that he dies, he is a murderer; the murderer
shall be put to death. ¹⁶Or if anyone has a stone in
his hand that could kill, and he strikes someone so
that he dies, he is a murderer; the murderer shall
be put to death. ¹⁷Or if anyone has a wooden
object in his hand that could kill, and he hits some-
one so that he dies, he is a murderer; the murderer
shall be put to death. ¹⁸The avenger of blood shall
put the murderer to death, when he meets him, he
shall put him to death. ¹⁹If anyone with malice
athought shoves another or throws something
at him intentionally so that he dies, ²⁰or if in hos-
tility he hits him with his fist so that he dies, that
person shall be put to death; he is a murderer. The
avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death
when he meets him.

²¹“But if without hostility someone suddenly
shoves another or throws something at him unin-
tentionally, ²²or, without seeing him, drops a stone
on him that could kill him, and he dies, then since
he was not his enemy and he did not intend to
harm him, ²³the assembly must judge between
him and the avenger of blood according to these
regulations. ²⁴The assembly must protect the one
accused of murder from the avenger of blood and
send him back to the city of refuge to which he
fled. He must stay there until the death of the high
priest, who was anointed with the holy oil.

²⁵“But if the accused ever goes outside the lim-
its of the city of refuge to which he has fled, ²⁶and
the avenger of blood finds him outside the city, the
avenger of blood may kill the accused without be-
ing guilty of murder. ²⁷The accused must stay in
his city of refuge until the death of the high priest;
only after the death of the high priest may he
return to his own property.

²⁸“These are to be legal requirements for you
throughout the generations to come, wherever
you live.

²⁹“Anyone who kills a person is to be put to
death as a murderer only on the testimony of wit-
nesses. But no one is to be put to death on the
testimony of only one witness.

³⁰“Do not accept a ransom for the life of a mur-
derer, who deserves to die. He must surely be put
to death.

³¹“Do not accept a ransom for anyone who has
fled to a city of refuge and so allow him to go back
and live on his own land before the death of the
high priest.

³²“Do not pollute the land where you are.
Bloodshed pollutes the land, and atonement can-
not be made for the land on which blood has been

¹² Hebrew *Jordan of Jericho*, possibly an ancient name for the Jordan River
Hebrew *two thousand cubits* (about 900 meters)

¹⁴ Hebrew *a thousand cubits* (about 450 meters)

35:6 Controlling Blood Feuds

Even today some nomadic tribes still follow the
principles of blood feuds. If a person is responsible,
even accidentally, for another's death, a relative of
the victim can in turn kill either the murderer or,
as a substitute, one of the murderer's relatives. The
cities of refuge put a control on this practice,
making allowance for “involuntary manslaughter.”
The assembly judged whether the killing was
accidental or intentional (verse 24).

shed, except by the blood of the one who shed it.
³⁴Do not defile the land where you live and where I dwell, for I, the LORD, dwell among the Israelites.”

Inheritance of Zelophehad's Daughters

36 The family heads of the clan of Gilead son of Makir, the son of Manasseh, who were from the clans of the descendants of Joseph, came and spoke before Moses and the leaders, the heads of the Israelite families. ²They said, “When the LORD commanded my lord to give the land as an inheritance to the Israelites by lot, he ordered you to give the inheritance of our brother Zelophehad to his daughters. ³Now suppose they marry men from other Israelite tribes; then their inheritance will be taken from our ancestral inheritance and added to that of the tribe they marry into. And so part of the inheritance allotted to us will be taken away. ⁴When the Year of Jubilee for the Israelites comes, their inheritance will be added to that of the tribe into which they marry, and their property will be taken from the tribal inheritance of our forefathers.” *

⁵Then at the LORD's command Moses gave this

order to the Israelites: “What the tribe of the descendants of Joseph is saying is right. ⁶This is what the LORD commands for Zelophehad's daughters: They may marry anyone they please as long as they marry within the tribal clan of their father. ⁷No inheritance in Israel is to pass from tribe to tribe, for every Israelite shall keep the tribal land inherited from his forefathers. ⁸Every daughter who inherits land in any Israelite tribe must marry someone in her father's tribal clan, so that every Israelite will possess the inheritance of his fathers. ⁹No inheritance may pass from tribe to tribe, for each Israelite tribe is to keep the land it inherits.”

¹⁰So Zelophehad's daughters did as the LORD commanded Moses. ¹¹Zelophehad's daughters—Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah and Noah—married their cousins on their father's side. ¹²They married within the clans of the descendants of Manasseh son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in their father's clan and tribe.

¹³These are the commands and regulations the LORD gave through Moses to the Israelites on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho.”

*13 Hebrew *Jordan of Jericho*, possibly an ancient name for the Jordan River

DEUTERONOMY

INTRODUCTION

A Personal Plea

Moses' last chance with the people he loved

But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul. 4:29

The book of Deuteronomy contains many speeches of Moses, motivating Israel and guiding them to enter the promised land. For their length and emotional power, these speeches have no equal in the Bible. Moses passionately went over and over the same ground, occasionally lashing out but more often showing the anguish and love of a parent. An undercurrent of sadness runs through the speeches: Moses knew he would not join in the triumph of entering Canaan. God had revealed that Moses would die before then.

In Exodus, Moses was marked by a quick temper and a reluctance to speak. His humility and eloquence as seen in Deuteronomy show how far he had come in 40 years.

Deep in his soul, Moses felt that the entire history of the Jews depended on what happened next. Poised on the banks of the Jordan River, they were about to enter the promised land and face the most crucial test of their lives. How would they react to the new land? Would they keep their covenant with God or reject it for the more immediate pleasures around them?

Desert-bred, the Israelites knew little about the seductions of other cultures: the sensuality, the exotic religions, the glittering wealth. They had spent their lives in near-isolation, sheltered from civilization. Now they were marching into a land full of enticements.

Three Speeches

Moses' first great speech, in chapters 1-3, reviewed God's dealings with Israel. Moses recalled Israel's history through his own eyes, mentioning such details as the irrigation system in Egypt, the abrupt departure, the fearsome desert with its serpents and scorpions, and the amazing miracles of God. He filled the account with personal reflections, like an aging father telling his children what to remember after he is gone.

The longest speech, chapters 4-26, went over the moral and civil code the Israelites had agreed to keep. Even here, a personal tone came through. Moses did not list laws as in a textbook; he discussed and amplified and preached them. Along with the laws, he included reminders, object lessons, personal outbursts.

In chapters 27-33 Moses gave a final summing up, a farewell charge from an old man facing certain death. As clearly as he could, he presented the choices facing the Israelites. He would not be with them as they chose their future. They were on their own; they held their destiny in their own hands.

How to Read Deuteronomy

Early in this century archaeologists began turning up samples of Near Eastern treaties. These "suzerainty treaties" set down in official form the relationship between a powerful king and the people he ruled over. Such treaties shed new light on the book of Deuteronomy, which seems to follow very closely the pattern of such a treaty. Typically, a treaty with a powerful king consisted of the following elements:

1. A preamble identifying the parties of the treaty, such as a king and a small cluster of tribes who want his protection.
2. A capsule history describing previous relations between the two parties.
3. Rules defining each party's obligations. The king may swear to defend some tribes with his armies in return for allegiance, taxes, and a percentage of produce.
4. Witnesses to the treaties, including, in many cases, a list of gods.
5. Curses and blessings specifying what will take place if one of the parties breaks the treaty.

The king may promise the people prosperity and peace if they keep the terms, but invasion, deportation, or death if they break them.

Read Deuteronomy as an example of a treaty between a king and his people. *Treaty* is another word for the one we have been using—*covenant*—to describe the formal agreement between God and the Israelites. With a little work, you can identify various portions of Deuteronomy that parallel the five elements above.

Chapters 1-11 and 27-34 contain the best summary of Moses' speeches to the Israelites. He holds back no emotion as he retells the story of his life. Almost all the action he describes repeats what we've heard before (see Exodus 12-20, 32-34, Numbers 11-17; 20-24), but Deuteronomy provides a much more personal account.

Unlike other ancient books, the Bible gives major emphasis to "nobodies"—poor people, aliens, widows, orphans, the sick. Many of the laws relating to them repeat laws from the three preceding books. But Deuteronomy gives hidden insights into why God has such special concern for nobodies and why the Israelites should also. It also gives intriguing ideas on how such concern can be translated into actual political and economic policies. As you go through the book, mark each passage that relates to such people.

The New Testament quotes Deuteronomy more often than any other Old Testament book. Twenty-one of the 27 New Testament books allude to Deuteronomy; some scholars count 90 different citations. Jesus, himself, drew from it during his temptation (Matthew 4).

PLANS FOR READING DEUTERONOMY

PLAN 1: An Overview of Deuteronomy in 3 Days

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to Deuteronomy and then chapter 4, part of Moses' first emotional speech.
- ☐ Day 2. Read chapter 8, here, Moses reveals his fears about how success may have a harmful effect on the Israelites.
- ☐ Day 3. Read chapter 28, which, in vivid, shocking language, sets out before the Israelites the choice between obedience and disobedience.

PLAN 2: All of Deuteronomy in 34 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16
☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28 ☐ 29 ☐ 30
☐ 31 ☐ 32 ☐ 33 ☐ 34
-

The Command to Leave Horeb

1 These are the words Moses spoke to all Israel in the fortieth year in the Jordan—that is, in the Arabah—opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Hazereth and Dizahab. ²(It takes eleven days to go from Horeb to Kadesh Barnea by the Mount Seir road.)

³In the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, Moses proclaimed to the Israelites all that the LORD had commanded him concerning them. ⁴This was after he had defeated Sihon king of the Amorites—who reigned in Heshbon, and after Edrei had defeated Og king of Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth.

East of the Jordan in the territory of Moab, Moses began to expound this law, saying:

⁵The LORD our God said to us at Horeb, "You have stayed long enough at this mountain. ⁶Break camp and advance into the hill country of the Amorites; go to all the neighboring peoples in the Arabah, in the mountains, in the western foothills, in the Negev and along the coast, to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the Euphrates. ⁷See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land that the LORD swore he would give to your fathers—to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and to their descendants after them."

The Appointment of Leaders

⁸At that time I said to you, "You are too heavy a burden for me to carry alone. ⁹The LORD your God has increased your numbers so that today you are as many as the stars in the sky. ¹⁰May the LORD, the God of your fathers, increase you a thousand times and bless you as he has promised! ¹¹But how can I bear your problems and your burdens and your disputes all by myself? ¹²Choose some wise, understanding and respected men from each of your tribes, and I will set them over you."

¹³You answered me, "What you propose to do is good."

¹⁴So I took the leading men of your tribes, wise and respected men, and appointed them to have authority over you—as commanders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens and as tribal officials. ¹⁵And I charged your judges at that time: Hear the disputes between your brothers and judge fairly, whether the case is between brother Israelites or between one of them and an alien. ¹⁶Do not show partiality in judging; hear both small and great alike. Do not be afraid of any man, for judgment belongs to God. Bring me any case too hard for you, and I will hear it. ¹⁷And at that time I told you everything you were to do.

Spies Sent Out

¹⁸Then, as the LORD our God commanded us, we set out from Horeb and went toward the hill country of the Amorites through all that vast and dreadful desert that you have seen, and so we reached Kadesh Barnea. ¹⁹Then I said to you, "You have reached the hill country of the Amorites, which the LORD our God is giving us. ²⁰See, the LORD your God has given you the land. Go up and

take possession of it as the LORD, the God of your fathers, told you. Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged."

²¹Then all of you came to me and said, "Let us send men ahead to spy out the land for us and bring back a report about the route we are to take and the towns we will come to."

²²The idea seemed good to me; so I selected twelve of you, one man from each tribe. ²³They left and went up into the hill country, and came to the Valley of Eshcol and explored it. ²⁴Taking with them some of the fruit of the land, they brought it down to us and reported, "It is a good land that the LORD our God is giving us."

Rebellion Against the LORD

²⁵But you were unwilling to go up; you rebelled against the command of the LORD your God. ²⁶You grumbled in your tents and said, "The LORD hates us, so he brought us out of Egypt to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us. ²⁷Where can we go? Our brothers have made us lose heart. They say, 'The people are stronger and taller than we are; the cities are large, with walls up to the sky. We even saw the Anakites there.'"

²⁸Then I said to you, "Do not be terrified; do not be afraid of them. ²⁹The LORD your God, who is going before you, will fight for you, as he did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes, ³⁰and in the desert. There you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place."

³¹In spite of this, you did not trust in the LORD your God, ³²who went ahead of you on your journey, in fire by night and in a cloud by day, to search out places for you to camp and to show you the way you should go.

³³When the LORD heard what you said, he was angry and solemnly swore: ³⁴"Not a man of this evil generation shall see the good land I swore to give your forefathers, ³⁵except Caleb son of Jephunneh. He will see it, and I will give him and his descendants the land he set his feet on, because he followed the LORD wholeheartedly."

³⁶Because of you the LORD became angry with me also and said, "You shall not enter it, either. ³⁷But your assistant, Joshua son of Nun, will enter it. Encourage him, because he will lead Israel to inherit it. ³⁸And the little ones that you said would be taken captive, your children who do not yet know good from bad—they will enter the land. I will give it to them and they will take possession of it."

1:37 Moses Distributes the Blame

God forbade Moses to enter the promised land because of the incident reported in Numbers 20. In his farewell speech, Moses could not resist expressing his own resentment at the Israelites' part in provoking his punishment. Both in this verse and in 3:26 and 4:21, he turned the blame back on his countrymen.

it. ⁴⁰But as for you, turn around and set out toward the desert along the route to the Red Sea.^a

⁴¹Then you replied, "We have sinned against the LORD. We will go up and fight, as the LORD our God commanded us." So every one of you put on his weapons, thinking it easy to go up into the hill country.

⁴²But the LORD said to me, "Tell them, 'Do not go up and fight, because I will not be with you. You will be defeated by your enemies.'"

⁴³So I told you, but you would not listen. You rebelled against the LORD's command and in your arrogance you marched up into the hill country.

⁴⁴The Amorites who lived in those hills came out against you; they chased you like a swarm of bees and beat you down from Seir all the way to Hormah. ⁴⁵You came back and wept before the LORD, but he paid no attention to your weeping and turned a deaf ear to you. ⁴⁶And so you stayed in Kadesh many days—all the time you spent there.

Wanderings in the Desert

2 Then we turned back and set out toward the desert along the route to the Red Sea,^a as the LORD had directed me. For a long time we made our way around the hill country of Seir.

²Then the LORD said to me, ³"You have made your way around this hill country long enough; now turn north. ⁴Give the people these orders: 'You are about to pass through the territory of your brothers the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir. They will be afraid of you, but be very careful. ⁵Do not provoke them to war, for I will not give you any of their land, not even enough to put your foot on. I have given Esau the hill country of Seir as his own. ⁶You are to pay them in silver for the food you eat and the water you drink.'"

⁷The LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He has watched over your journey through this vast desert. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you, and you have not lacked anything.

⁸So we went on past our brothers the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir. We turned from the Arabah road, which comes up from Elath and Ezion Geber, and traveled along the desert road of Moab.

⁹Then the LORD said to me, "Do not harass the Moabites or provoke them to war, for I will not give you any part of their land. I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot as a possession."

¹⁰(The Emmites used to live there—a people strong and numerous, and as tall as the Anakites. ¹¹Like the Anakites, they too were considered Rephaites, but the Moabites called them Emmites. ¹²Horites used to live in Seir, but the descendants of Esau drove them out. They destroyed the Horites from before them and settled in their place, just as Israel did in the land the LORD gave them as their possession.)

¹³And the LORD said, "Now get up and cross the Zered Valley." So we crossed the valley.

¹⁴Thirty-eight years passed from the time we left Kadesh Barnea until we crossed the Zered Valley.

By then, that entire generation of fighting men had perished from the camp, as the LORD had sworn to them. ¹⁵The LORD's hand was against them until he had completely eliminated them from the camp.

¹⁶Now when the last of these fighting men among the people had died, ¹⁷the LORD said to me, ¹⁸"Today you are to pass by the region of Moab at Ar. ¹⁹When you come to the Ammonites, do not harass them or provoke them to war, for I will not give you possession of any land belonging to the Ammonites. I have given it as a possession to the descendants of Lot."

²⁰(That too was considered a land of the Rephaites, who used to live there, but the Ammonites called them Zamzummmites. ²¹They were a people strong and numerous, and as tall as the Anakites. The LORD destroyed them from before the Ammonites, who drove them out and settled in their place. ²²The LORD had done the same for the descendants of Esau, who lived in Seir, when he destroyed the Horites from before them. They drove them out and have lived in their place to this day. ²³And as for the Avvites who lived in villages as far as Gaza, the Caphtorites coming out from Caphtor^b destroyed them and settled in their place.)

Defeat of Sihon King of Heshbon

²⁴"Set out now and cross the Arnon Gorge. See, I have given into your hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his country. Begin to take possession of it and engage him in battle. ²⁵This very day I will begin to put the terror and fear of you on all the nations under heaven. They will hear reports of you and will tremble and be in anguish because of you."

²⁶From the desert of Kedemoth I sent messengers to Sihon king of Heshbon offering peace and saying, ²⁷"Let us pass through your country. We will stay on the main road; we will not turn aside to the right or to the left. ²⁸Sell us food to eat and water to drink for their price in silver. Only let us pass through on foot—²⁹as the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir, and the Moabites, who live in Ar, did for us—until we cross the Jordan into the land the LORD our God is giving us." ³⁰But Sihon king of Heshbon refused to let us pass through. For the LORD your God had made his spirit stub-

2:14 Children of the Desert

As he reviewed the Israelites' history, Moses recalled with bitterness the series of rebellions leading to the 40-year punishment in "that vast and dreadful desert" (1:19). Actually, of course, the people listening to him had been mere children when the decisive rebellions occurred (1:39); their parents were the ones forbidden to enter the promised land. Except for Joshua, Caleb, and Moses' own family, all those listening to Moses had grown up in the desert.

^a40,1 Hebrew Yam Suph, that is, Sea of Reeds

^b23 That is, Crete

born and his heart obstinate in order to give him into your hands as he has now done.

11The Lord said to me, "See, I have begun to deliver Sihon and his country over to you. Now begin to conquer and possess his land."

12When Sihon and all his army came out to meet us in battle at Jahaz, 13the Lord our God delivered him over to us and we struck him down, together with his sons and his whole army. 14At that time we took all his towns and completely destroyed them—men, women and children. We left no survivors. 15But the livestock and the plunder from the towns we had captured we carried off for ourselves. 16From Arnon on the rim of the Arnon Gorge, and from the town in the gorge, even as far as Gilead, not one town was too strong for us. The Lord our God gave us all of them. 17But in accordance with the command of the Lord our God, you did not encroach on any of the land of the Ammonites, neither the land along the course of the Jabbuk nor that around the towns in the hills.

Defeat of Og King of Bashan

3Next we turned and went up along the road toward Bashan, and Og king of Bashan with his whole army marched out to meet us in battle at Edrei. The Lord said to me, "Do not be afraid of him, for I have handed him over to you with his whole army and his land. Do to him what you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon."

5So the Lord our God also gave into our hands Og king of Bashan and all his army. We struck them down, leaving no survivors. 6At that time we took all his cities. There was not one of the sixty cities that we did not take from them—the whole region of Argob, Og's kingdom in Bashan. 7All these cities were fortified with high walls and with gates and bars, and there were also a great many unwallled villages. 8We completely destroyed them, as we had done with Sihon king of Heshbon, destroying every city—men, women and children. 9But all the livestock and the plunder from their cities we carried off for ourselves.

10So at that time we took from these two kings of the Amorites the territory east of the Jordan, from the Arnon Gorge as far as Mount Hermon. 11(Hermon is called Senir by the Sidonians; the Amorites call it Senir.) 12We took all the towns on the plateau and all Gilead, and all Bashan as far as Salecah and Edrei, towns of Og's kingdom in Bashan. 13(Only Og king of Bashan was left of the remnant of the Rephaites. His bed was made of iron and was more than thirteen feet long and six feet wide. It is still in Rabbah of the Ammonites.)

Division of the Land

12Of the land that we took over at that time, I gave the Reubenites and the Gadites the territory north of Arnon by the Arnon Gorge, including half the hill country of Gilead, together with its towns.

The rest of Gilead and also all of Bashan, the kingdom of Og, I gave to the half tribe of Ma-

nasseh. (The whole region of Argob, a Bashan man's territory, was called a Bashan man's land, a district land of Bashan.) 13The Lord our God gave us Argob as the territory of the land of the Amorites. It was named after it, Argob. This day Bashan is called Hauran. 14At that time I gave Gilead to Manasse. 15The Lord our God and the Gadites I gave the territory stretching from Gilead down to the Arnon Gorge, even as far as the gorge, being the border, stretching from Beth Peor, which is the border of the Amorites, as far as the border of the Bashanites. 16I gave Kinnereth to the half of the Asherites. 17The rest of the land below the slopes of Pisgah

18I commanded you at that time. "The Lord your God has given you this land to take possession of it. But all your able-bodied men, fighting in battle, must cross over ahead of your brother tribes. 19However, your wives, your children and your livestock (I know you have them with you), may stay in the towns I have given you. 20The Lord gives rest to your brothers as he has to you, and they too have taken over the land that the Lord your God is giving them. 21Then the people of the land that you are going to take will be your prey. After that, each of you may do as he pleases in the land I have given you."

Moses Forbidden to Cross the Jordan

2At that time I commanded Joshua, "You have seen with your own eyes all that the Lord your God has done to these two kings. The Lord will do the same to all the kingdoms over which you are going. 3Do not be afraid of them; the Lord your God himself will fight for you."

4At that time I pleaded with the Lord. 5O Sovereign Lord, you have begun to show to your servant your greatness and your strong hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do the deeds and mighty works you do? 6Let me go over and see the good land beyond the Jordan—that fine hill country and Lebanon.

7But because of you the Lord was angry with me and would not listen to me. "That is enough," the Lord said. "Do not speak to me anymore about this matter. 8Go up to the top of Pisgah and look west and north and south and east. Look at the land with your own eyes, since you are not going to cross this Jordan. 9But commission Joshua and encourage and strengthen him, for he will lead this people across and will cause them to inherit the land that you will see." 10So we stayed in the valley near Beth Peor.

Obedience Commanded

4Hear now, O Israel, the decrees and laws I am about to teach you. Follow them so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land that the Lord, the God of your fathers, is giving you. 2Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the Lord your God that I give you.

3You saw with your own eyes what the Lord did at Baal Peor. The Lord your God destroyed from

11 The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the Lord, often by totally destroying them.

12 sarcophagus
ments of Jair

13 Hebrew, nine cubits long and four cubits wide, about 4 meters long and 1.6 meters wide.

17 That is, the Dead Sea.

14 Or, unless the

among you everyone who followed the lead of those. But all of you who held fast to the Lord your God are still alive today.

So I have taught you decrees and laws as the Lord my God commanded me, so that you may observe them carefully. For this is your wisdom and understanding to the eyes of the nations about all these decrees and laws. For what great nation is a wise and understanding nation? What other nation is so great as the Lord our God is whenever we pray to him? And what other nation has so many decrees and laws as this body of laws I am commanding you today?

Now be careful and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen. Guard your heart as long as you live, so that you do not turn away from your children and to their children. Remember the day you stood before the Lord at Horeb, when he said to me, "Assemble the people before me to hear my words, so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live, and so that they may teach them to their children." You came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, which was blazing with fire to the very top, with black clouds and deep darkness. From the midst of the fire the Lord spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice. He declared to you his covenant, the Ten Commandments, which he commanded you to follow and then wrote them on two tablets of stone. And the Lord directed me at that time to teach you the decrees and laws you are to follow in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess.

Idolatry Forbidden

Be careful not to worship any kind of image the day the Lord brought you out of the fire. Therefore, do not worship any other gods, very carefully, so that you do not become corrupt and make for yourselves an idol, whether made of any shape, whether formed like a man or a woman, or like any animal on earth or any bird that flies in the air, or like any creature that moves along the ground or any fish in the water below. And when you look up to the sky and see the sun, the moon and the stars—all the heavenly array—do not be enticed into bowing down to them and worshiping things the Lord

your God has appointed to all the nations under heaven. "But is for you," the Lord took you and brought you out of the iron-smelting furnace, out of Egypt, to be the people of his inheritance, as you now are.

21 The Lord was angry with me because of you, and he solemnly swore that I would not cross the Jordan and enter the good land the Lord your God is giving you as your inheritance. 22 I will die in this land; I will not cross the Jordan, but you are about to cross over and take possession of that good land. 23 Be careful not to forget the covenant of the Lord your God that he made with you; do not make for yourselves an idol in the form of anything the Lord your God has forbidden. 24 For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

25 After you have had children and grandchildren and have lived in the land a long time—if you then become corrupt and make any kind of idol, doing evil in the eyes of the Lord your God and provoking him to anger, 26 I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you this day that you will quickly perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess. You will not live there long but will certainly be destroyed. 27 The Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and only a few of you will survive among the nations to which the Lord will drive you. 28 There you will worship man-made gods of wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or eat or smell. 29 But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul. 30 When you are in distress and all these things have happened to you, then in later days you will return to the Lord your God and obey him. 31 For the Lord your God is a merciful God; he will not abandon or destroy you or forget the covenant with your forefathers, which he confirmed to them by oath.

The Lord Is God

32 Ask now about the former days, long before your time, from the day God created man on the earth; ask from one end of the heavens to the other. Has anything so great as this ever happened, or has anything like it ever been heard of? 33 Has any other people heard the voice of God?

4:23 Relating Laws to Experience

Chapter 4 follows a typical pattern in Deuteronomy: Moses begins with the Israelites' experience and then shows how the laws of the covenant relate directly to that experience. In this chapter, he vividly reminds them of their own encounters with God, especially at Mount Sinai. "How did God reveal himself to them? 'You saw no form of any kind,' Moses concludes (4:15); therefore, idols made with human hands would insult and devalue such a God. Then he describes the unique privilege the Jews have: to know personally the God who created the universe.

4:6 Old Testament Evangelism

As he explained various laws to the Jews, Moses often appealed to their unique calling as a nation. God had chosen them as a "kingdom of priests" and a "treasured possession." This passage describes yet another benefit to keeping the law: what today we would call evangelism. The purity of the Israelites would serve as an example to the nations around them, who would thus be attracted to the true God.

speaking out of fire as you have, and lived? ³⁴Has any god ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation by testings, by miraculous signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, or by great and awesome deeds like all the things the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes?

³⁵You were shown these things so that you might know that the LORD is God, besides him there is no other. ³⁶From heaven he made you hear his voice to discipline you. On earth he showed you his great fire, and you heard his words from out of the fire. ³⁷Because he loved your forefathers and chose their descendants after them, he brought you out of Egypt by his Presence and his great strength, ³⁸to drive out before you nations greater and stronger than you and to bring you into their land to give it to you for your inheritance, as it is today.

³⁹Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other. ⁴⁰Keep his decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the LORD your God gives you for all time.

Cities of Refuge

⁴¹Then Moses set aside three cities east of the Jordan, ⁴²to which anyone who had killed a person could flee if he had unintentionally killed his neighbor without malice aforethought. He could flee into one of these cities and save his life. ⁴³The cities were these: Bezer in the desert plateau, for the Reubenites, Ramoth in Gilead, for the Gadites; and Golan in Bashan, for the Manassites.

Introduction to the Law

⁴⁴This is the law Moses set before the Israelites. ⁴⁵These are the stipulations, decrees and laws Moses gave them when they came out of Egypt ⁴⁶and were in the valley near Beth Peor east of the Jordan, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon and was defeated by Moses and the Israelites as they came out of Egypt. ⁴⁷They took possession of his land and the land of Og king of Bashan, the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan. ⁴⁸This land extended from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Gorge to Mount Siyon^a (that is, Hermon), ⁴⁹and included all the Arabah east of the Jordan, as far as the Sea of the Arabah,^b below the slopes of Pisgah.

The Ten Commandments

5 Moses summoned all Israel and said: Hear, O Israel, the decrees and laws I declare in your hearing today. Learn them and be sure to follow them. ²The LORD our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. ³It was not with our fathers that the LORD made this covenant, but with us, with all of us who are alive here today. ⁴The LORD spoke to you face to face out of the fire on the mountain. ⁵At that time I stood between the LORD and you to declare to you the word of the LORD, because you

were afraid of the fire and did not go up the mountain.) And he said:

⁶"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

⁷"You shall have no other gods before me.

⁸"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. ⁹You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, ¹⁰but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

¹¹"You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

¹²"Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. ¹³Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁴but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do. ¹⁵Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

¹⁶"Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

¹⁷"You shall not murder.

¹⁸"You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁹"You shall not steal.

²⁰"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

²¹"You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. You shall not set your desire on your neighbor's house or land, his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

²²These are the commandments the LORD proclaimed in a loud voice to your whole assembly there on the mountain from out of the fire, the cloud and the deep darkness; and he added nothing more. Then he wrote them on two stone tablets and gave them to me.

^a Hebrew, Syriac (see also Deut. 3:9) Sirion

^b49 That is, the Dead Sea

^c7 Or besides

23When you heard the voice out of the darkness, while the mountain was ablaze with fire, all the leading men of your tribes and your elders came to me. 24And you said, "The LORD our God has shown us his glory and his majesty, and we have heard his voice from the fire. Today we have seen that a man can live even if God speaks with him. 25But now, why should we die? This great fire will consume us, and we will die if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any longer. 26For what mortal man has ever heard the voice of the living God speaking out of fire, as we have, and survived? 27Go near and listen to all that the LORD our God says. Then tell us whatever the LORD our God tells you. We will listen and obey."

28The LORD heard you when you spoke to me and the LORD said to me, "I have heard what this people said to you. Everything they said was good. 29Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever!"

30"Go, tell them to return to their tents. 31But you stay here with me so that I may give you all the commands, decrees and laws you are to teach

them to follow in the land I am giving them to possess."

32So be careful to do what the LORD your God has commanded you, do not turn aside to the right or to the left. 33Walk in all the way that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.

Love the LORD Your God

6 These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, 2so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. 3Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you.

4Hear, O Israel. The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength

*4 Or The LORD our God is one LORD; or The LORD is our God, the LORD is one; or The LORD is our God, the LORD alone

INSIGHT

Healthier, Wealthier, and Wiser

Do only good things happen to good people?

When your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. 8:13-14

Do Christians have accidents? Do they get cancer? Are they ever tired from their jobs? The answer to all three questions is, of course, yes. But that answer causes big problems for some new Christians. Doesn't the Bible promise that God will look out for and protect his followers? How can such bad things occur?

People puzzled by such questions often refer to Old Testament books, where God clearly promised success and protection to the Israelites. In Deuteronomy, Moses spelled out God's promises in complete detail. Israelite wives would have many babies. All the crops—grain, grapes, olive trees—would produce bountifully. Cattle and sheep would multiply. And Moses even included this extraordinary promise: "The LORD will keep you free from every disease" (7:15).

A Special Arrangement

For the Israelites to receive these benefits, God asked only one thing in return: follow the covenant agreement first set forth in the book of Exodus. Deuteronomy repeats much of the covenant and affirms, "It was not with our fathers that the LORD made this covenant, but with us, with all of us who are alive here today" (5:3).

God had a unique relationship with the band of refugees who had been roaming the Sinai for 40 years (10:15, 14:2). Moses, for one, could not seem to get over the arrangement. "Ask from one end of the heavens to the other," he said. "Has anything so great as this ever happened, or has anything like it ever been heard of? Has any god ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation . . . like all the things the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes?" (14:32,34)

Moses promised that good things would come the Israelites' way if they merely held up their end of the covenant. //, he said—underscoring that small but very crucial word. Threads of doubt and anxiety run all through the book. Will the Israelites stick to terms of the covenant? Will they obey?

These commandments that I give you today are to impress them on your children. You shall teach them when you sit at home and when you are on the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and

on your gates. When the LORD your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you—a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant—then when you eat and are satisfied, be careful that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

6:4 Most Quoted Verses

These six verses (4-9) may well be the most quoted portion in the entire Bible. Known as the *Shema*, they are recited every morning and every evening by orthodox Jews—and have been for hundreds of years. They graphically emphasize the importance of God's laws to the Israelites.

13Fear the LORD your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name. 14Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you; 15for the LORD your God, who is among you, is a jealous God and his anger will burn against you, and he will destroy you from the face of the land. 16Do not test the LORD your God as you did at Massah. 17Be sure to keep the commands of the LORD your God and the stipulations and decrees he has given you. 18Do what is right and good in the LORD's sight, so that it may go well with you and you may go in and take over the good land that the LORD promised on oath to your forefathers, 19thrusting out all your enemies before you, as the LORD said.

20In the future, when your son asks you, "What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the LORD our God has commanded you?" 21tell him, "We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 22Before our eyes the LORD sent miraculous signs and wonders—great and terrible—upon Egypt and Pharaoh and his whole household. 23But he brought us out from there to bring us in and give us the land that he promised on oath to our forefathers. 24The LORD commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the LORD our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept

Dangers of Success

Moses seemed to fear the coming prosperity even more than the rigors of the desert, and he voiced those fears in chapter 8. In the promised land, a lush country of streams and fruit trees and valuable resources, the Israelites might forget God and begin to take credit for their own success. That, at least, was the danger, and the reason Moses kept urging, "Remember!" Remember the days of slavery in Egypt, and God's acts in liberating you. Remember the trials of the vast and desolate desert, and God's faithfulness there. Remember your special calling as a peculiar treasure of God. Do not forget, as a prosperous nation, what you learned as refugees in the Sinai.

God predicted bluntly, "When I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, the land I promised on oath to their forefathers, and when they eat their fill and thrive, they will turn to other gods and worship them, rejecting me and breaking my covenant" (31:20).

As the books following Deuteronomy record, all that God and Moses feared came true. The covenant was irreparably broken. Ultimately, the Israelites received not wealth and happiness but slavery and suffering.

A Message for Us Today

The promises of Deuteronomy were given to a particular people, the Israelites, in a special covenant relationship—a covenant that God prophesied would be broken. The formula was simple: "Do good, get blessed; do evil, get punished." But Christians of today cannot simply turn to those promises of wealth and prosperity and apply them directly. Rather, we must look at this book in light of the new covenant introduced by Jesus Christ and spelled out in the New Testament.

When Jesus came, he promised certain rewards for Christians, but he also predicted poverty, rejection, and even persecution. Rewards on this earth cannot be reduced to such a simple "Do good, get blessed; do evil, get punished" formula. (See Hebrews 11 and "What Is True Faith?" page 1056.) Jesus' disciples proved faithful to him, and yet most of them lived through poverty and persecution and died martyrs' deaths. For them, full rewards had to wait until heaven.

Deuteronomy may offer a clue to why God does not exempt his followers from every bad thing in life. Ironically, prosperity and health may make it harder to depend on God. Moses' fears came true—the Israelites proved least faithful to God after they moved into the prosperity of the promised land. In the desert, at least, they had been forced to lean on God just for daily survival. But after a very short time in Canaan, they forgot about him. There is a grave danger in finally getting what you want.

Life Questions: When do you think most about God: when things are going well or when you are in trouble?

alive, as is the case today. ²⁵And if we are careful to obey all this law before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness."

Driving Out the Nations

7 When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you—²and when the LORD your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally.³ Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy.³ Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, ⁴for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you. ⁵This is what you are to do to them: Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles^b and burn their idols in the fire. ⁶For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.

⁷The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. ⁸But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. ⁹Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands. ¹⁰But

those who hate him he will repay to their face
by destruction;

he will not be slow to repay to their face
those who hate him.

¹¹Therefore, take care to follow the commands, decrees and laws I give you today.

¹²If you pay attention to these laws and are careful to follow them, then the LORD your God will keep his covenant of love with you, as he swore to your forefathers. ¹³He will love you and bless you and increase your numbers. He will bless the fruit of your womb, the crops of your land—your grain,

new wine and oil—the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks in the land that he swore to your forefathers to give you. ¹⁴You will be blessed more than any other people, none of your men or women will be childless, nor any of your livestock without young. ¹⁵The LORD will keep you free from every disease. He will not inflict on you the horrible diseases you knew in Egypt, but he will inflict them on all who hate you. ¹⁶You must destroy all the peoples the LORD your God gives over to you. Do not look on them with pity and do not serve their gods, for that will be a snare to you.

¹⁷You may say to yourselves, "These nations are stronger than we are. How can we drive them out?" ¹⁸But do not be afraid of them; remember well what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt. ¹⁹You saw with your own eyes the great trials, the miraculous signs and wonders, the mighty hand and outstretched arm, with which the LORD your God brought you out. The LORD your God will do the same to all the peoples you now fear. ²⁰Moreover, the LORD your God will send the hornet among them until even the survivors who hide from you have perished. ²¹Do not be terrified by them, for the LORD your God, who is among you, is a great and awesome God. ²²The LORD your God will drive out those nations before you, little by little. You will not be allowed to eliminate them all at once, or the wild animals will multiply around you. ²³But the LORD your God will deliver them over to you, throwing them into great confusion until they are destroyed. ²⁴He will give their kings into your hand, and you will wipe out their names from under heaven. No one will be able to stand up against you; you will destroy them. ²⁵The images of their gods you are to burn in the fire. Do not covet the silver and gold on them, and do not take it for yourselves, or you will be ensnared by it, for it is detestable to the LORD your God. ²⁶Do not bring a detestable thing into your house or you, like it, will be set apart for destruction. Utterly abhor and detest it, for it is set apart for destruction.

Do Not Forget the LORD

8 Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land that the LORD promised on oath to your forefathers. ²Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. ³He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. ⁴Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. ⁵Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you.

⁶Observe the commands of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and revering him. ⁷For the

7:7 Why the Israelites?

Deuteronomy makes clear that God chose Israel out of pure grace. He did not select them for their impressiveness (this verse), their goodness (9:5), or their faithfulness (9:24). Rather, he chose them because he loved them, and he had made absolute promises to their ancestors. Deuteronomy promises the new land to the Israelites 69 times.

⁴² The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD—often by totally destroying them—also in verse 26.
⁴⁵ That is, symbols of the goddess Asherah, here and elsewhere in Deuteronomy

LORD your God is bringing you into a good land—a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills; ⁸a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey. ⁹a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing, a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills.

¹⁰When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. ¹¹Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. ¹²Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, ¹³and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, ¹⁴then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ¹⁵He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. ¹⁶He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you. ¹⁷You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." ¹⁸But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

¹⁹If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed. ²⁰Like the nations the LORD destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the LORD your God.

Not Because of Israel's Righteousness

9 Hear, O Israel. You are now about to cross the Jordan to go in and dispossess nations greater and stronger than you, with large cities that have walls up to the sky. ²The people are strong and tall—Anakites! You know about them and have heard it said: "Who can stand up against the Anakites?" ³But be assured today that the LORD your God is the one who goes across ahead of you like a devouring fire. He will destroy them; he will subdue them before you. And you will drive them out and annihilate them quickly, as the LORD has promised you.

⁴After the LORD your God has driven them out before you, do not say to yourself, "The LORD has brought me here to take possession of this land because of my righteousness." No, it is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is going to drive them out before you. ⁵It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; but on account of the wickedness of these nations, the LORD your God will drive them out before you, to accomplish what he swore to your fathers, to

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. ⁶Understand, then, that it is not because of your righteousness that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stiff-necked people.

The Golden Calf

⁷Remember this and never forget how you provoked the LORD your God to anger in the desert. From the day you left Egypt until you arrived here, you have been rebellious against the LORD. ⁸At Horeb you aroused the LORD's wrath so that he was angry enough to destroy you. ⁹When I went up on the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant that the LORD had made with you, I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights; I ate no bread and drank no water. ¹⁰The LORD gave me two stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God. On them were all the commandments the LORD proclaimed to you on the mountain out of the fire, on the day of the assembly.

¹¹At the end of the forty days and forty nights, the LORD gave me the two stone tablets, the tablets of the covenant. ¹²Then the LORD told me, "Go down from here at once, because your people whom you brought out of Egypt have become corrupt. They have turned away quickly from what I commanded them and have made a cast idol for themselves."

¹³And the LORD said to me, "I have seen this people, and they are a stiff-necked people indeed! ¹⁴Let me alone, so that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven. And I will make you into a nation stronger and more numerous than they."

¹⁵So I turned and went down from the mountain while it was ablaze with fire. And the two tablets of the covenant were in my hands. ¹⁶When I looked, I saw that you had sinned against the LORD your God; you had made for yourselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. You had turned aside quickly from the way that the LORD had commanded you. ¹⁷So I took the two tablets and threw them out of my hands, breaking them to pieces before your eyes.

¹⁸Then once again I fell prostrate before the LORD for forty days and forty nights; I ate no bread and drank no water, because of all the sin you had committed, doing what was evil in the LORD's

9:4 Reasons for Warfare

Commands for the Israelites to utterly destroy other nations have caused modern readers of the Old Testament much concern. This passage reveals that God was acting not because of the Israelites' superior moral character, but because of the inhabitants' own wickedness. Chapter 20:16-18 gives yet another rationale for the wars: to keep Israel free from contamination by other nations. The Israelites never followed these commands completely, and their nation was ultimately weakened and destroyed precisely because of such contamination. (See "Is a War Ever Holy?" page 190, for further details.)

* Or And I had the two tablets of the covenant with me, one in each hand

sight and so provoking him to anger. ¹⁹I feared the anger and wrath of the LORD, for he was angry enough with you to destroy you. But again the LORD listened to me. ²⁰And the LORD was angry enough with Aaron to destroy him, but at that time I prayed for Aaron too. ²¹Also I took that sinful thing of yours, the calf you had made, and burned it in the fire. Then I crushed it and ground it to powder as fine as dust and threw the dust into a stream that flowed down the mountain.

²²You also made the LORD angry at Taberah, at Massah and at Kibroth Hattaavah.

²³And when the LORD sent you out from Kadesh Barnea, he said, "Go up and take possession of the land I have given you." But you rebelled against the command of the LORD your God. You did not trust him or obey him. ²⁴You have been rebellious against the LORD ever since I have known you.

²⁵I lay prostrate before the LORD those forty days and forty nights because the LORD had said he would destroy you. ²⁶I prayed to the LORD and said, "O Sovereign LORD, do not destroy your people, your own inheritance that you redeemed by your great power and brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. ²⁷Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Overlook the stubbornness of this people, their wickedness and their sin. ²⁸Otherwise, the country from which you brought us will say, 'Because the LORD was not able to take them into the land he had promised them, and because he hated them, he brought them out to put them to death in the desert.' ²⁹But they are your people, your inheritance that you brought out by your great power and your outstretched arm.

Tablets Like the First Ones

10 At that time the LORD said to me, "Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones and come up to me on the mountain. Also make a wooden chest." ²I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. Then you are to put them in the chest."

³So I made the ark out of acacia wood and chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I went up on the mountain with the two tablets in my hands. ⁴The LORD wrote on these tablets what he had written before, the Ten Commandments he had proclaimed to you on the mountain, out of the fire, on the day of the assembly. And the LORD gave them to me. ⁵Then I came back down the mountain and put the tablets in the ark I had made, as the LORD commanded me, and they are there now.

⁶(The Israelites traveled from the wells of the Jaakanites to Moserah. There Aaron died and was buried, and Eleazar his son succeeded him as priest. ⁷From there they traveled to Gudgodah and on to Jotbathah, a land with streams of water. ⁸At that time the LORD set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister and to pronounce blessings in his name, as they still do today. ⁹That is why the Levites have no share or inheritance

among their brothers, the LORD is their inheritance, as the LORD your God told them.)

¹⁰Now I had stayed on the mountain forty days and nights, as I did the first time, and the LORD listened to me at this time also. It was not his will to destroy you. ¹¹"Go," the LORD said to me, "and lead the people on their way, so that they may enter and possess the land that I swore to their fathers to give them."

Fear the LORD

¹²And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³and to observe the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?

¹⁴To the LORD your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. ¹⁵Yet the LORD set his affection on your forefathers and loved them, and he chose you, their descendants, above all the nations, as it is today. ¹⁶Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer. ¹⁷For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. ¹⁸He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. ¹⁹And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt. ²⁰Fear the LORD your God and serve him. Hold fast to him and take your oaths in his name. ²¹He is your praise; he is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes. ²²Your forefathers who went down into Egypt were seventy in all, and now the LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the sky.

Love and Obey the LORD

11 Love the LORD your God and keep his requirements, his decrees, his laws and his commands always. ²Remember today that your children were not the ones who saw and experienced the discipline of the LORD your God: his majesty, his mighty hand, his outstretched arm; ³the signs he performed and the things he did in the heart of Egypt, both to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his whole country; ⁴what he did to the Egyptian army, to its horses and chariots, how he overwhelmed them with the waters of the Red Sea^a as they were pursuing you, and how the LORD brought lasting ruin on them. ⁵It was not your children who saw what he did for you in the desert until you arrived at this place, ⁶and what he did to Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab the Reubenite, when the earth opened its mouth right in the middle of all Israel and swallowed them up with their households, their tents and every living thing that belonged to them. ⁷But it was your own eyes that saw all these great things the LORD has done.

⁸Observe therefore all the commands I am giv-

^a1 That is, an ark

^a4 Hebrew Yam Suph; that is, Sea of Reeds

and you today so that you may have the strength and take over the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess,⁹ and so that you may know that the LORD swore to your fathers to give to them and their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰The land you are taking over is not like the land of Egypt, which you have come, where you sowed seed and irrigated it by foot as in a garden. ¹¹But the land you are crossing the Jordan to take possession of is a land of mountains and valleys that drinks rain from heaven. ¹²It is a land that the LORD your God cares for; the eyes of the LORD your God are continually on it from the beginning of the year to its end.

¹³So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today—to love the LORD your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your mind—¹⁴then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil. ¹⁵I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied.

¹⁶Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them. ¹⁷Then the LORD's anger will burn against you, and he will shut the heavens so that it will not rain and the ground will yield no produce, and you will soon perish from the good land the LORD is giving you. ¹⁸Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds, tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ¹⁹Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ²⁰Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, ²¹so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land that the LORD swore to give your forefathers, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.

²²If you carefully observe all these commands I am giving you to follow—to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways and to hold fast to him—²³then the LORD will drive out all these nations before you, and you will dispossess nations larger and stronger than you. ²⁴Every place where you set your foot will be yours: Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the Euphrates River to the western sea.^a ²⁵No man

will be able to stand against you. The LORD your God, as he promised you, will put the terror and fear of you on the whole land, wherever you go.

²⁶See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse—²⁷the blessing if you obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today; ²⁸the curse if you disobey the commands of the LORD your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known. ²⁹When the LORD your God has brought you into the land you are entering to possess, you are to proclaim on Mount Gerizim the blessings, and on Mount Ebal the curses. ³⁰As you know, these mountains are across the Jordan, west of the road,^b toward the setting sun, near the great trees of Moreh, in the territory of those Canaanites living in the Arabah in the vicinity of Gilgal. ³¹You are about to cross the Jordan to enter and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you. When you have taken it over and are living there, ³²be sure that you obey all the decrees and laws I am setting before you today.

The One Place of Worship

12 These are the decrees and laws you must be careful to follow in the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess—as long as you live in the land. ²Destroy completely all the places on the high mountains and on the hills and under every spreading tree where the nations you are dispossessing worship their gods. ³Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and burn their Asherah poles in the fire; cut down the idols of their gods and wipe out their names from those places.

⁴You must not worship the LORD your God in their way. ⁵But you are to seek the place the LORD your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his Name there for his dwelling. To that place you must go; ⁶there bring your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, what you have vowed to give and your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. ⁷There,

12:2 A Book that Changed History

The Israelites did not fully follow these instructions on destroying the "high places," which were centers of idol worship. But hundreds of years after this scene with Moses, a dramatic event took place. In the midst of a temple renovation, workers came across an old scroll containing the Book of the Law. Discovery of the book had an electrifying effect on the nation. When King Josiah heard it read, he wept and tore his robes, then called for all the elders to hear the words. The event ushered in a sweeping spiritual revival that included a campaign against idolatry and the "high places." Many scholars believe Deuteronomy was the book that stirred a kingdom (see 2 Kings 22-23 for the full account).

11:18 Laws on the Head

Many commentators, both Jewish and Christian, read these sentences figuratively. But strict Jews take them literally. They wear handwritten portions of the Old Testament (including Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:18-20) in a small box strapped to their foreheads, and they also mount them in a box beside the door to their homes. The boxes are called "phylacteries." Jesus referred to the practice (Matthew 23:5), commenting that it could become a showy way of expressing spiritual pride.

^a At 15, the Mediterranean. ^b30 Or Jordan westward

in the presence of the LORD your God, you and your families shall eat and shall rejoice in everything you have put your hand to, because the LORD your God has blessed you.

⁸You are not to do as we do here today, everyone as he sees fit. ⁹Since you have not yet reached the resting place and the inheritance the LORD your God is giving you. ¹⁰But you will cross the Jordan and settle in the land the LORD your God is

giving you as an inheritance, and he will give you rest from all your enemies around you so that you will live in safety. ¹¹Then to the place the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name—there you are to bring everything I command you: your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, and all the choice possessions you have vowed to the LORD. ¹²And there rejoice before the LORD your God, you, your sons and

INSIGHT

Who Needs Laws?

Love makes the difference in this rulebook

Be careful to obey all these regulations I am giving you, so that it may always go well with you and your children after you, because you will be doing what is good and right in the eyes of the LORD your God. 12:28

Deuteronomy repeats verbatim many of the laws given in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. Yet it is far from a rulebook. A different spirit pervades it: the spirit of love. The rules in Deuteronomy read more like a guide on "How to Have a Successful Family" than "How to Repair a Car." To maintain a car you need only follow the rules. To maintain a close personal relationship you need more—you need love.

What Makes Deuteronomy Different

Deuteronomy focuses on motives: *why* people should obey laws. The preceding three books barely mentioned the love of God for his people, but Deuteronomy again and again refers to it (see 4:37, 7:7-8, 10:15, 23:5). The author portrays God as a father with his children, as a mother who gives them life, as an eagle hovering over its young.

In return, God asks for obedience based on love, not a sense of duty. At least 15 times in the book Moses tells the Israelites to love God and cling to him. God wants not just an outward conformity, but an obedience that comes from the heart. (Later, in summing up the Old Testament, Jesus quoted the first and greatest commandment from Deuteronomy: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" [Matthew 22:37; Deuteronomy 6:5].)

Restating the Negatives

Deuteronomy also hints at why laws are needed in the first place. Moses stated the principle directly, "The LORD commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the LORD our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today" (6:24). In other words, the laws were given for the Israelites' own good.

Most of the Ten Commandments were given in a negative form, "You shall not." But each of these negative statements protects a privileged relationship between two people or a person and God. For example, "Do not murder" could be restated, "Human life is sacred and has enormous worth. Respect such life as the image of God, and defend it." Other commandments protect marriage, private property, honesty, and the day set aside to worship God.

Never Forget

Moses could not have emphasized the laws more strongly. "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts," he said. "Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (6:6-7).

Moses wanted to make sure the Israelites would not possibly forget the laws. He instructed the priests to gather the whole nation together to hear them read aloud every seven years (31:9-13). Any king of Israel was required, as one of his first acts, to write out the laws by hand (17:18-19).

One last visual reminder served to impress the laws on the Israelites' minds. The priests wrote them in bold letters on stones covered with plaster. As the tribes marched across the Jordan River into the new land, they passed between the writing-covered stones (27:1-8).

No one in Israel could plead ignorance of what God required of them—his rules were carved in stone. As history would prove, obeying the rules was another matter.

Life Questions Read over the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5. How do they help us? What "rights" are they protecting?

your menservants and maidservants, from your towns, who have no inheritance of their own. ¹³Be careful not to burn your burnt offerings anywhere you wish, but only at the place the LORD will choose of your tribes, and there observe my command you.

¹⁴And you may slaughter your animals in your towns and eat as much of the meat as you wish, as if it were gazelle or deer, according to what the LORD your God gives you. Both the ceremonially unclean and the clean may eat it. ¹⁵But you must not eat the blood; pour it out on the ground like water. ¹⁷You must not eat in your own towns the firstborn of your grain and new wine and the firstborn of your herds and flocks, or anything you have vowed to give, or your freewill offerings or special gifts. ¹⁸Instead, you are to eat the presents of the LORD your God at the place the LORD your God will choose—you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, and the Levites from your towns—and rejoice before the LORD your God in everything you put your hand to. ¹⁹Be careful not to neglect the Levites as long as you live in your

land. When the LORD your God has enlarged your territory as he promised you, and you crave meat, say, "I would like some meat," then you may eat as much of it as you want. ²¹If the place where the LORD your God chooses to put his Name is too far away from you, you may slaughter animals from the herds and flocks the LORD has given you, as he has commanded you, and in your own towns you may eat as much of them as you want. ²²Eat them as you would gazelle or deer. Both the ceremonially unclean and the clean may eat. ²³But be sure you do not eat the blood, because the blood is the life, and you must not eat the life with the meat. ²⁴You must not eat the blood, pour it out on the ground like water. ²⁵Do not eat it, so that it may go well with you and your children after you, because you will be doing what is right in the eyes of the LORD.

²⁶But take your consecrated things and whatever you have vowed to give, and go to the place the LORD will choose. ²⁷Present your burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD your God, both the meat and the blood. The blood of your sacrifices must be poured beside the altar of the LORD your God, but you may eat the meat. ²⁸Be careful to observe these regulations I am giving you, so that everything may always go well with you and your children after you, because you will be doing what is good and right in the eyes of the LORD your God.

The LORD your God will cut off before you the nations you are about to invade and dispossess. But when you have driven them out and settled in their land, ³⁰and after they have been destroyed before you, be careful not to be ensnared by inquiring about their gods, saying, "How do these nations serve their gods? We will do the same." You must not worship the LORD your God in their way, because in worshipping their gods, they

do all kinds of detestable things the LORD hates. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods.

³²See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it.

Worshipping Other Gods

13 If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, ²and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, "Let us follow other gods" (gods you have not known) "and let us worship them," ³you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul. ⁴It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him. ⁵That prophet or dreamer must be put to death, because he preached rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery; he has tried to turn you from the way the LORD your God commanded you to follow. You must purge the evil from among you.

⁶If your very own brother, or your son or daughter, or the wife you love, or your closest friend secretly entices you, saying, "Let us go and worship other gods" (gods that neither you nor your fathers have known, ⁷gods of the peoples around you, whether near or far, from one end of the land to the other), ⁸do not yield to him or listen to him. Show him no pity. Do not spare him or shield him. ⁹You must certainly put him to death. Your hand must be the first in putting him to death, and then the hands of all the people. ¹⁰Stone him to death, because he tried to turn you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ¹¹Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and no one among you will do such an evil thing again.

¹²If you hear it said about one of the towns the LORD your God is giving you to live in ¹³that wicked men have arisen among you and have led the people of their town astray, saying, "Let us go and worship other gods" (gods you have not known), ¹⁴then you must inquire, probe and investigate it thoroughly. And if it is true and it has been proved that this detestable thing has been done among you, ¹⁵you must certainly put to the sword all who live in that town. Destroy it completely, both its people and its livestock. ¹⁶Gather all the plunder of the town into the middle of the public square and completely burn the town and all its plunder as a whole burnt offering to the LORD your God. It is to remain a ruin forever, never to be rebuilt. ¹⁷None of those condemned things shall be found in your hands, so that the LORD will turn from his fierce anger; he will show you mercy, have compassion on you, and increase your numbers, as he promised on oath to your forefathers, ¹⁸because you obey the LORD your God, keeping all his commands that I am giving

The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them.

DEUTERONOMY 14:1

you today and doing what is right in his eyes

Clean and Unclean Food

14 You are the children of the LORD your God. Do not cut yourselves or shave the front of your heads for the dead, ²for you are a people holy to the LORD your God. Out of all the peoples on the face of the earth, the LORD has chosen you to be his treasured possession.

³Do not eat any detestable thing. ⁴These are the animals you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, ⁵the deer, the gazelle, the roe deer, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope and the mountain sheep. ⁶You may eat any animal that has a split hoof divided in two and that chews the cud. ⁷However, of those that chew the cud or that have a split hoof completely divided you may not eat the camel, the rabbit or the coney. ⁸Although they chew the cud, they do not have a split hoof; they are ceremonially unclean for you. ⁹The pig is also unclean; although it has a split hoof, it does not chew the cud. You are not to eat their meat or touch their carcasses.

¹⁰Of all the creatures living in the water, you may eat any that has fins and scales. ¹¹But anything that does not have fins and scales you may not eat; for you it is unclean.

¹²You may eat any clean bird. ¹³But these you may not eat: the eagle, the vulture, the black vulture, ¹⁴the red kite, the black kite, any kind of falcon, ¹⁵any kind of raven, ¹⁶the horned owl, the screech owl, the gull, any kind of hawk, ¹⁷the little owl, the great owl, the white owl, ¹⁸the desert owl, the osprey, the cormorant, ¹⁹the stork, any kind of heron, the hoopoe and the bat.

²⁰All flying insects that swarm are unclean to you; do not eat them. ²¹But any winged creature that is clean you may eat.

²²Do not eat anything you find already dead. You may give it to an alien living in any of your towns, and he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner. But you are a people holy to the LORD your God.

Do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk.

Tithes

²³Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year. ²⁴Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the LORD your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name, so that you may learn to revere the LORD your God always. ²⁵But if that place is too distant and you have been blessed by the LORD your God and cannot carry your tithe (because the place where the LORD will choose to put his Name is so far away), ²⁶then exchange your tithe for silver, and take the silver with you and go to the place the LORD your God will choose. ²⁷Use the silver to buy whatever you like: cattle, sheep, wine or other fermented drink, or anything you wish. Then you and your household shall eat there in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice. ²⁸And do not neglect the Levites living in your towns, for they have no allotment or inheritance of their own.

²⁹At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns, ³⁰so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

The Year for Canceling Debts

15 At the end of every seven years you must cancel debts. ²This is how it is to be done: Every creditor shall cancel the loan he has made to his fellow Israelite. He shall not require payment from his fellow Israelite or brother, because the LORD's time for canceling debts has been proclaimed. ³You may require payment from a foreigner, but you must cancel any debt your brother owes you. ⁴However, there should be no poor among you, for in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess as your inheritance, he will richly bless you, ⁵if only you fully obey the LORD your God and are careful to follow all these commands I am giving you today. ⁶For the LORD your God will bless you as he has promised, and you will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. You will rule over many nations but none will rule over you.

⁷If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. ⁸Rather be openhanded and freely lend him whatever he needs. ⁹Be careful not to harbor this wicked thought: "The seventh year, the year for canceling debts, is near," so that you do not show ill will toward your needy brother and give him nothing. He may then appeal to the LORD against you, and you will be found guilty of sin. ¹⁰Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. ¹¹There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land.

Freeing Servants

¹²If a fellow Hebrew, a man or a woman, sells himself to you and serves you six years, in the seventh year you must let him go free. ¹³And

14:28-29 Tithe to the Poor

Each year the Israelites presented a tithe of produce as an offering to God. Every third year the tithe would be distributed to needy people. God accepted the gifts to these people as an offering to himself. The principle behind this practice was later powerfully expressed in a parable by Jesus (Matthew 25:31-46), who said, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."

* The precise identification of some of the birds and animals in this chapter is uncertain.

** That is, the hyrax or rock badger.

when you release him, do not send him away empty handed. ¹⁴Supply him liberally from your flock, your threshing floor and your winepress. Give to him as the LORD your God has blessed you. ¹⁵Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you. That is why I give you this command today.

¹⁶But if your servant says to you, "I do not want to leave you," because he loves you and your family and is well off with you, ¹⁷then take an awl and push it through his ear lobe into the door, and he will become your servant for life. Do the same for your maidservant.

Do not consider it a hardship to set your servant free, because his service to you these six years has been worth twice as much as that of a hired hand. And the LORD your God will bless you in everything you do.

The Firstborn Animals

¹⁸Set apart for the LORD your God every firstborn male of your herds and flocks. Do not put the firstborn of your oxen to work, and do not shear the firstborn of your sheep. ²⁰Each year you and your family are to eat them in the presence of the LORD your God at the place he will choose. ²¹If an animal has a defect, is lame or blind, or has any serious flaw, you must not sacrifice it to the LORD your God. ²²You are to eat it in your own towns. Both the ceremonially unclean and the clean may eat it, as if it were gazelle or deer. ²³But you must not eat the blood, pour it out on the ground like water.

Passover

16 Observe the month of Abib and celebrate the Passover of the LORD your God, because in the month of Abib he brought you out of Egypt by night. ²Sacrifice as the Passover to the LORD your God an animal from your flock or herd at the place the LORD will choose as a dwelling for his Name. ³Do not eat it with bread made with yeast, but for seven days eat unleavened bread, the bread of affliction, because you left Egypt in haste—so that all the days of your life you may remember the time of your departure from Egypt. ⁴Let no yeast be found in your possession in all your land for seven days. Do not let any of the meat you sacrifice on the evening of the first day remain until morning.

⁵You must not sacrifice the Passover in any town the LORD your God gives you except in the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name. There you must sacrifice the Passover in the evening, when the sun goes down, on the anniversary^a of your departure from Egypt. ⁷Roast it and eat it at the place the LORD your God will choose. Then in the morning return to your tents. ⁸For six days eat unleavened bread and on the seventh day hold an assembly to the LORD your God and do no work.

Feast of Weeks

Count off seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain. ¹⁰Then celebrate the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God by

giving a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings the LORD your God has given you. ¹¹And rejoice before the LORD your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name—you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, the Levites in your towns, and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows living among you. ¹²Remember that you were slaves in Egypt, and follow carefully these decrees.

Feast of Tabernacles

¹³Celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days after you have gathered the produce of your threshing floor and your winepress. ¹⁴Be joyful at your Feast—you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, and the Levites, the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns. ¹⁵For seven days celebrate the Feast to the LORD your God at the place the LORD will choose. For the LORD your God will bless you in all your harvest and in all the work of your hands, and your joy will be complete.

¹⁶Three times a year all your men must appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles. No man should appear before the LORD empty-handed. ¹⁷Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you.

Judges

¹⁸Appoint judges and officials for each of your tribes in every town the LORD your God is giving you, and they shall judge the people fairly. ¹⁹Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. ²⁰Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the LORD your God is giving you.

Worshipping Other Gods

²¹Do not set up any wooden Asherah pole^b beside the altar you build to the LORD your God, ²²and do not erect a sacred stone, for these the LORD your God hates.

17 Do not sacrifice to the LORD your God an ox or a sheep that has any defect or flaw in it, for that would be detestable to him.

²If a man or woman living among you in one of the towns the LORD gives you is found doing evil in the eyes of the LORD your God in violation of his covenant, ³and contrary to my command has worshiped other gods, bowing down to them or to the sun or the moon or the stars of the sky, ⁴and this has been brought to your attention, then you must investigate it thoroughly. If it is true and it has been proved that this detestable thing has been done in Israel, ⁵take the man or woman who has done this evil deed to your city gate and stone that person to death. ⁶On the testimony of two or three witnesses a man shall be put to death, but no one shall be put to death on the testimony of only one witness. ⁷The hands of the witnesses must be the first in putting him to death, and then the hands of

^a at the time of day

^b21 Or Do not plant any tree dedicated to Asherah

17:8-12 You must judge the evil from the good.

Law Courts

17:9-12 When you have your courts that are too far from you to bring whether banished or not, take them to the place the LORD your God has chosen. And if the judge who is at the place the LORD has chosen is not with you, you must not go to the judge. The LORD will direct you. Do not turn aside to the right or to the left. Do not accept a bribe for the judge or for the one who is listening there to the case. Do not be out to death. You must not be contemptuous.

The King

17:13-17 When the king and the LORD your God is with you, you have taken possession of it and you have taken possession of it. Let us set a king over us. The LORD your God chooses. He must not be from among your own brothers. Do not let the king be a foreigner. One who is not a brother. The king moreover must not acquire many wives or horses for himself or make himself a great army to get more of them. You are not to go back that way. The king must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate great amounts of silver and gold.

17:18-20 When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he must write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, which the priests who are Levites shall read to him. He shall read it all the days of his life. He shall not depart from it. He shall not depart from the words of this law. He shall not consider himself better than his brothers and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants shall reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel.

Offerings for Priests and Levites

18:1-4 The priests who are Levites—indeed the whole tribe of Levi—are to have no allotment of inheritance with Israel. They shall live on

the offerings made to the LORD by fire for that is their inheritance. They shall have no inheritance among their brothers. The LORD is their inheritance, as he promised them.

18:5-6 This is the share due the priests from the people who sacrifice a bull or a sheep: the shoulder, the jaws and the inner parts. You are to give them the firstfruits of your grain, new wine and oil, and the first wool from the shearing of your sheep. For the LORD your God has chosen them and their descendants out of all your tribes to stand and minister in the LORD's name always.

18:7-10 If a Levite moves from one of your towns anywhere in Israel where he is living, and comes in all earnestness to the place the LORD will choose, he may minister in the name of the LORD his God like all his fellow Levites who serve there in the presence of the LORD. He is to share equally in their benefits, even though he has received money from the sale of family possessions.

Detestable Practices

18:11-13 When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and because of these detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you. You must be blameless before the LORD your God.

The Prophet

18:14-16 The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery or divination. But as for you, the LORD your God has not permitted you to do so. The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him. For this is what you asked of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, "Let us not hear the voice of the LORD our God nor see this great fire any more, or we will die."

18:17-19 The LORD said to me: "What they say is good. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account. But a prophet who presumes

17:15 Prescription for a King

Until now, the Bible has not mentioned the possibility of an Israelite king. But here, long before the nation actually got a king, God lays down his prescription for a good one. The list of qualities hardly fits the normal image of a king—or the kind of person the Israelites' descendants usually got.

18:9 Detestable Ways

This brief paragraph gives a preview of some of the "detestable ways" the Israelites would encounter in the promised land. Child sacrifice was a common part of worship in Canaan. God had already stated that the Israelites' invasion was a form of punishment on the Canaanites for these kinds of practices (9:4).

in my name anything I have not commanded to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death." You say to yourselves, "How can we know what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord has not spoken. That he has spoken presumptuously. Do not be

Cities of Refuge

19 When the Lord your God has destroyed the nations whose land he is giving you, and you have driven them out and settled in their towns and houses, ²then set aside for yourself three cities centrally located in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess. ³Build these cities and divide into three parts the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, so that anyone who kills a man may flee there. ⁴This is the rule concerning the man who kills his neighbor and flees there to save his life—one who kills his neighbor unintentionally, without malice aforethought. For instance, a man may go into the forest with his neighbor to cut wood, and as he swings his axe to fell a tree the head may fly off and hit his neighbor and kill him. That man may flee to one of these cities and save his life. ⁶Otherwise, the avenger of blood might pursue him in a rage, and because the distance is too great, and kill him, though he is not deserving of death, for he did not hate his neighbor without malice aforethought. ⁷That is why I command you to set aside three cities.

⁸When the Lord enlarges your territory, as he promised to your forefathers, and gives you the whole land he promised them, ⁹because you have followed all these laws I command you, do not leave the Lord your God and to walk in his ways—then you are to set aside three more cities. ¹⁰Do this so that innocent blood will not be shed in your land, which the Lord your God is giving you as your inheritance, and so that you will not be guilty of bloodshed.

¹¹If a man hates his neighbor and lies in wait for him, assaults and kills him, and then flees to one of these cities, ¹²the elders of his town shall send for him, bring him back from the city, and hand him over to the avenger of blood to die. ¹³Show him no pity. You must purge from Israel the guilt of shedding innocent blood, so that it may be removed from you.

¹⁴Do not move your neighbor's boundary stone that your predecessors in the inheritance you receive in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess.

Witnesses

¹⁵One witness is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offense he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

¹⁶If a malicious witness takes the stand to accuse a man of a crime, ¹⁷the two men involved in the dispute must stand in the presence of the Lord

before the priests and the judges who are in office at the time. ¹⁸The judges must make a thorough investigation, and if the witness proves to be a liar, giving false testimony against his brother, ¹⁹then do to him as he intended to do to his brother. You must purge the evil from among you. ²⁰The rest of the people will hear of this and be afraid, and never again will such an evil thing be done among you. ²¹Show no pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Going to War

20 When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be afraid of them, because the Lord your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with you. ²When you are about to go into battle, the priest shall come forward and address the army. ³He shall say: "Hear, O Israel, today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not be terrified or give way to panic before them. ⁴For the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory."

⁵The officers shall say to the army: "Has anyone built a new house and not dedicated it? Let him go home, or he may die in battle and someone else may dedicate it. ⁶Has anyone planted a vineyard and not begun to enjoy it? Let him go home, or he may die in battle and someone else enjoy it. ⁷Has anyone become pledged to a woman and not married her? Let him go home, or he may die in battle and someone else marry her." ⁸Then the officers shall add, "Is any man afraid or fainthearted? Let him go home so that his brothers will not become disheartened too." ⁹When the officers have finished speaking to the army, they shall appoint commanders over it.

¹⁰When you march up to attack a city, make its people an offer of peace. ¹¹If they accept and open their gates, all the people in it shall be subject to forced labor and shall work for you. ¹²If they refuse to make peace and they engage you in battle, lay siege to that city. ¹³When the Lord your God delivers it into your hand, put to the sword all the men in it. ¹⁴As for the women, the children, the livestock and everything else in the city, you may take these as plunder for yourselves. And you may use the plunder the Lord your God gives you from your enemies. ¹⁵This is how you are to treat all the cities that are at a distance from you and do not belong to the nations nearby.

¹⁶However, in the cities of the nations the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, do not

20:5 Uncommon Military Rules

The Israelites gained a reputation as fierce and determined fighters. Yet Moses' instructions in this chapter defied normal military practice. Soldiers with new homes, new vineyards, and new fiancées—or even just plain scared soldiers—got exemptions from fighting. And before attacking any city, the army was to make a peace offer.

have done anything that troubles. I completely destroy them like the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Hivites, Jebusites and Jebusites—so the Lord your God will completely destroy them. You will not cut down any of the trees at the siege, because they are for food for your people and for the animals. You will not cut down any of the trees that are for food for your people and for the animals. You will not cut down any of the trees that are for food for your people and for the animals.

When you lay siege to a city for a long time, do not cut down any of the trees at the siege, because they are for food for your people and for the animals. You will not cut down any of the trees that are for food for your people and for the animals. You will not cut down any of the trees that are for food for your people and for the animals.

Attestment for an Unsolved Murder

21 If you find a slain person lying in a field in the land of the Lord your God is giving you to possess, and you do not know who has killed him, your elders and judges will go out and measure the distance from the body to the neighboring towns. The town nearest the body shall be responsible, for it has never been worked and has no well, nor has it been sown or planted and where no well has been dug. There in the valley they shall seek for the murderer. The priests the Levites shall stand forward for the Lord your God and pronounce them to be innocent and to pronounce a curse in the name of the Lord and to curse all those of curse and accursed. When all the elders of the town nearest the body shall wash their hands over the never working well was broken in the valley, and they shall declare, Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did our eyes see it. Then the Lord your God will acquit your people Israel, which you have redeemed. O Lord, and do not turn back before guilt or the blood of an innocent man. And the bloodshed will be atoned for, and you will purge from yourselves the guilt of shedding innocent blood, since you have done what is right in the eyes of the Lord.

Marrying a Captive Woman

When you go to war against your enemies and the Lord your God delivers them into your hands and you take captives, if you notice among the captives a beautiful woman and are attracted to her, you may take her as your wife. Bring her to your home and have her shave her head, trim her nails, and put aside the clothes she was wearing when captured. After she has lived in your house and mourned her father and mother for a full month, then you may go to her and be her husband and she shall be your wife. If you are not pleased with her, let her go wherever she wishes. You must not sell her or treat her as a slave, since you have dishonored her.

The Right of the Firstborn

If a man has two wives, and he loves one but not the other, and both bear him sons but the firstborn is the son of the wife he does not love,

when he wills his property to his sons, he must not give the rights of the firstborn to the son of the wife he loves in preference to his actual firstborn, the son of the wife he does not love. He must acknowledge the son of his unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double share of all he has. That son is the first sign of his father's strength. The right of the firstborn belongs to him.

A Rebellious Son

If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him, his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town. They shall say to the elders, This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a prodigal and a drunkard. Then all the men of his town shall stone him to death. You must purge the evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and be afraid.

Various Laws

If a man guilty of a capital offense is put to death and his body is hung on a tree, you must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse. You must not desecrate the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance.

22 If you see your brother's ox or sheep straying, do not ignore it but be sure to take it back to him. If the brother does not live near you or if you do not know who he is, take it home with you and keep it until he comes looking for it. Then give it back to him. Do the same if you find your brother's donkey or his cloak or anything he loses. Do not ignore it.

If you see your brother's donkey or his ox fallen on the road, do not ignore it. Help him get it to its feet.

A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing, for the Lord your God detests anyone who does this.

If you come across a bird's nest beside the road, either in a tree or on the ground, and the mother is sitting on the young or on the eggs, do not take the mother with the young. You may take the young, but be sure to let the mother go, so that it may go well with you and you may have a long life.

When you build a new house, make a parapet around your roof so that you may not bring the

22:1 Respect for Nature

The laws in Deuteronomy demonstrate God's concern that nature be treated with respect. In his instructions on war, Moses ordered those who laid siege to a city to choose carefully which trees to cut down (20:19). God's concern for the weak and helpless extended into the animal kingdom, for the law protected oxen, donkeys, and even birds (22:1-7).

21:1 The Hebrew text refers to the atonement given over of things or persons to the Lord, often by totally destroying them.
22:1 On some it is not clear why the law must refer to the benefit of man.

bloodshed on your house if someone falls on it.⁹

10 Do not plant two kinds of seed in your vineyard; you do, not only the crops you plant but the fruit of the vineyard will be defiled.¹⁰

11 Do not plow with an ox and a donkey yoked

together.¹¹ Do not wear clothes of wool and linen woven

together.¹² Make tassels on the four corners of the cloak

Marriage Violations

13 If a man takes a wife and, after lying with her, she hates her¹⁴ and slanders her and gives her a bad name, saying, "I married this woman, but when I approached her, I did not find proof of her virginity,"¹⁵ then the girl's father and mother shall bring proof that she was a virgin to the town elders at the gate.¹⁶ The girl's father will say to the elders, "I gave my daughter in marriage to this man, but he dislikes her."¹⁷ Now he has slandered her and said, "I did not find your daughter to be a virgin." But here is the proof of my daughter's virginity." Then her parents shall display the cloth before the elders of the town.¹⁸ And the elders shall take the man and punish him.¹⁹ They shall fine him a hundred shekels of silver²⁰ and give them to the girl's father, because this man has given an Israelite virgin a bad name. She shall continue to be his wife, he must not divorce her as long as he lives.

21 If, however, the charge is true and no proof of the girl's virginity can be found,²¹ she shall be brought to the door of her father's house and there the men of her town shall stone her to death. She has done a disgraceful thing in Israel by being promiscuous while still in her father's house. You must purge the evil from among you.

22 If a man is found sleeping with another man's wife, both the man who slept with her and the woman must die. You must purge the evil from Israel.

23 If a man happens to meet in a town a virgin pledged to be married and he sleeps with her,²⁴ you shall take both of them to the gate of that town and stone them to death—the girl because she was in a town and did not scream for help, and the man because he violated another man's wife. You must purge the evil from among you.

25 But if out in the country a man happens to meet a girl pledged to be married and rapes her, only the man who has done this shall die.²⁶ Do nothing to the girl; she has committed no sin deserving death. This case is like that of someone who attacks and murders his neighbor,²⁷ for the man found the girl out in the country, and though the betrothed girl screamed, there was no one to rescue her.

28 If a man happens to meet a virgin who is not pledged to be married and rapes her and they are discovered,²⁹ he shall pay the girl's father fifty shekels of silver.³⁰ He must marry the girl, for he has violated her. He can never divorce her as long as he lives.

30 A man is not to marry his father's wife; he must not dishonor his father's bed.

Exclusion From the Assembly

23 No one who has been emasculated by crushing or cutting may enter the assembly of the LORD.

24 No one born of a forbidden marriage⁴ nor any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD, even down to the tenth generation.

25 No Ammonite or Moabite or any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD, even down to the tenth generation.⁵ For they did not come to meet you with bread and water on your way when you came out of Egypt, and they hired Balaam son of Beor from Pethor in Aram Naharaim⁶ to pronounce a curse on you.⁷ However, the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam but turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you.⁸ Do not seek a treaty of friendship with them as long as you live.

26 Do not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother. Do not abhor an Egyptian, because you lived as an alien in his country.⁹ The third generation of children born to them may enter the assembly of the LORD.

Uncleanness in the Camp

27 When you are encamped against your enemies, keep away from everything impure.¹⁰ If one of your men is unclean because of a nocturnal emission, he is to go outside the camp and stay there.¹¹ But as evening approaches he is to wash himself, and at sunset he may return to the camp.

28 Designate a place outside the camp where you can go to relieve yourself.¹² As part of your equipment have something to dig with, and when you relieve yourself, dig a hole and cover up your excrement.¹³ For the LORD your God moves about in your camp to protect you and to deliver your enemies to you. Your camp must be holy, so that he will not see among you anything indecent and turn away from you.

Miscellaneous Laws

29 If a slave has taken refuge with you, do not hand him over to his master.¹⁴ Let him live among you wherever he likes and in whatever town he chooses. Do not oppress him.

30 No Israelite man or woman is to become a shrine prostitute.¹⁵ You must not bring the earnings of a female prostitute or of a male prostitute¹⁶ into the house of the LORD your God to pay any vow, because the LORD your God detests them both.

31 Do not charge your brother interest, whether on money or food or anything else that may earn interest.¹⁷ You may charge a foreigner interest, but not a brother Israelite, so that the LORD your God may bless you in everything you put your hand to in the land you are entering to possess.

32 If you make a vow to the LORD your God, do not be slow to pay it, for the LORD your God will

⁹ Or be forfeited to the sanctuary (kilogram)

¹⁹ That is, about 2 1/2 pounds (about 1 kilogram)

⁴² Or one of illegitimate birth

⁴ That is, Northwest Mesopotamia

²⁹ That is, about 1 1/4 pounds (about 0.6

¹⁸ Hebrew of a dog

certainly demand it of you and you will be guilty of sin. ²²But if you refrain from making a vow, you will not be guilty. ²³Whatever your lips utter you must be sure to do, because you made your vow freely to the Lord your God with your own mouth.

²⁴If you enter your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat all the grapes you want, but do not put any in your basket. ²⁵If you enter your neighbor's grainfield, you may pick kernels with your hands, but you must not put a sickle to his standing grain.

24 If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again, for she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the Lord. Do not bring sin upon the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance.

If a man has recently married, he must not be sent away or have any other duty laid on him. For this you, he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married.

Do not take a pair of millstones—not even the lesser one—as security for a debt, because that would be taking a man's livelihood as security.

If a man is caught kidnapping one of his brother Israelites and treats him as a slave or sells him, the kidnapper must die. You must purge the evil from among you.

In cases of leprosy diseases be very careful to do exactly as the priests, who are Levites, instruct you. You must follow carefully what I have commanded them. Remember what the Lord your God did to Miriam along the way after you came out of Egypt.

When you make a loan of any kind to your neighbor, do not go into his house to get what he is owing you as a pledge. Stay outside and let the man whom you are making the loan bring the pledge down to you. If the man is poor, do not go to sleep with his pledge in your possession. Return his cloak to him by sunset so that he may sleep in it. Then he will thank you, and it will be regarded as

a righteous act in the sight of the Lord your God.

¹⁴Do not take advantage of a hired man who is poor and needy, whether he is a brother Israelite or an alien living in one of your towns. ¹⁵Pay him his wages each day before sunset, because he is poor and is counting on it. Otherwise he may cry to the Lord against you, and you will be guilty of sin.

¹⁶Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sin.

¹⁷Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge.

¹⁸Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this.

¹⁹When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. ²⁰When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. ²¹When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. ²²Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. That is why I command you to do this.

25 When men have a dispute, they are to take it to court and the judges will decide the case, acquitting the innocent and condemning the guilty. If the guilty man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall make him lie down and have him flogged in his presence with the number of lashes his crime deserves, but he must not give him more than forty lashes. If he is flogged more than that, your brother will be degraded in your eyes.

⁴Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.

If brothers are living together and one of them dies without a son, his widow must not marry outside the family. Her husband's brother shall take her and marry her and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her. The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel.

However, if a man does not want to marry his brother's wife, she shall go to the elders at the town gate and say, "My husband's brother refuses to carry on his brother's name in Israel. He will not fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to me." Then the elders of his town shall summon him and talk

24-6 Respect People, Not Money

Old Testament laws contained many provisions to protect people from exploitation. Israelites could not charge each other interest for loans (Exodus 22:25). And Deuteronomy set limits on the "collateral" or pledge that secured a loan. Here, the lender could not accept a millstone, for that would threaten the debtor's livelihood. Verses 10-13 show further safeguards. The debtor was allowed to keep everything necessary for living. And the lender could not even enter the debtor's house to get his pledge.

24:19 Don't Forget the Poor

Chapter 24 contains some of the regulations expressly designed to protect the poor. One, called gleaning, is still practiced today in a modern form. Certain religious organizations in America contract with farmers to harvest their "wasted" or abandoned crops in order to feed the poor. God's laws built a concern for the poor into the Israelites' daily routine.

1. The Hebrew word was used by various churches applying the law, but not necessarily literally.

to him. If he persists in saying, "I do not want to marry her,"⁹ his brother's widow shall go up to him in the presence of the elders, take off one of his sandals, spit in his face and say, "This is what is done to the man who will not build up his brother's family line."¹⁰ That man's line shall be known in Israel as The Family of the Unsandaled.

If two men are fighting and the wife of one of them comes to rescue her husband from his assailant, and she reaches out and seizes him by his private parts,¹² you shall cut off her hand. Show her no pity.

Do not have two differing weights in your bag—one heavy, one light.¹⁴ Do not have two differing measures in your house—one large, one small.¹⁵ You must have accurate and honest weights and measures, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.¹⁶ For the LORD your God detests anyone who does these things, anyone who deals dishonestly.

¹⁷Remember what the Amalekites did to you along the way when you came out of Egypt.¹⁸ When you were weary and worn out, they met you on your journey and cut off all who were lagging behind, they had no fear of God.¹⁹ When the LORD your God gives you rest from all the enemies around you in the land he is giving you to possess as an inheritance, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget!

Firstfruits and Tithes

26 When you have entered the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance and have taken possession of it and settled in it, take some of the firstfruits of all that you produce from the soil of the land the LORD your God is giving you and put them in a basket. Then go to the place the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name³ and say to the priest in office at the time, "I declare today to the LORD your God that I have come to the land the LORD swore to our forefathers to give us."⁴ The priest shall take the basket from your hands and set it down in front of the altar of the LORD your God.⁵ Then you shall declare before the LORD your God: "My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great nation, powerful and numerous.⁶ But the Egyptians mistreated us and made us suffer, putting us to hard labor.⁷ Then we cried out to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our misery, toil and oppression.⁸ So the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with miraculous signs and wonders.⁹ He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey;¹⁰ and now I bring the firstfruits of the soil that you, O LORD, have given me." Place the basket before the LORD your God and bow down before him.¹¹ And you and the Levites and the aliens among you shall rejoice in all the good things the LORD your God has given to you and your household.

¹⁷ Traditionally peace offerings

¹²When you have finished setting aside a tenth of all your produce in the third year, the year of the tithe, you shall give it to the Levite, the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied.¹³ Then say to the LORD your God: "I have removed from my house the sacred portion and have given it to the Levite, the alien, the fatherless and the widow, according to all you commanded. I have not turned aside from your commands nor have I forgotten any of them.¹⁴ I have not eaten any of the sacred portion while I was in mourning, nor have I removed any of it while I was unclean, nor have I offered any of it to the dead. I have obeyed the LORD my God; I have done everything you commanded me.¹⁵ Look down from heaven, your holy dwelling place, and bless your people Israel and the land you have given us as you promised on oath to our forefathers, a land flowing with milk and honey."

Follow the LORD's Commands

¹⁶The LORD your God commands you this day to follow these decrees and laws; carefully observe them with all your heart and with all your soul.¹⁷ You have declared this day that the LORD is your God and that you will walk in his ways, that you will keep his decrees, commands and laws, and that you will obey him.¹⁸ And the LORD has declared this day that you are his people, his treasured possession as he promised, and that you are to keep all his commands.¹⁹ He has declared that he will set you in praise, fame and honor high above all the nations he has made and that you will be a people holy to the LORD your God, as he promised.

The Altar on Mount Ebal

27 Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people: "Keep all these commands that I give you today.² When you have crossed the Jordan into the land the LORD your God is giving you, set up some large stones and coat them with plaster.³ Write on them all the words of this law when you have crossed over to enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you.⁴ And when you have crossed the Jordan, set up these stones on Mount Ebal, as I command you today, and coat them with plaster.⁵ Build there an altar to the LORD your God, an altar of stones. Do not use any iron tool upon them.⁶ Build the altar of the LORD your God with fieldstones and offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God.⁷ Sacrifice fellowship offerings^a there, eating them and rejoicing in the presence of the LORD your God.⁸ And you shall write very clearly all the words of this law on these stones you have set up."

Curses From Mount Ebal

⁹Then Moses and the priests, who are Levites, said to all Israel, "Be silent, O Israel, and listen! You have now become the people of the LORD your God.¹⁰ Obey the LORD your God and follow his commands and decrees that I give you today."

11On the same day Moses commanded the people

12When you have crossed the Jordan, these tribes shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin 13And these tribes shall stand on Mount Ebal to pronounce curses: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali.

14The Levites shall recite to all the people of Israel in a loud voice:

15"Cursed is the man who carves an image or casts an idol—a thing detestable to the LORD, the work of the craftsman's hands—and sets it up in secret."

Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

27:12 A Task for Joshua

Joshua carried out Moses' instructions for these blessings and curses, as recorded in Joshua 8:31-35. Mount Ebal had special significance for the Israelites, who believed that Abraham first worshiped God near here after receiving the original promise of the land (Genesis 15).

16"Cursed is the man who dishonors his father or his mother."

Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

17"Cursed is the man who moves his neighbor's boundary stone."

Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

18"Cursed is the man who leads the blind astray on the road."

Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

19"Cursed is the man who withholds justice from the alien, the fatherless or the widow."

Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

20"Cursed is the man who sleeps with his father's wife, for he dishonors his father's bed."

Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

21"Cursed is the man who has sexual relations with any animal."

Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

22"Cursed is the man who sleeps with his sister, the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother."

Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

23"Cursed is the man who sleeps with his mother-in-law."

INSIGHT

A Scent of Doom

All were jubilant, except one man

Because you did not serve the LORD your God joyfully and gladly in the time of prosperity, therefore in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and dire poverty, you will serve the enemies the LORD sends against you. 28:47-48

Old habits die hard. This is the lesson of Deuteronomy. The story of a prisoner illustrates it. This man served 33 years in prison before he was released. He was 58 years old when he stepped out of jail, having served three terms for robbery. His hair had turned gray, and most of his friends had died.

For a while this old man tried to live a life that was within the law. But one afternoon, while watching a cinema about a train robbery, he was inspired to go back to his life of crime. He masterminded six train robberies in a row, stopping the trains, holding up the passengers, and running off with their money.

This prisoner, having served three different sentences in jail, had three different opportunities to start a new life without crime. Each time, however, he failed and went back to a life of crime. He is not alone. Perhaps you know of someone who has vowed to never again lie or cheat or drink or commit adultery, only to fall back into the old patterns of sin.

The last chapters of Deuteronomy show the Israelites facing the same situation. Having been set free from bondage in Egypt by God's miraculous deliverance, one would expect them to trust him. They failed. That failure caused them to spend 40 years wandering in the wilderness. These four decades were like an imprisonment or probation period. Now, finally, the long-awaited release has come. They can enter the promised land.

Moses Pulls out the Stops

For 40 years Moses had led the cranky assortment of tribes. He had listened to their grumbling, endured their gossip, and survived their insurrections. Now he had one last chance to warn them not to repeat their ways.

You cannot read the last chapters of Deuteronomy without detecting a doleful sense of hopelessness in Moses' words. The Israelites, settling down into a life of quiet obedience was not likely. They had failed far too often, they were doomed to fail again.

Moses pulled out all the stops. He orchestrated a dramatic object lesson that would live in their

the people shall say "Amen!"
 is the man who kills his neighbor
 the people shall say "Amen!"
 is the man who accepts a bribe to
 kill a person
 the people shall say "Amen!"
 is the man who does not uphold
 this law by carrying them out."
 the people shall say "Amen!"

Blessings for Obedience

28 If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you, the Lord your God will set you high above all nations on earth. All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God:

- 1 You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country.
- 2 The fruit of your womb will be blessed.
- 3 The crops of your land and the young of your livestock—the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks—

4 Your basket and your kneading trough will be blessed.

5 You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out.

6 The Lord will grant that the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you. They will come at you from one direction but flee from you in seven.

7 The Lord will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The Lord your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.

8 The Lord will establish you as his holy people, as he promised you on oath, if you keep the commands of the Lord your God and walk in his ways.

9 Then all the peoples on earth will see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they will fear you. 10 The Lord will grant you abundant prosperity—in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your ground—in the land he swore to your forefathers to give you.

11 The Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow

nothing forever. It actually took place after Moses' death, as recorded in Joshua 8:30-35. Representatives from all the tribes climbed two mountains with a narrow valley in between. These designated speakers shouted out curses and blessings on the Israelites (see 11:26-32, 27-28). As they entered the new land, their ears rang with the dissonance of wonderful blessings and horrific curses.

Future Terrors

Moses starkly summarized the future of the Jewish race. They would, he said, have "an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart. You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life. In the morning you will say, 'If only it were evening'—and in the evening, 'If only it were morning!'—because of the terror that will fill your hearts and the sights that your eyes will see" (28:65-67). His descriptions of their future are unmatched for their horror.

Just in case the Israelites didn't get the message, Moses taught them a song given him by God (chapter 32). It became a kind of national anthem, memorized by everyone and sung as they marched into Canaan. But the song is like no other national anthem. It has virtually no words of encouragement or hope, only doom.

Moses knew that even the promised land would not change his people's ingrained habits of disobeying God. They would fail in the promised land, just as they had failed in the wilderness. He concluded his farewell speech to the people with these words, "They are not just idle words for you—they are your life" (32:47). And then on that same day he ascended a mountain to die. He had been forbidden by God to cross into Canaan because of his own disobedience.

This sad final scene may have made the strongest impression of all. No one could get away with rebellion against God—not even Moses, "whom the Lord knew face to face" (34:10).

Life Questions Why do you think the Bible includes accounts of big failures like this? Have you ever experienced a repeated failure: a sin or problem that keeps returning, no matter what you do?

from none. ¹⁴The LORD will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the LORD your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom. ¹⁵Do not turn aside from any of the commands I give you today, to the right or to the left, following other gods and serving them.

Curses for Disobedience

¹⁶However, if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you.

¹⁶You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the country.

¹⁷Your basket and your kneading trough will be cursed.

¹⁸The fruit of your womb will be cursed, and the crops of your land, and the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks.

¹⁹You will be cursed when you come in and cursed when you go out.

²⁰The LORD will send on you curses, confusion and rebuke in everything you put your hand to, until you are destroyed and come to sudden ruin because of the evil you have done in forsaking

The LORD will plague you with diseases until he has destroyed you from the land you are entering to possess. ²²The LORD will strike you with wasting disease, with fever and inflammation, with scorching heat and drought, with blight and mildew, which will plague you until you perish. ²³The sky over your head will be bronze, the ground beneath you iron. ²⁴The LORD will turn the rain of your country into dust and powder; it will come down from the skies until you are destroyed.

²⁵The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. You will come at them from one direction but flee from them in seven, and you will become a thing of horror to all the kingdoms on earth. ²⁶Your carcasses will be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and there will be no one to frighten them away. ²⁷The LORD will afflict you with the boils of Egypt and with tumors, festering sores and the itch, from which you can-

not be cured. ²⁸The LORD will afflict you with madness, blindness and confusion of mind. ²⁹At midday you will grope about like a blind man in the dark. You will be unsuccessful in everything you do, day after day you will be oppressed and robbed, with no one to rescue you.

³⁰You will be pledged to be married to a woman, but another will take her and ravish her. You will build a house, but you will not live in it. You will plant a vineyard, but you will not even begin to enjoy its fruit. ³¹Your ox will be slaughtered before your eyes, but you will eat none of it. Your donkey will be forcibly taken from you and will not be returned. Your sheep will be given to your enemies, and no one will rescue them. ³²Your sons and daughters will be given to another nation, and you will wear out your eyes watching for them day after day, powerless to lift a hand. ³³A people that you do not know will eat what your land and labor produce, and you will have nothing but cruel oppression all your days. ³⁴The sights you see will drive you mad. ³⁵The LORD will afflict your knees and legs with painful boils that cannot be cured, spreading from the soles of your feet to the top of your head.

³⁶The LORD will drive you and the king you set over you to a nation unknown to you or your fathers. There you will worship other gods, gods of wood and stone. ³⁷You will become a thing of horror and an object of scorn and ridicule to all the nations where the LORD will drive you.

³⁸You will sow much seed in the field but you will harvest little, because locusts will devour it. ³⁹You will plant vineyards and cultivate them but you will not drink the wine or gather the grapes, because worms will eat them. ⁴⁰You will have olive trees throughout your country but you will not use the oil, because the olives will drop off. ⁴¹You will have sons and daughters but you will not keep them, because they will go into captivity. ⁴²Swarms of locusts will take over all your trees and the crops of your land.

⁴³The alien who lives among you will rise above you higher and higher, but you will sink lower and lower. ⁴⁴He will lend to you, but you will not lend to him. He will be the head, but you will be the tail.

⁴⁵All these curses will come upon you. They will pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the LORD your God and observe the commands and decrees he gave you. ⁴⁶They will be a sign and a wonder to you and your descendants forever. ⁴⁷Because you did not serve the LORD your God joyfully and gladly in the time of prosperity, ⁴⁸therefore in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and dire poverty, you will serve the enemies the LORD sends against you. He will put an iron yoke on your neck until he has destroyed you.

⁴⁹The LORD will bring a nation against you from far away, from the ends of the earth, like an eagle swooping down, a nation whose language you will not understand, ⁵⁰a fierce-looking nation without respect for the old or pity for the young.

28:20 Scattered Abroad

Moses warned that, if the Israelites failed to obey God's law, they would be uprooted from the new land and scattered all over the earth. "You will become a thing of horror and an object of scorn and ridicule to all the nations where the LORD will drive you," Moses warned (verse 37). At least three times in history this kind of dispersion of Jews (called Diaspora) took place on a massive scale. Assyria, Babylon, and finally the Roman Empire invaded the homeland of the Jews and scattered them far abroad.

Renewal of the Covenant

29 These are the terms of the covenant the LORD commanded Moses to make with the Israelites in Moab, in addition to the covenant he had made with them at Horeb.

²Moses summoned all the Israelites and said to them:

Your eyes have seen all that the LORD did in Egypt to Pharaoh, to all his officials and to all his land. ³With your own eyes you saw those great trials, those miraculous signs and great wonders. ⁴But to this day the LORD has not given you a mind that understands or eyes that see or ears that hear. ⁵During the forty years that I led you through the desert, your clothes did not wear out, nor did the sandals on your feet. ⁶You ate no bread and drank no wine or other fermented drink. I did this so that you might know that I am the LORD your God.

⁷When you reached this place, Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan came out to fight against us, but we defeated them. ⁸We took their land and gave it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

⁹Carefully follow the terms of this covenant, so that you may prosper in everything you do. ¹⁰All of you are standing today in the presence of the LORD your God—your leaders and chief men, your elders and officials, and all the other men of Israel, ¹¹together with your children and your wives, and the aliens living in your camps who chop your wood and carry your water. ¹²You are standing here in order to enter into a covenant with the LORD your God, a covenant the LORD is making with you this day and sealing with an oath, ¹³to confirm you this day as his people, that he may be your God as he promised you and as he swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. ¹⁴I am making this covenant, with its oath, not only with you ¹⁵who are standing here with us today in the presence of the LORD our God but also with those who are not here today.

¹⁶You yourselves know how we lived in Egypt and how we passed through the countries on the way here. ¹⁷You saw among them their detestable images and idols of wood and stone, of silver and gold. ¹⁸Make sure there is no man or woman, clan or tribe among you today whose heart turns away from the LORD our God to go and worship the gods of those nations; make sure there is no root among you that produces such bitter poison.

¹⁹When such a person hears the words of this oath, he invokes a blessing on himself and therefore thinks, "I will be safe, even though I persist in going my own way." This will bring disaster on

29:5 Miracles in the Desert

The Sinai peninsula was a harsh place, and the Bible records the Israelites' problems with food and water supplies. But, as these verses 5 and 6 show, God cared for his people there, giving them daily food and drink and even making sure their clothes did not wear out.

they will devour the young of your livestock and of your land until you are destroyed. ⁵¹I will give you no grain, new wine or oil, nor will I give you herds or lambs of your flocks to be returned. ⁵²They will lay siege to all the towns of your land until the high fortified cities, where you trust fall down. They will be cutting off cities throughout the land the LORD is giving you.

⁵³Because of the suffering that your enemy will inflict on you during the siege, you will eat the flesh of your own people—the flesh of the sons and daughters whom your God has given you. ⁵⁴Even the most sensitive and sensitive man among you will not have compassion on his own brother or the wife of his surviving children. ⁵⁵And he will not spare one of them any of the flesh of his children he is eating. It will be all he has left because of the suffering your enemy will inflict on you during the siege of all your cities. ⁵⁶The most gentle and sensitive woman among you—so sensitive and gentle that she would not venture to touch the sole of her foot—will begrudge the breast she loves and her own son or daughter, her afterbirth from her womb and the child she bears. For she intends to eat them secretly during the siege and in the distress that your enemy will inflict on you in your cities.

⁵⁷So do not carefully follow all the words of the law which are written in this book, and do not serve this glorious and awesome name—the LORD your God. ⁵⁸For the LORD will send fearful plagues on you and your descendants, harsh and prolonged disasters, and severe and lingering illnesses. ⁵⁹He will bring upon you all the diseases of Egypt that you dreaded, and they will cling to you. ⁶⁰The LORD will also bring on you every kind of sickness and disaster not recorded in this Book of the Law, until you are destroyed. ⁶¹You who were as numerous as the stars in the sky will be left but few in number, because you did not obey the LORD your God. ⁶²Just as it pleased the LORD to make you prosper and increase in number, so it will please him to ruin and destroy you. You will be uprooted from the land you are entering to possess.

⁶³Then the LORD will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other gods—gods of wood and stone which neither you nor your fathers have known. ⁶⁴Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your foot. There the LORD will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart. ⁶⁵You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life. ⁶⁶In the morning you will say, "If only it were evening!" and in the evening, "If only it were morning!"—because of the terror that will fill your hearts and the sights that your eyes will see. ⁶⁷The LORD will send you back in ships to Egypt on a journey I said you should never make again. There you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy you.

DEUTERONOMY 29:20

the watered land as well as the dry.²⁰ The LORD will never be willing to forgive him; his wrath and zeal will burn against that man. All the curses written in this book will fall upon him and the LORD will blot out his name from under heaven.²¹ The LORD will single him out from all the tribes of Israel for disaster, according to all the curses of the covenant written in this Book of the Law.

²²Your children who follow you in later generations and foreigners who come from distant lands will see the calamities that have fallen on the land and the diseases with which the LORD has afflicted it. The whole land will be a burning waste of salt and sulfur—nothing planted, nothing sprouting, no vegetation growing on it. It will be like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the LORD overthrew in fierce anger.²³ All the nations will ask: "Why has the LORD done this to this land? Why this fierce, burning anger?"

And the answer will be: "It is because this people abandoned the covenant of the LORD, the God of their fathers, the covenant he made with them when he brought them out of Egypt.²⁴ They went off and worshiped other gods and bowed down to them—gods they did not know, gods he had not given them.²⁵ Therefore the LORD's anger burned against this land, so that he brought on it all the curses written in this book.²⁶ In furious anger and in great wrath the LORD uprooted them from their land and thrust them into another land, as this now

is. The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

Prosperity After Turning to the LORD

30 When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come upon you and you take them to heart wherever the LORD your God disperses you among the nations,² and when you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today,³ then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes⁴ and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you.⁵ Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the LORD your God will gather you and bring you back.⁶ He will bring you to the land that belonged to your fathers, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers.⁷ The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.⁸ The LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies who hate and persecute you.⁹ You will again obey the LORD and follow all his commands I am giving you today.¹⁰ Then the LORD your God will make you most prosperous in all the work of your hands and in the fruit of your womb, the young of your

livestock and the crops of your land. The LORD will again delight in you and make you prosperous just as he delighted in your fathers,¹¹ but you obey the LORD your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

The Offer of Life or Death

¹²Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach.¹³ It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, "Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?"¹⁴ Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, "Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?"¹⁵ No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.

¹⁶See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction.¹⁷ For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.

¹⁸But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them,¹⁹ I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.

²⁰This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live,²¹ and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Joshua to Succeed Moses

31 Then Moses went out and spoke these words to all Israel:² "I am now a hundred and twenty years old and I am no longer able to lead you. The LORD has said to me, 'You shall not cross the Jordan.'³ The LORD your God himself will cross over ahead of you. He will destroy these nations before you, and you will take possession of their land. Joshua also will cross over ahead of you, as the LORD said.⁴ And the LORD will do to them what he did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, whom he destroyed along with their land.⁵ The LORD will deliver them to you, and you must do to them all that I have commanded you.⁶ Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."

⁷Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land that the LORD swore to their forefathers to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance."⁸ The LORD himself goes before

¹⁹ Or way, in order to add drunkenness to thirst

²³ Or will bring you back from captivity

in you, he will never leave you
You need be afraid, do not be doub-

The Reading of the Law

When this law and gave it to
Levi, who carried the ark of
the presence of the Lord, and to all the elders of
the tribe of Manasse commanded them "At the
Israel. Then Moses commanded them "At the
end of every seven years, in the year for canceling
debts, during the Feast of Tabernacles, when all
appear before the Lord your God at
his house, you shall read this law
to their hearing. Assemble the
men and children, and the aliens
in your towns—so they can listen and learn
from your God and follow carefully all
of this law. Their children, who do not
know, must hear it and learn to fear the
Lord as long as you live in the land you
are crossing the Jordan to possess."

Israel's Rebellion Predicted

The Lord said to Moses, "Now the day of your
departure. Call Joshua and present yourselves
before the Tent of Meeting, where I will commission
you. Then Moses and Joshua came and presented
themselves before the Lord. The Lord appeared at the Tent in a pillar
of fire, and the cloud stood over the entrance to
the Tent. And the Lord said to Moses: "You are
about to depart with your fathers, and these people
will prostitute themselves to the foreign gods
of the land they are entering. They will forsake me
and break the covenant I made with them. On
that day I will become angry with them and for-
sake them, I will hide my face from them, and they
will be destroyed. Many disasters and difficulties
will come upon them, and on that day they will
ask, 'Have not these disasters come upon us be-
cause our God is not with us?' And I will cer-
tainly hide my face on that day because of all their
wickedness in turning to other gods."

Moses wrote down for yourselves this song and
taught it to the Israelites and have them sing it, so
that it may be a witness for me against them.

When I have brought them into the land flowing
with milk and honey, the land I promised on oath
to their forefathers, and when they eat their fill and
thrive, they will turn to other gods and worship
them, rejecting me and breaking my covenant.

And when many disasters and difficulties come
upon them, this song will testify against them,
because it will not be forgotten by their descend-
ants. I know what they are disposed to do, even
before I bring them into the land I promised them
on oath." So Moses wrote down this song that
day and taught it to the Israelites.

The Lord gave this command to Joshua son of
Nun: "Be strong and courageous, for you will
bring the Israelites into the land I promised them
on oath, and I myself will be with you."

After Moses finished writing in a book the
words of this law from beginning to end, he gave

this song and to the Levites, who carried the ark of
the presence of the Lord. I gave the words of the
law and I charged them to teach the ark of the presence of
the Lord to the people. I said to them, "When you appear
before the Lord your God at his house, you shall read this law
to their hearing. Assemble the men and children, and the
aliens in your towns—so they can listen and learn from
your God and follow carefully all of this law. Their
children, who do not know, must hear it and learn to
fear the Lord as long as you live in the land you are
crossing the Jordan to possess."

The Song of Moses

And Moses recited the words of this song from
beginning to end in the hearing of the whole as-
sembly of Israel.

32 Listen, O heavens, and I will speak;
hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.

Let my teaching fall like rain
and my words descend like dew,
like showers on new grass,
like abundant rain on tender plants.

I will proclaim the name of the Lord
Oh, praise the greatness of our God!

He is the Rock, his works are perfect,
and all his ways are just.

A faithful God who does no wrong,
upright and just is he.

They have acted corruptly toward him;
to their shame they are no longer his
children,

but a warped and crooked generation.

Is this the way you repay the Lord,
O foolish and unwise people?

Is he not your Father, your Creator,^a
who made you and formed you?

Remember the days of old,
consider the generations long past.

Ask your father and he will tell you,
your elders, and they will explain to you.

When the Most High gave the nations their
inheritance,

when he divided all mankind,
he set up boundaries for the peoples

according to the number of the sons of
Israel.

For the Lord's portion is his people,
Jacob his allotted inheritance.

In a desert land he found him,
in a barren and howling waste
He shielded him and cared for him;
he guarded him as the apple of his eye,

like an eagle that stirs up its nest
and hovers over its young.

^a Or Corrupt are they and not his children: a generation warped and twisted to their shame.

^b Masoretic Text. Dead Sea Scrolls (see also Septuagint), sons of God.

^c Or Father, who brought you

- that spreads its wings to catch them
and carries them on its pinions.
12 The Lord alone led him,
no foreign god was with him.
13 He made him ride on the heights of the land
and fed him with the fruit of the fields.
He nourished him with honey from the rock,
and with oil from the flinty crag,
14 with curds and milk from herd and flock
and with fattened lambs and goats,
with choice rams of Bashan
and the finest kernels of wheat.
You drank the foaming blood of the grape.
15 Jeshurun grew fat and kicked,
filled with food, he became heavy and sleek.
He abandoned the God who made him
and rejected the Rock his Savior.
16 They made him jealous with their foreign gods
and angered him with their detestable idols.
17 They sacrificed to demons, which are not
God—
gods they had not known,
gods that recently appeared,
gods your fathers did not fear.
18 You deserted the Rock, who fathered you;
you forgot the God who gave you birth.
19 The Lord saw this and rejected them
because he was angered by his sons and
daughters.
20 "I will hide my face from them," he said,
"and see what their end will be;
for they are a perverse generation,
children who are unfaithful.
21 They made me jealous by what is no god
and angered me with their worthless idols.
I will make them envious by those who are not
a people;
I will make them angry by a nation that has
no understanding.
22 For a fire has been kindled by my wrath,
one that burns to the realm of death^b below.
It will devour the earth and its harvests
and set afire the foundations of the
mountains.
23 "I will heap calamities upon them
and spend my arrows against them.
24 I will send wasting famine against them,
consuming pestilence and deadly plague;

- I will send against them the force of my
wrath.
25 In the anger of my wrath I will hide my face
from them, and I will bring them down
to ruin, and I will cut them off.
26 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
27 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
28 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
29 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
30 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
31 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
32 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
33 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
34 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
35 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
36 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
37 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
38 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
39 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
40 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
41 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
42 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
43 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
44 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
45 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
46 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
47 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
48 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
49 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
50 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
51 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
52 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
53 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
54 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
55 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
56 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
57 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
58 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
59 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
60 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
61 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
62 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
63 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
64 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
65 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
66 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
67 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
68 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
69 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
70 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
71 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
72 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
73 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
74 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
75 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
76 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
77 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
78 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
79 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
80 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
81 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
82 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
83 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
84 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
85 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
86 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
87 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
88 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
89 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
90 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
91 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
92 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
93 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
94 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
95 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
96 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
97 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
98 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
99 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.
100 I will bring down their strength to the ground,
and I will bring down their pride to the dust.

32:11 Mixed Emotions

"Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever!" God had said about the Israelites (5:29). The tender words of the song in this chapter express God's true love for them. And yet the song contains words of dreadful realism as well. God knew the Israelites would fail him, and this song would "testify against them" when they turned away from him (31:21).

^a15 Jeshurun means the upright one, that is, Israel.

^b22 Hebrew is Sheol

⁴³Rejoice, O nations, with his people ^a for he will avenge the blood of his servants, he will take vengeance on his enemies and make atonement for his land and people

⁴⁴Moses came with Joshua^a son of Nun and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people. ^bWhen Moses finished reciting all these words to all Israel, ⁴⁵he said to them, "Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. ⁴⁷They are not just idle words for you—they are your life. By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess."

Moses to Die on Mount Nebo

⁴⁸On that same day the LORD told Moses, ⁴⁹"Go up into the Abarim Range to Mount Nebo in Moab, across from Jericho, and view Canaan^c the land I am giving the Israelites as their own possession. ⁵⁰There on the mountain that you have climbed you will die and be gathered to your people, just as your brother Aaron died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people. ⁵¹This is because both of you broke faith with me in the presence of the Israelites at the waters of Meribah Kadesh in the Desert of Zin and because you did not uphold my holiness among the Israelites. ⁵²Therefore, you will see the land only from a distance; you will not enter the land I am giving to the people of Israel."

Moses Blesses the Tribes

33 This is the blessing that Moses the man of God pronounced on the Israelites before his death. ²He said,

"The LORD came from Sinai and dawned over them from Seir, he shone forth from Mount Paran. He came with^d myriads of holy ones from the south, from his mountain slopes.^e

³Surely it is you who love the people; all the holy ones are in your hand. At your feet they all bow down, and from you receive instruction,

⁴the law that Moses gave us, the possession of the assembly of Jacob.

⁵He was king over Jeshurun^f when the leaders of the people assembled, along with the tribes of Israel.

⁶"Let Reuben live and not die, nor^g his men be few."

⁷And this he said about Judah:

"Hear, O LORD, the cry of Judah, bring him to his people. With his own hands he defends his cause. Oh, be his help against his foes!"

⁸About Levi he said:

"Your Thummim and Urim belong

to the man you favored. You tested him at Massah, you contended with him at the waters of Meribah.

⁹He said of his father and mother, "I have no regard for them." He did not recognize his brothers or acknowledge his own children, but he watched over your word and guarded your covenant.

¹⁰He teaches your precepts to Jacob and your law to Israel.

He offers incense before you and whole burnt offerings on your altar.

¹¹Bless all his skills, O LORD, and be pleased with the work of his hands. Smite the loins of those who rise up against him; strike his foes till they rise no more."

¹²About Benjamin he said:

"Let the beloved of the LORD rest secure in him, for he shields him all day long, and the one the LORD loves rests between his shoulders."

¹³About Joseph he said:

"May the LORD bless his land with the precious dew from heaven above and with the deep waters that lie below;

¹⁴with the best the sun brings forth and the finest the moon can yield;

¹⁵with the choicest gifts of the ancient mountains and the fruitfulness of the everlasting hills;

¹⁶with the best gifts of the earth and its fullness and the favor of him who dwelt in the burning bush.

Let all these rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among^h his brothers.

¹⁷In majesty he is like a firstborn bull; his horns are the horns of a wild ox.

With them he will gore the nations, even those at the ends of the earth.

Such are the ten thousands of Ephraim; such are the thousands of Manasseh."

¹⁸About Zebulun he said:

"Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out, and you, Issachar, in your tents.

¹⁹They will summon peoples to the mountain and there offer sacrifices of righteousness; they will feast on the abundance of the seas, on the treasures hidden in the sand."

²⁰About Gad he said:

"Blessed is he who enlarges Gad's domain! Gad lives there like a lion, tearing at arm or head.

²¹He chose the best land for himself; the leader's portion was kept for him. When the heads of the people assembled,

^a43 Or Make his people rejoice, O nations

^b44 Hebrew Hoshana, a variant of Joshua

uncertain

^c43 Masoretic Text, Dead Sea Scrolls (see also Septuagint) people, / and let all the angels

^d2 Or from

^e2 The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is

^f15 jeshurun means the upright one, that is, Israel, also in verse 26.

^g16 Or but let

^h16 Or of the one separated from

he carried out the LORD's righteous will,
and his judgments concerning Israel."

22 About Dan he said

Dan is a serpent
springing out of Bashan

23 And of Naphtali he said

Naphtali is abounding with the favor of the
LORD

and is full of his blessing
he will go down southward to the lake"

24 About Asher he said

Most blessed of sons is Asher
of whom he is favored by his brothers
and he will bathe his feet in oil

25 Therefore his gates will be iron and bronze,
and his strength will equal your days.

26 Therefore he will be like the God of Jeshurun,
who rides on the heavens to help you
and in the clouds in his majesty

27 Therefore the clouds are your refuge,
and underneath are the everlasting arms,
he will drive out your enemy before you,
and he will say, "Destroy him!"

28 Therefore you will live in safety alone;
your springs are secure

29 and you will have grain and new wine,
and the heavens drop dew

30 Blessed are you, O Israel!

and you will be like you

31 because you are saved by the LORD?

32 He is your shield and helper

and your glorious sword.

33 Your enemies will cower before you,

and you will trample down their high
places."

The Death of Moses

34 Then Moses climbed Mount Nebo from the
plains of Moab to the top of Pisgah, across
from Jeshcho. There the LORD showed him the

whole land—from Gilead to Dan, all of Naphtali,
the territory of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the
land of Judah as far as the western sea,³⁵ the
Negev and the whole region from the Valley of
Jeshcho, the City of Palms, as far as Zoar.³⁶ Then the
LORD said to him, "This is the land I promised on
oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when I said, 'I
will give it to your descendants.' I have let you see
it with your eyes, but you will not cross over into
it."

³⁵ And Moses the servant of the LORD died there
in Moab, as the LORD had said. ³⁶ He buried him³⁷ in
Moab in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this
day no one knows where his grave is. ³⁸ Moses was
a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet
his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone. ³⁹ The
Israelites grieved for Moses in the plains of Moab
thirty days, until the time of weeping and mourn-
ing was over.

⁴⁰ Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the
spirit⁴¹ of wisdom because Moses had laid his
hands on him. So the Israelites listened to him and
did what the LORD had commanded Moses.

⁴² Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like
Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, ⁴³ who
did all those miraculous signs and wonders the
LORD sent him to do in Egypt—to Pharaoh and to
all his officials and to his whole land. ⁴⁴ For no one
has ever shown the mighty power or performed
the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of
all Israel.

34:4 Moses Gets a Preview

To his great disappointment, Moses could not lead
his people into the new land, for reasons
mentioned in 32:48-52. But God allowed him a
final look over all the promised land. And, in a very
unexpected way, Moses did realize his dream of
setting foot in the promised land. Over a thousand
years later, he returned with the prophet Elijah and
visited with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration
(Matthew 17; Mark 9; Luke 9).

³⁵ Or will tread upon their bodies

⁴² That is, the Mediterranean

³⁶ Or He was buried

⁴¹ Or Spirit

JOSHUA

INTRODUCTION

The Difference 40 Years Can Make

They faced overwhelming odds with renewed hope

“Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” 1:9

On the surface, not much had changed in 40 years. The band of refugees amassing beside the Jordan River greatly resembled a similar horde from four decades before. They had packed once. Would they again?

The Israelites still faced overwhelming odds. They had no chariots or even horses. They had only primitive arms, an untested new leader, and long-delayed marching orders from God.

A New Spirit, a New Leader

Yet in another sense, everything had changed. Older Israelites with fearful, slave mentalities had died off in the desert—all the older generation except Joshua and Caleb, two legendary warriors. The new generation had decided to trust God, no matter what. In stark contrast to the spies in Numbers (13:11-13), Joshua's scouts brought back this report, “The Lord has surely given the whole land into our hands; all the people are melting in fear because of us” (2:24).

The book of Joshua contains not a word about rebellion against a leader or grumbling against God. It is a good news book, a welcome relief from the discouraging tone of Numbers and the fatalism of Deuteronomy. What a difference 40 years had made!

As newly appointed leader of the Israelites, Joshua took on two main tasks. First, he was to direct a military campaign to take control of the land God had promised. Then, he would parcel out the conquered land among all the tribes.

Learning to Follow Instructions

Once inside Canaan, the Israelites followed God's instructions precisely, even when doing so must have strained their faith to new limits. The residents of Jericho had shut themselves behind stone walls, awaiting the onslaught of the feared Israelites. But how did the Israelites spend their first week in Canaan? They built a stone monument to God, performed circumcision rituals, and held a Passover celebration. No conquering army had ever behaved in such a manner.

Everything in Joshua seems handpicked to strike home the point that God was really in charge. Covering a period of approximately seven years, Joshua's 24 chapters devote only a few sentences to some extensive military campaigns (see chapters 10-11). But key events, such as the fall of Jericho, get detailed coverage, underscoring that the Israelites succeeded when they relied on God, not military might. The few negative stories (such as the battle of Ai and the trick of the Gibeonites) show what happened when the Israelites did not seek God's will.

A Book of Hope

The Bible does not give history for its own sake. Rather, it presents practical and spiritual lessons. Fortunately, Joshua's lessons are overwhelmingly positive ones. Guided by God, the nation of Israel met with unprecedented success. In fact, the book concludes that “not one of all the Lord's good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled” (21:45).

The book of Joshua gives a fresh breeze of hope. Writers of hymns and spirituals have often gone back to it to try to recapture the spirit of success that swept over God's people those first few years in the new land. It can work: people can follow God. Joshua shows how.

How to Read Joshua

Phrases in the first two paragraphs of Joshua hint at the tone to follow. “I will never leave you nor forsake you,” God promised. “I will give you every place where you set foot.” “Be careful to

obey all the law my servant Moses gave you—that you may be successful wherever you go.” Often the Israelites offer examples of what not to do. Already the books of Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy have given negative examples, and the historical book that follows will describe further failures in lurid detail. But the Old Testament does offer a few bright spots of hope, the book of Joshua being one of the brightest.

(The “good news” character of Joshua causes some people to compare it to the New Testament books of Ephesians and Philippians, which share its success-and-triumph tone. You may want to read one of those New Testament books along with Joshua.)

Fast-paced battle action appears in chapters 1-11, “the book of war.” The latter chapters, “the book of distribution,” mostly concern the parceling out of the land.

You can casually read about the military campaigns of Joshua, but to truly appreciate them you must study a map or Bible atlas. Joshua is a very geographical book. Place-names appear in every chapter, describing the military progress and also the division of the land among the tribes of Israel.

As you read Joshua, keep two major themes in mind: Joshua’s leadership and God’s direct involvement in history. Study Joshua’s life as an example of leadership. What were the reasons behind his few failures, such as those recorded in chapters 7 and 9? You may also want to refer to the background passages on his life in Exodus (17, 24, 32, 33) and Numbers (11, 13, 26). What lesson did Joshua learn at each of these key moments?

PLANS FOR READING JOSHUA

PLAN 1: An Overview of Joshua in 4 Days

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to Joshua and then chapter 2, the story of Rahab and the spies.
- ☐ Day 2. Read the story of Jericho in chapter 6; the Israelites practiced very unorthodox military tactics, but learned to rely on God.
- ☐ Day 3. Success at Jericho immediately preceded a great failure; read about it in chapter 7.
- ☐ Day 4. Read chapter 24, part of Joshua’s stirring farewell speech to the nation he led so well.

PLAN 2: All of Joshua in 21 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12-13 ☐ 14-15 ☐ 16-17 ☐ 18
19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24

The LORD Commands Joshua

1 After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses’ aide: **2** “Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. **3** I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. **4** Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Great Sea^a on the west. **5** No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.

6 “Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. **7** Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. **8** Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and

night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. **9** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

10 So Joshua ordered the officers of the people: **11** “Go through the camp and tell the people, ‘Get your supplies ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you for your own.’”

12 But to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said, **13** “Remember the command that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you: ‘The LORD your God is giving you rest and has granted you this land.’ **14** Your wives, your children and your livestock may stay in the land that Moses gave you east of the Jordan, but all your fighting men, fully armed, must cross over ahead of your brothers. You are to help your brothers **15** until the LORD gives them rest, as he has done for

^a That is, the Mediterranean

JOSHUA 3:7

⁷And the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses. ⁸Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: 'When you reach the edge of the Jordan's waters, go and stand in the river.'"

⁹Joshua said to the Israelites: "Come here and listen to the words of the LORD your God. ¹⁰This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites. ¹¹See, the ark of the covenant of the LORD of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of you. ¹²Now then, choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. ¹³And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the LORD—the LORD of all the earth—set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap."

¹⁴So when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them. ¹⁵Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, ¹⁶the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan, while the water flowing down to the Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea ^a) was completely cut off. So the people crossed over opposite Jericho. ¹⁷The priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground.

4 When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, ²"Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, ³and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan from right where the priests stood and to carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight."

⁴So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, ⁵and said to them, "Go over before the ark of the LORD your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, ⁶to serve as a sign among you. In the future,

when your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' ⁷tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever."

⁸So the Israelites did as Joshua commanded them. They took twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, as the LORD had told Joshua; and they carried them over with them to their camp, where they put them down. ⁹Joshua set up the twelve stones that had been^b in the middle of the Jordan at the spot where the priests who carried the ark of the covenant had stood. And they are there to this day.

¹⁰Now the priests who carried the ark remained standing in the middle of the Jordan until everything the LORD had commanded Joshua was done by the people, just as Moses had directed Joshua. The people hurried over, ¹¹and as soon as all of them had crossed, the ark of the LORD and the priests came to the other side while the people watched. ¹²The men of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh crossed over, armed, in front of the Israelites, as Moses had directed them. ¹³About forty thousand armed for battle crossed over before the LORD to the plains of Jericho for war.

¹⁴That day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they revered him all the days of his life, just as they had revered Moses.

¹⁵Then the LORD said to Joshua, ¹⁶"Command the priests carrying the ark of the Testimony to come up out of the Jordan."

¹⁷So Joshua commanded the priests, "Come up out of the Jordan."

¹⁸And the priests came up out of the river carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD. No sooner had they set their feet on the dry ground than the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and ran at flood stage as before.

¹⁹On the tenth day of the first month the people went up from the Jordan and camped at Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho. ²⁰And Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan. ²¹He said to the Israelites, "In the future when your descendants ask their fathers, 'What do these stones mean?' ²²tell them, 'Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.' ²³For the LORD your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The LORD your God did to the Jordan just what he had done to the Red Sea^c when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over. ²⁴He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God."

Circumcision at Gilgal

5 Now when all the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings along the coast heard how the LORD had dried up the Jordan before the Israelites until we had crossed over,

^a16 That is, the Dead Sea

^b9 Or Joshua also set up twelve stones

^c23 Hebrew Yam Suph; that is, Sea of Reeds

3:16 Stopping the Jordan River

A 1927 earthquake caused the 40-foot clay banks of the Jordan River to collapse, totally damming the Jordan for 21 hours. Whatever means God used to allow the Israelites to cross, this miracle in Joshua achieved a similar result during the river's swollen flood stage. The miracle echoed the crossing of the Red Sea 40 years before, helping to establish Joshua as a worthy successor to Moses. Joshua and the Israelites crossed at a location very close to where Jesus was later baptized.

their hearts melted and they no longer had the courage to face the Israelites.

At that time the LORD said to Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise the Israelites again." So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the Israelites at Gibeath Haaraloth.⁴

⁴Now this is why he did so. All those who came out of Egypt—all the men of military age—died in the desert on the way after leaving Egypt. ⁵All the people that came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the desert during the journey from Egypt had not. ⁶The Israelites had moved about in the desert forty years until all the men who were of military age when they left Egypt had died, since they had not obeyed the LORD. For the LORD had sworn to them that they would not see the land that he had solemnly promised their fathers to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. ⁷So he raised up their sons in their place, and these were the ones Joshua circumcised. They were still uncircumcised because they had not been circumcised on the way. ⁸And after the whole nation had been circumcised, they remained where they were in camp until they were healed.

⁹Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." So the place has been called Gilgal⁵ to this day.

¹⁰On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover.

¹¹The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain. ¹²The manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate of the produce of Canaan.

The Fall of Jericho

¹³Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?"

¹⁴"Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord⁶ have for his servant?"

¹⁵The commander of the LORD's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

6 Now Jericho was tightly shut up because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in.

²Then the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. ³March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. ⁴Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. ⁵When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse

and the people will go up, every man straight in."

⁶So Joshua son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant of the LORD and have seven priests carry trumpets in front of it." ⁷And he ordered the people, "Advance! March around the city, with the armed guard going ahead of the ark of the LORD."

⁸When Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets before the LORD went forward, blowing their trumpets, and the ark of the LORD's covenant followed them. ⁹The armed guard marched ahead of the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard followed the ark. All this time the trumpets were sounding. ¹⁰But Joshua had commanded the people, "Do not give a war cry, do not raise your voices, do not say a word until the day I tell you to shout. Then shout!" ¹¹So he had the ark of the LORD carried around the city, circling it once. Then the people returned to camp and spent the night there.

¹²Joshua got up early the next morning and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. ¹³The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets went forward, marching before the ark of the LORD and blowing the trumpets. The armed men went ahead of them and the rear guard followed the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets kept sounding. ¹⁴So on the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days.

¹⁵On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times. ¹⁶The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the people, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city! ¹⁷The city and all that is in it are to be devoted⁷ to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute⁸ and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent. ¹⁸But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it. ¹⁹All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the LORD and must go into his treasury."

²⁰When the trumpets sounded, the people shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the people gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so every man charged straight in, and they took the city. ²¹They devoted the city to the LORD and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys.

²²Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring her out and all who belong to her, in accordance with your oath to her." ²³So the young men who had done the spying went in and brought out Rahab, her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. They brought out her entire

¹ Gibeath Haaraloth means hill of foreskins.

⁵ Gilgal sounds like the Hebrew for roll.

¹² Or the day

¹⁴ Or lord

⁷ The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them, also in verses 18 and 21.

¹⁷ Or possibly innkeeper; also in verses 22 and 25

JOSHUA 6:24

family and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel

²⁴Then they burned the whole city and everything in it, but they put the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the LORD's house. ²⁵But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho—and she lives among the Israelites to this day.

²⁶At that time Joshua pronounced this solemn oath: "Cursed before the LORD is the man who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho.

"At the cost of his firstborn son
will he lay its foundations;
at the cost of his youngest
will he set up its gates."

²⁷So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout the land.

Achan's Sin

7 But the Israelites acted unfaithfully in regard to the devoted things^a; Achan son of Carmi, the son of Zimri,^b the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the LORD's anger burned against Israel.

²Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth Aven to the east of Bethel, and told them, "Go up and spy out the region." So the men went up and spied out Ai.

³When they returned to Joshua, they said, "Not all the people will have to go up against Ai. Send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary all the people, for only a few men are there." ⁴So about three thousand^c men went up; but they were routed by the men of Ai, ⁵who killed about thirty-six of them. They chased the Israelites from the city gate as far as the stone quarries^c and struck them down on the slopes. At this the hearts of the people melted and became like water.

⁶Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell facedown to the ground before the ark of the LORD, remaining there till evening. The elders of Israel did the same, and sprinkled dust on their heads. ⁷And Joshua said, "Ah, Sovereign LORD, why did you ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side of the Jordan! ⁸O Lord, what can I say, now that Israel has been routed by its enemies? ⁹The Canaanites and the other people of the country will hear about this and they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth. What then will you do for your own great name?"

6:26 Cursed City

Joshua's curse was fulfilled literally when a man attempted to rebuild the city of Jericho in the days of King Ahab (see 1 Kings 16:34).

¹⁰The LORD said to Joshua, "Stand up! What are you doing down on your face? ¹¹Israel has sinned, they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things, they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. ¹²That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction.

¹³"Go, consecrate the people. Tell them, 'Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow; for this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: That which is devoted is among you, O Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove it.

¹⁴"In the morning, present yourselves tribe by tribe. The tribe that the LORD takes shall come forward clan by clan; the clan that the LORD takes shall come forward family by family; and the family that the LORD takes shall come forward man by man. ¹⁵He who is caught with the devoted things shall be destroyed by fire, along with all that belongs to him. He has violated the covenant of the LORD and has done a disgraceful thing in Israel!"

¹⁶Early the next morning Joshua had Israel come forward by tribes, and Judah was taken. ¹⁷The clans of Judah came forward, and he took the Zerahites. He had the clan of the Zerahites come forward by families, and Zimri was taken. ¹⁸Joshua had his family come forward man by man, and Achan son of Carmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

¹⁹Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, give glory to the LORD,^d the God of Israel, and give him the praise.^e Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me."

²⁰Achan replied, "It is true! I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel. This is what I have done: ²¹When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia,^f two hundred shekels^g of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels,^h I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath."

²²So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent, and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver underneath. ²³They took the things from

7:7 A Crisis of Confidence

Ai stood near the original location where God had promised the land to Abraham hundreds of years before (Genesis 12:8). Military defeat there, coming so quickly on the heels of a great victory at Jericho, caused even Joshua to tremble. Without God's protection, the Israelites were militarily vulnerable.

^a The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them; also in verses 11, 12, 13 and 15. ^b See Septuagint and 1 Chron. 2:6, Hebrew *Zabdi*, also in verses 17 and 18. ^c Or as far as Shebarim

^d19 A solemn charge to tell the truth

2.3 kilograms)

^e21 That is, about 1 1/4 pounds (about 0.6 kilogram)

^f19 Or and confess to him

^g21 Hebrew *Shinar*

^h21 That is, about 5 pounds (about

the tent, brought them to Joshua and all the Israelites and spread them out before the LORD.

Then Joshua, together with all Israel, took the son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the gold, the bronze, his sons and daughters, his cattle, donkeys and sheep, his tent and all that he had, to the valley of Achor. ²⁵Joshua said, "Why have you brought this trouble on us? The LORD will bring retribution on you today."

Then Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them. ²⁶Over Achan they heaped up a large pile of rocks, which remains to this day. Then the LORD turned from his anger. Therefore that place has been called the Valley of Achor ever since.

Ai Destroyed

8 Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged. Take the whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai. For I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city and his land. ²You shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king, except that you may carry off their plunder and livestock for yourselves. Set an ambush behind the city."

So Joshua and the whole army moved out to attack Ai. He chose thirty thousand of his best fighting men and sent them out at night ⁴with these orders: "Listen carefully. You are to set an ambush behind the city. Don't go very far from it. All of you be on the alert. ⁵I and all those with me will advance on the city, and when the men come out against us, as they did before, we will flee from them. ⁶They will pursue us until we have lured them away from the city, for they will say, 'They are running away from us as they did before.' So when we flee from them, ⁷you are to rise up from ambush and take the city. The LORD your God will deliver it into your hand. ⁸When you have taken the city, set it on fire. Do what the LORD has commanded. See to it, you have my orders."

Then Joshua sent them off, and they went to the place of ambush and lay in wait between Bethel and Ai, to the west of Ai—but Joshua spent that night with the people.

Early the next morning Joshua mustered his men, and he and the leaders of Israel marched before them to Ai. ¹¹The entire force that was with him marched up and approached the city and arrived in front of it. They set up camp north of Ai, with the valley between them and the city.

Joshua had taken about five thousand men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, to the west of the city. ¹³They had the soldiers take up their positions—all those in the camp to the north of the city and the ambush to the west of it. That night Joshua went into the valley.

When the king of Ai saw this, he and all the men of the city hurried out early in the morning to meet Israel in battle at a certain place overlooking the Arabah. But he did not know that an ambush had been set against him behind the city. ¹⁵Joshua and all Israel let themselves be driven back before

them, and they fled toward the desert. ¹⁶All the men of Ai were called to pursue them, and they pursued Joshua and were lured away from the city. ¹⁷Not a man remained in Ai or Bethel who did not go after Israel. They left the city open and went in pursuit of Israel.

¹⁸Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Hold out toward Ai the javelin that is in your hand, for into your hand I will deliver the city." So Joshua held out his javelin toward Ai. ¹⁹As soon as he did this, the men in the ambush rose quickly from their position and rushed forward. They entered the city and captured it and quickly set it on fire.

²⁰The men of Ai looked back and saw the smoke of the city rising against the sky, but they had no chance to escape in any direction, for the Israelites who had been fleeing toward the desert had turned back against their pursuers. ²¹For when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city and that smoke was going up from the city, they turned around and attacked the men of Ai. ²²The men of the ambush also came out of the city against them, so that they were caught in the middle, with Israelites on both sides. Israel cut them down, leaving them neither survivors nor fugitives. ²³But they took the king of Ai alive and brought him to Joshua.

²⁴When Israel had finished killing all the men of Ai in the fields and in the desert where they had chased them, and when every one of them had been put to the sword, all the Israelites returned to Ai and killed those who were in it. ²⁵Twelve thousand men and women fell that day—all the people of Ai. ²⁶For Joshua did not draw back the hand that held out his javelin until he had destroyed^b all who lived in Ai. ²⁷But Israel did carry off for themselves the livestock and plunder of this city, as the LORD had instructed Joshua.

²⁸So Joshua burned Ai and made it a permanent heap of ruins, a desolate place to this day. ²⁹He hung the king of Ai on a tree and left him there until evening. At sunset, Joshua ordered them to take his body from the tree and throw it down at the entrance of the city gate. And they raised a large pile of rocks over it, which remains to this day.

The Covenant Renewed at Mount Ebal

³⁰Then Joshua built on Mount Ebal an altar to

8:30 Blessings and Curses

The scene in this section, which describes the carrying out of Moses' instructions in Deuteronomy 27-28, was a profoundly symbolic event in the history of the Israelites. It elaborately portrayed what would happen if they obeyed the covenant, and if they disobeyed. The two mountains, Ebal and Gerizim, formed a natural amphitheater, ideal for such a public ceremony. From their peaks much of the promised land could be seen. (Mount Gerizim eventually became the seat of worship for the Samaritans, which helps explain Jesus' conversation in John 4.)

^b means trouble
destroying them

²⁶ The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by

LORD also gave that city and its king into Israel's hand. The city and everyone in it Joshua put to the sword. He left no survivors there. And he did to its king as he had done to the king of Jericho.

³¹Then Joshua and all Israel with him moved on from Libnah to Lachish; he took up positions against it and attacked it. ³²The LORD handed Lachish over to Israel, and Joshua took it on the second day. The city and everyone in it he put to the sword, just as he had done to Libnah. ³³Meanwhile, Horem king of Gezer had come up to help Lachish, but Joshua defeated him and his army—until no survivors were left.

³⁴Then Joshua and all Israel with him moved on from Lachish to Eglon; they took up positions against it and attacked it. ³⁵They captured it that same day and put it to the sword and totally de-

stroyed everyone in it, just as they had done to Lachish.

³⁶Then Joshua and all Israel with him went up from Eglon to Hebron and attacked it. ³⁷They took the city and put it to the sword, together with its king, its villages and everyone in it. They left no survivors. Just as at Eglon, they totally destroyed it and everyone in it.

³⁸Then Joshua and all Israel with him turned around and attacked Debir. ³⁹They took the city, its king and its villages, and put them to the sword. Everyone in it they totally destroyed. They left no survivors. They did to Debir and its king as they had done to Libnah and its king and to Hebron.

⁴⁰So Joshua subdued the whole region, including the hill country, the Negev, the western foot-

INSIGHT

Is a War Ever Holy?

Why did God order a ruthless military campaign?

The LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them, because by this time tomorrow I will hand all of them over to Israel, slain." 11:6

Holy war. Ironically, the term applies to the most vicious, bloody wars. And often, far too often, Christians have been at the heart of such holy wars.

There is something irrational and even repulsive about a holy war. It harnesses all the best energies of religion for one of the ugliest acts of human nature. And yet anyone who reads the Bible cannot ignore the holy wars in the Old Testament.

Whole books have been written about the problem, and no brief article can begin to cover the issues. But modern readers need some background to help understand why a fierce holy war is presented in such a good light.

A Land Promised to the Israelites

The Israelites' fighting style fit the harsh pattern of warfare in that day. Contemporary Egyptian and Assyrian reports boasted of mass executions, torture, and the systematic razing of cities. But God's involvement raises unique questions. He personally ordered the destruction of seven Canaanite nations, with no survivors. Why?

The Old Testament makes clear that the Canaanites were not being uprooted on a sudden whim. God had promised the land to the Israelites over 400 years before Joshua. He had called one man, Abraham, to found a nation of chosen people. He repeated those promises often (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:5-18; 17:2-8; 26:3,23-24; 28:13-14) and finally called the Israelites out of Egypt to take over the promised land. Almost from the beginning Canaan was a vital part of God's plan.

Delayed Punishment

Israel's inheritance, however, meant kicking out the Canaanites. How could innocent people simply be pushed aside, or killed? In answer to this question, the Bible makes clear that the Canaanites were *not* "innocent." Through their long history of sin, they had forfeited their right to the land.

Four hundred years before Joshua, God had told Abraham that his descendants would not occupy the land until the sin of its inhabitants "had reached its full measure" (Genesis 15:16). Later, just days before the onset of Joshua's campaign, Moses stated, "It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; but on account of the wickedness of these nations, the LORD your God will drive them out before you" (Deuteronomy 9:5).

Historians have uncovered plenty of evidence of this wickedness. Canaanite temples featured prostitutes, orgies, and human sacrifice. Relics and plaques of exaggerated sex organs hint at the morality that characterized Canaan.

Canaanite gods, such as Baal and his wife Anath, delighted in butchery and sadism. Archaeologists have found great numbers of jars containing the tiny bones of children sacrificed to Baal. Families seeking good luck in a new home practiced "foundation sacrifice." They would kill

11:6 and the mountain slopes, together with all their kings. He left no survivors. He totally destroyed all who breathed, just as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded. 41 Joshua subdued them from Kadesh Barnea to Gaza and from the whole region of Goshen to Gibeon. 42 All these kings and their lands Joshua conquered in one campaign, because the LORD, the God of Israel, fought for Israel.

Then Joshua returned with all Israel to the camp at Gilgal.

Northern Kings Defeated

11 When Jabin king of Hazor heard of this, he sent word to Jobab king of Madon, to the

kings of Shimron and Achaph, 2 and to the northern kings who were in the mountains, in the Arabah south of Kinnereth, in the western foothills and in Naphoth Dor^a on the west; 3 to the Canaanites in the east and west; to the Amontes, Hittites, Perizzites and Jebusites in the hill country, and to the Hivites below Hermon in the region of Mizpah. 4 They came out with all their troops and a large number of horses and chariots—a huge army, as numerous as the sand on the seashore. 5 All these kings joined forces and made camp together at the Waters of Merom, to fight against Israel.

6 The LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid of them, because by this time tomorrow I will hand

^a N. Eights of Dor

one of their children and seal the body in the mortar of the wall. In many ways, Canaan had become like Sodom and Gomorrah.

The Bible records that God has patience with decadent societies for a time, but judgment inevitably follows. For Sodom and Gomorrah it took the form of fire and brimstone. For Canaan it came through Joshua's conquering armies. Later, God let his own chosen people be ravaged by invaders, as punishment for their sins. The judgment pronounced on Canaan seems severe, but no more severe than what was later inflicted on Israel itself.

The Contamination Problem

The Israelites could not simply settle down as new neighbors among existing Canaanite cities. From the time when the tribes had made a golden calf while Moses was receiving the Ten Commandments (Exodus 32), Israelites had shown a fatal weakness to infection from outside. They seemed particularly susceptible to sins of sex and idolatry, Canaan's national specialties.

Israel's later history offers a negative proof of why God commanded utter destruction of Canaanites. The damning phrase in Joshua, “they did not drive them out,” hints at trouble to come, and the very next book, Judges, tells of the devastating results. The Israelites slid to one of their lowest levels because they had not fulfilled the original mission of cleansing the land of impure elements.

A Struggle Beyond Nations

Looking back at this period of time, we tend to see the battles of Joshua as national or racial struggles—the Israelites versus the people of Canaan. But the Bible presents the warfare as a wider struggle—one between those who followed God and those who opposed him.

When God judged groups, as he judged the world in Noah's day or as he judged Sodom and Gomorrah, those few who remained faithful to him found a way of escape. And in Joshua one bright story shines out: the story of Rahab, a non-Jew. A typical Canaanite who worked as a professional prostitute, she nevertheless learned to fear and then trust the God of Israel. She escaped the fall of Jericho. Furthermore, she went on to marry a leading Israelite and became one of the ancestors of the Messiah himself, Jesus.

Rahab claimed that others in her city of Jericho had quaked in fear for 40 years, waiting for the judgment of the God of Israel (2:9-11). Yet only she took the further step of seeking help. If others in Canaan had repented and turned to God, they might well have escaped punishment, as Rahab did.

Holy Wars Today

One fact about “holy war” is very clear. We cannot argue from a war specifically commanded by God in Joshua to any rational situation today. In the Old Testament, God was dealing primarily with one particular nation, the Israelites, for a stated purpose. When the Messiah finally emerged out of that nation, everything changed.

Jesus' followers all lived in the same territory captured by Joshua, the “promised land.” But four times, in his very last words, Jesus commanded his disciples to go out, away from Jerusalem, into all the world. Go, he told them, not as conquering armies but rather as bearers of the good news that applies to all people, all races, all nations.

Anyone who looks to the book of Joshua for a rationalization of a holy war must also look ahead to Jesus. Although on a holy crusade, he chose against violent means. In fact, he chose suffering and death. Nothing in the New Testament gives consolation to a religious warrior.

Life Questions. What arguments have you heard Christians use for or against wars?

JOSHUA 11:7

all of them over to Israel, slain. You are to hamstring their horses and burn their chariots."

⁷So Joshua and his whole army came against them suddenly at the Waters of Merom and attacked them, ⁸and the LORD gave them into the hand of Israel. They defeated them and pursued them all the way to Greater Sidon, to Misrephoth Maim, and to the Valley of Mizpah on the east, until no survivors were left. ⁹Joshua did to them as the LORD had directed: He hamstringed their horses and burned their chariots.

¹⁰At that time Joshua turned back and captured Hazor and put its king to the sword. (Hazor had been the head of all these kingdoms.) ¹¹Everyone in it they put to the sword. They totally destroyed^a them, not sparing anything that breathed, and he burned up Hazor itself.

¹²Joshua took all these royal cities and their kings and put them to the sword. He totally destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded. ¹³Yet Israel did not burn any of the cities built on their mounds—except Hazor, which Joshua burned. ¹⁴The Israelites carried off for themselves all the plunder and livestock of these cities, but all the people they put to the sword until they completely destroyed them, not sparing anyone that breathed. ¹⁵As the LORD commanded his servant Moses, so Moses commanded Joshua, and Joshua did it, he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses.

¹⁶So Joshua took this entire land: the hill country, all the Negev, the whole region of Goshen, the western foothills, the Arabah and the mountains of Israel with their foothills, ¹⁷from Mount Halak, which rises toward Seir, to Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. He captured all their kings and struck them down, putting them to death. ¹⁸Joshua waged war against all these kings for a long time. ¹⁹Except for the Hivites living in Gibeon, not one city made a treaty of peace with the Israelites, who took them all in battle. ²⁰For it was the LORD himself who hardened their hearts to wage war against Israel, so that he might destroy them totally, exterminating them without mercy, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

²¹At that time Joshua went and destroyed the Anakites from the hill country: from Hebron, Debir and Anab, from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel. Joshua totally destroyed them and their towns. ²²No Anakites

were left in Israelite territory: only in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod did any survive. ²³So Joshua took the entire land, just as the LORD had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions.

Then the land had rest from war.

List of Defeated Kings

12 These are the kings of the land whom the Israelites had defeated and whose territory they took over east of the Jordan, from the Arnon Gorge to Mount Hermon, including all the eastern side of the Arabah:

²Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon. He ruled from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Gorge—from the middle of the gorge—to the Jabbok River, which is the border of the Ammonites. This included half of Gilead. ³He also ruled over the eastern Arabah from the Sea of Kin-nereth^b to the Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea^c), to Beth Jeshimoth, and then southward below the slopes of Pisgah.

⁴And the territory of Og king of Bashan, one of the last of the Rephaites, who reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei. ⁵He ruled over Mount Hermon, Salecah, all of Bashan to the border of the people of Geshur and Maacah, and half of Gilead to the border of Sihon king of Heshbon.

⁶Moses, the servant of the LORD, and the Israelites conquered them. And Moses the servant of the LORD gave their land to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh to be their possession.

⁷These are the kings of the land that Joshua and the Israelites conquered on the west side of the Jordan, from Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon to Mount Halak, which rises toward Seir (their lands Joshua gave as an inheritance to the tribes of Israel according to their tribal divisions—⁸the hill country, the western foothills, the Arabah, the mountain slopes, the desert and the Negev—the lands of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites):

⁹ the king of Jericho	one
the king of Ai (near Bethel)	one
¹⁰ the king of Jerusalem	one
the king of Hebron	one
¹¹ the king of Jarmuth	one
the king of Lachish	one
¹² the king of Eglon	one
the king of Gezer	one
¹³ the king of Debir	one
the king of Geder	one
¹⁴ the king of Hormah	one
the king of Arad	one
¹⁵ the king of Libnah	one
the king of Adullam	one
¹⁶ the king of Makkedah	one
the king of Bethel	one

11:23 Two Accounts of Warfare

Judges 1 summarizes the incidents recorded in Joshua, but from a different point of view. Joshua presents the campaign as highly successful; Judges shows that many military goals were never achieved. One possible explanation: Joshua presented the wars as a series of raids on territory and did not include the "mopping up" and settlement process. Judges shows that, after they divided up the land, the Israelites proved far less successful in the second phase of conquest.

^a11 The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them, also in verses 12, 20 and 21. ^b3 That is, Gallilee. ^c3 That is, the Dead Sea.

the king of Tappuah	one
the king of Hepher	one
the king of Aphik	one
the king of Lasharon	one
the king of Madon	one
the king of Hazor	one
the king of Shimron Meron	one
the king of Achshaph	one
the king of Taanach	one
the king of Megiddo	one
the king of Kedesh	one
the king of Jokneam in Carmel	one
the king of Dor (in Naphoth Dor)	one
the king of Goyim in Gilgal	one
the king of Tirzah	one
thirty-one kings in all	

Land Still to Be Taken

13 When Joshua was old and well advanced in years, the LORD said to him, "You are very old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken over.

This is the land that remains, all the regions of the Philistines and Geshurites: from the Shihor River on the east of Egypt to the territory of Ekron on the north—all of it counted as Canaanite (the territory of the five Philistine rulers in Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron—that of the Avvites); from the south, all the land of the Canaanites, from Arah of the Sidonians as far as Aphek, the region of the Amorites, the area of the Gebalites; and all Lebanon to the east, from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo Hamath.

As for all the inhabitants of the mountain regions from Lebanon to Misrephoth Maim, that is, all the Sidonians, I myself will drive them out before the Israelites. Be sure to allocate this land to Israel for an inheritance, as I have instructed you, and divide it as an inheritance among the nine tribes and half of the tribe of Manasseh."

Division of the Land East of the Jordan

The other half of Manasseh,⁴ the Reubenites and the Gadites had received the inheritance that Moses had given them east of the Jordan, as he, the servant of the LORD, had assigned it to them.

It extended from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Gorge, and from the town in the middle

13:1 Dividing Up the Land

Chapter 13 introduces an abrupt transition. The rest of Joshua tells about what happened five to seven years after the crossing of the Jordan. Chapters 13-22 give a kind of land-title record for the new nation. Genesis 48-49 and Deuteronomy 13 provide background material. For example, Reuben's tribe forfeited the right to first choice because of a sexual sin, and Simeon and Levi likewise lost their rights because of their violent past.

of the gorge, and included the whole plateau of Medeba as far as Dibon,¹⁶ and all the towns of Sihon king of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon, out to the border of the Ammonites.¹⁷ It also included Gilead, the territory of the people of Geshur and Maacah, all of Mount Hermon and all Bashan as far as Salekah—¹⁸that is, the whole kingdom of Og in Bashan, who had reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei and had survived as one of the last of the Rephaites. Moses had defeated them and taken over their land.¹⁹ But the Israelites did not drive out the people of Geshur and Maacah, so they continue to live among the Israelites to this day.

¹⁴But to the tribe of Levi he gave no inheritance, since the offerings made by fire to the LORD, the God of Israel, are their inheritance, as he promised them.

¹⁵This is what Moses had given to the tribe of Reuben, clan by clan:

¹⁶The territory from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Gorge, and from the town in the middle of the gorge, and the whole plateau past Medeba ¹⁷to Heshbon and all its towns on the plateau, including Dibon, Bamoth Baal, Beth Baal Meon, ¹⁸Jahaz, Kedemoth, Mephaath, ¹⁹Kinathaim, Sibmah, Zereth Shahar on the hill in the valley, ²⁰Beth Peor, the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth Jeshimoth ²¹—all the towns on the plateau and the entire realm of Sihon king of the Amorites, who ruled at Heshbon. Moses had defeated him and the Midianite chiefs, Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur and Reba—princes allied with Sihon—who lived in that country. ²²In addition to those slain in battle, the Israelites had put to the sword Balaam son of Beor, who practiced divination. ²³The boundary of the Reubenites was the bank of the Jordan. These towns and their villages were the inheritance of the Reubenites, clan by clan.

²⁴This is what Moses had given to the tribe of Gad, clan by clan:

²⁵The territory of Jazer, all the towns of Gilead and half the Ammonite country as far as Aroer, near Rabbah; ²⁶and from Heshbon to Ramath Mizpah and Betonim, and from Mahanaim to the territory of Debir; ²⁷and in the valley, Beth Haram, Beth Nimrah, Succoth and Zaphon with the rest of the realm of Sihon king of Heshbon (the east side of the Jordan, the territory up to the end of the Sea of Kinereth). ²⁸These towns and their villages were the inheritance of the Gadites, clan by clan.

²⁹This is what Moses had given to the half-tribe of Manasseh, that is, to half the family of the descendants of Manasseh, clan by clan:

³⁰The territory extending from Mahanaim and

⁴ heights of Dor
(Manasseh)

¹⁵ That is, the area of Byblos
²⁷ That is, Galilee

¹⁵ Or to the entrance to

⁴⁸ Hebrew With it (that is, with the

JOSHUA 13:31

including all of Bashan, the entire realm of Og king of Bashan—all the settlements of Jair in Bashan, sixty towns, ³¹half of Gilead, and Ashtaroth and Edrei (the royal cities of Og in Bashan). This was for the descendants of Makir son of Manasseh—for half of the sons of Makir, clan by clan.

³²This is the inheritance Moses had given when he was in the plains of Moab across the Jordan east of Jericho. ³³But to the tribe of Levi, Moses had given no inheritance; the LORD, the God of Israel, is their inheritance, as he promised them.

Division of the Land West of the Jordan

14 Now these are the areas the Israelites received as an inheritance in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun and the heads of the tribal clans of Israel allotted to them. ²Their inheritances were assigned by lot to the nine-and-a-half tribes, as the LORD had commanded through Moses. ³Moses had granted the two-and-a-half tribes their inheritance east of the Jordan but had not granted the Levites an inheritance among the rest. ⁴For the sons of Joseph had become two tribes—Manasseh and Ephraim. The Levites received no share of the land but only towns to live in, with pasturelands for their flocks and herds. ⁵So the Israelites divided the land, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Hebron Given to Caleb

⁶Now the men of Judah approached Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know what the LORD said to Moses the man of God at Kadesh Barnea about you and me. ⁷I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land. And I brought him back a report according to my convictions, ⁸but my brothers who went up with me made the hearts of the people melt with fear. I, however, followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly. ⁹So on that day Moses swore to me, 'The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever, because you have followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly.'"

¹⁰"Now then, just as the LORD promised, he has kept me alive for forty-five years since the time he said this to Moses, while Israel moved about in the desert. So here I am today, eighty-five years old! ¹¹I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. ¹²Now give me this hill country that the LORD promised me that day. You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but, the LORD helping me, I will drive them out just as he said."

¹³Then Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as his inheritance. ¹⁴So Hebron has belonged to Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite ever since, because he followed the LORD, the God of Israel, wholeheartedly. ¹⁵(He-

bron used to be called Kiriath Arba after Arba, who was the greatest man among the Anakites.)

Then the land had rest from war.

Allotment for Judah

15 The allotment for the tribe of Judah, clan by clan, extended down to the territory of Edom, to the Desert of Zin in the extreme south.

²Their southern boundary started from the bay at the southern end of the Salt Sea,^b

³crossed south of Scorpion Pass, continued on to Zin and went over to the south of Kadesh Barnea. Then it ran past Hezron up to Addar and curved around to Karka. ⁴It then passed along to Azmon and joined the Wadi of Egypt, ending at the sea. This is their^d southern boundary.

⁵The eastern boundary is the Salt Sea as far as the mouth of the Jordan

The northern boundary started from the bay of the sea at the mouth of the Jordan, ⁶went up to Beth Hoglah and continued north of Beth Arabah to the Stone of Bohan son of Reuben. ⁷The boundary then went up to Debir from the Valley of Achor and turned north to Gilgal, which faces the Pass of Adummim south of the gorge. It continued along to the waters of En Shemesh and came out at En Rogel. ⁸Then it ran up the Valley of Ben Hinnom along the southern slope of the Jebusite city (that is, Jerusalem). From there it climbed to the top of the hill west of the Hinnom Valley at the northern end of the Valley of Rephaim. ⁹From the hilltop the boundary headed toward the spring of the waters of Nephtoah, came out at the towns of Mount Ephron and went down toward Baalah (that is, Kiriath Jearam). ¹⁰Then it curved westward from Baalah to Mount Seir, ran along the northern slope of Mount Jearum (that is, Kesalon), continued down to Beth Shemesh and crossed to Timnah. ¹¹It went to the northern slope of Ekron, turned toward Shikkeron, passed along to Mount Baalah and reached Jabneel. The boundary ended at the sea.

¹²The western boundary is the coastline of the Great Sea.^e

These are the boundaries around the people of Judah by their clans.

¹³In accordance with the LORD's command to him, Joshua gave to Caleb son of Jephunneh a portion in Judah—Kiriath Arba, that is, Hebron. (Arba was the forefather of Anak.) ¹⁴From Hebron Caleb drove out the three Anakites—Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmai—descendants of Anak. ¹⁵From there he marched against the people living in Debir (formerly called Kiriath Sepher). ¹⁶And Caleb said, "I will give my daughter Acsah in marriage to the man who attacks and captures Kiriath Sepher." ¹⁷Othniel son of Kenaz (Caleb's brother) took it, so Caleb gave his daughter Acsah to him in marriage.

¹⁸One day when she came to Othniel, she urged

^{a9} Deut 1:36 ^{b2} That is, the Dead Sea, also in verse 5 Mediterranean, also in verse 47

^{c3} Hebrew Akrahim

^{d4} Hebrew your

^{e12} That is, the

him to ask her father for a field. When she got off her donkey, Caleb asked her, "What can I do for you?"

She replied, "Do me a special favor. Since you have given me land in the Negev, give me also springs of water." So Caleb gave her the upper and lower springs.

This is the inheritance of the tribe of Judah, clan by clan.

The southernmost towns of the tribe of Judah in the Negev toward the boundary of Edom were Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur, ²²Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah, ²³Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan, ²⁴Ziph, Telem, Bealoth, ²⁵Hazor Hadattah, Keriath Hezron (that is, Hazor), ²⁶Amam, Shema, Moladah, ²⁷Hazar Gaddah, Heshmon, Beth Pelet, ²⁸Hazar Shual, Beersheba, Biziothuah, ²⁹Baalath, Iim, Ezem, ³⁰Eltolad, Kesil, Hormah, ³¹Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah, Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain and Rimmon—a total of twenty-nine towns and their villages.

In the western foothills

Ishtaol, Zorah, Ashnah, ³⁴Zanoah, En Gannim, Tappuah, Enam, ³⁵Jarmuth, Adullam Socoh, Azekah, ³⁶Shaaraim, Adithaim and Gederah (or Gederothaim)^b—fourteen towns and their villages.

³⁷Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal Gad, ³⁸Dilean, Mizpah, Ioktheel, ³⁹Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon, ⁴⁰Cabbon, Lahmas, Kitlish, ⁴¹Gederoth, Beth Dagon, Naamah and Makkedah—sixteen towns and their villages.

⁴²Ibnah, Ether, Ashan, ⁴³Iptah, Ashnah, Nezib, ⁴⁴Keilah, Aczib and Mareshah—nine towns and their villages.

⁴⁵Ekron, with its surrounding settlements and villages; ⁴⁶west of Ekron, all that were in the vicinity of Ashdod, together with their villages; ⁴⁷Ashdod, its surrounding settlements and villages; and Gaza, its settlements and villages, as far as the Wadi of Egypt and the coastline of the Great Sea.

⁴⁸In the hill country

Shamir, Jattir, Socoh, ⁴⁹Dannah, Kiriath Sannah (that is, Debir), ⁵⁰Anab, Eshtemoah, Anin, ⁵¹Goshen, Holon and Giloh—eleven towns and their villages.

⁵²Arab, Dumah, Eshan, ⁵³Janim, Beth Tappuah, Aphekah, ⁵⁴Humtah, Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron) and Zior—nine towns and their villages.

⁵⁵Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Jutta, ⁵⁶Jezreel, Iokdeam, Zanoah, ⁵⁷Kain, Gibeah and Timnah—ten towns and their villages.

⁵⁸Ialhul, Beth Zur, Gedor, ⁵⁹Maarath, Beth Anoth and Eltekon—six towns and their villages.

⁶⁰Kiriath Baal (that is, Kiriath Jearim) and Rabbah—two towns and their villages.

In the desert

Beth Arabah, Middin, Socacah, ⁶²Nibshan, the City of Salt and En Gedi—six towns and their villages.

⁶³Judah could not dislodge the Jebusites, who were living in Jerusalem; to this day the Jebusites live there with the people of Judah.

Allotment for Ephraim and Manasseh

16 The allotment for Joseph began at the Jordan of Jericho,^c east of the waters of Jericho, and went up from there through the desert into the hill country of Bethel. ²It went on from Bethel (that is, Luz),^d crossed over to the territory of the Arkites in Ataroth, ³descended westward to the territory of the Japhletites as far as the region of Lower Beth Horon and on to Gezer, ending at the sea.

⁴So Manasseh and Ephraim, the descendants of Joseph, received their inheritance.

⁵This was the territory of Ephraim, clan by clan:

The boundary of their inheritance went from Ataroth Addar in the east to Upper Beth Horon^e and continued to the sea. From Micmethath on the north it curved eastward to Taanath Shiloh, passing by it to Janoah on the east. ⁷Then it went down from Janoah to Ataroth and Naarah, touched Jericho and came out at the Jordan. ⁸From Tappuah the border went west to the Kanah Ravine and ended at the sea. This was the inheritance of the tribe of the Ephraimites, clan by clan. ⁹It also included all the towns and their villages that were set aside for the Ephraimites within the inheritance of the Manassites.

¹⁰They did not dislodge the Canaanites living in Gezer; to this day the Canaanites live among the people of Ephraim but are required to do forced labor.

17 This was the allotment for the tribe of Manasseh as Joseph's firstborn, that is, for Makir, Manasseh's firstborn. Makir was the ancestor of the Gileadites, who had received Gilead and Bashan because the Makirites were great soldiers. ²So this allotment was for the rest of the people of Manasseh—the clans of Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hephher and Shemida. These are the other male descendants of Manasseh son of Joseph by their clans.

³Now Zelophehad son of Hephher, the son of Gilead, the son of Makir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons but only daughters, whose names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah. ⁴They

15:63 Hints of Failure

In several key places (13:2-7; 16:10; 23:4) and in Judges 1, the Bible indicates that pockets of Canaanites remained in the land. The Israelites "could not dislodge" them, or "did not drive them out." The unconquered tribes became thorns in Israel's side.

^a Hebrew and some Septuagint manuscripts, other Septuagint manuscripts (see also note at Judges 1:14) Othniel, he urged her

^b Gederah and Gederothaim

^c1 Jordan of Jericho was possibly an ancient name for the Jordan River

^d2 Septuagint, Hebrew

Filling Moses' Shoes

Joshua could follow orders as well as give them

Israel served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua. 24:31

Like all the Israelites, Joshua began in humble surroundings. He was born a slave in Egypt and followed Moses across the Red Sea to freedom. He first appears in the Bible as a military commander. Soon after escaping from Egypt, the Israelites confronted a new enemy, and Moses turned to Joshua to lead their very first battle (Exodus 17:9-15).

A month later, when Moses climbed craggy Mount Sinai to meet with God, Joshua was at his side. He first reported to Moses the strange sounds coming from the camp, sounds that turned out to be the Israelites' great spiritual rebellion (Exodus 32:17). Joshua rose to become Moses' trusted number-two man, an aide who served him at almost every major crisis. Moses changed his name from Hoshea, which meant "help," or "salvation," to Joshua, meaning "The Lord's help." (The Greek form of Joshua is *Jesus*.)

Becoming Number One

On the verge of entering Canaan, Moses turned to Joshua again, choosing him as one of 12 spies sent to collect information about the land. Ten came back frightened, with predictions of doom. Only Joshua and Caleb had faith that God would keep his promises to the Israelites despite the military odds.

Joshua learned about the hazards of leadership from that spy trip: on his return, thousands of angry Israelites called for his public stoning (Numbers 14). But he stood firm, and God rewarded him. Of all the Israelites who left Egypt, only he and Caleb were allowed to enter the promised land—not even Moses had that honor. As Moses' death neared, God and Moses made Joshua their uncontested choice for a new leader for Israel. It was time for number two to become number one.

Joshua made a remarkably smooth transition into leadership. In fact, Joshua's life had many parallels to that of Moses. The miracle of crossing the Jordan River poignantly replayed Moses' crossing of the Red Sea. Moses encountered God directly at the burning bush; Joshua met God's special representative, the "commander of the army of the LORD," and likewise took off his shoes at the meeting (5:13-15).

Both Moses and Joshua wrote the law onto stones: Moses creating a permanent record for Israel, and Joshua erecting a monument for the nation to pass by on the way into the new land (8:32). Both leaders pleaded with God on behalf of their people. And both ended their terms with stirring speeches that reviewed history and challenged the people toward a critical choice.

Well-Rounded Leader

Moses, who grew up in the courts of Pharaoh, obviously received a better education than Joshua. He showed a philosophical bent. Joshua, on the other hand, was action-oriented and pragmatic, a perfect military man. He had the rare combination of knowing how to follow orders as well as how to give them.

The Bible, never guilty of glossing over its heroes' flaws, reveals some of Joshua's mistakes. In one incident in the desert, he was rash (Numbers 11:26-30). During the first battle of Ai and the treaty negotiations with the Gibeonites, he acted impulsively, without first seeking God's advice. And, faced with his first major defeat at Ai, he uncharacteristically dissolved in fright, earning God's stern rebuke: "Stand up! What are you doing down on your face?" (7:6-12).

Apart from these few incidents, Joshua's life was marked by unusual faith and obedience. Joshua never let the press of military action interfere with worship and the renewal of the covenant. When he divided up the land (an immense bureaucratic burden that takes up the last half of this book), he did so with wisdom and fairness, selecting his own portion only after all others had chosen.

The Bible records this simple legacy: "Israel served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua" (24:31). History would show how rarely that occurred in the life of a troublesome nation.

Life Questions: Often when a popular leader—a pastor, a politician, a teacher—retires from office, something slips. What made Joshua such an effective replacement?

the priest Joshua son of Nun, and he said: "The Lord commanded inheritance among our brothers. I will give them an inheritance along with their father, according to the share of Manasseh's share. The land on the east side of Gilead and Bashan east of the Jordan, the daughters of the tribe of Manasse received an inheritance among the tribes. The land of Gilead belonged to the rest of the tribes of Manasseh."

The territory of Manasseh extended from the hill country of Micmethath east of Shechem. The hill country ran southward from there to include the people living at En Tappuah. (Manasseh had the land of Tappuah, but Tappuah was on the boundary of Manasseh, between the Ephraimites.) Then the boundary of Manasseh ran south to the Kanah Ravine, which was between towns belonging to Ephraim lying among the towns of Manasseh, but the hill country of Manasseh was the northern side of the ravine and ended at the sea. On the south side of the land belonged to Ephraim on the north to Manasseh. The territory of Manasseh reached the sea and bordered Asher on the north and Issachar on the east.

Within Issachar and Asher, Manasseh had Beth Shan, Ibleam and the people of Taanach and Megiddo, together with their surrounding settlements (the third settlement is Naphoth²).

The Manassites were not able to occupy these towns, for the Canaanites were determined to live there. However, when the Israelites came to the land, they subjected the Canaanites to forced labor but did not drive them out completely.

The people of Joseph said to Joshua, "Why have you given us only one allotment and one portion for an inheritance? We are a numerous people and the Lord has blessed us abundantly."

"If you are so numerous," Joshua answered, "and if the hill country of Ephraim is too small for you, go up into the forest and clear land for yourselves there in the land of the Perizzites and Rephaim."

The people of Joseph replied, "The hill country is not enough for us, and all the Canaanites who live in the plain have iron chariots, both those in Beth Shan and its settlements and those in the Valley of Jezreel."

But Joshua said to the house of Joseph—to Ephraim and Manasseh—"You are numerous and very powerful. You will have not only one allotment but the forested hill country as well. Clear it and its farthest limits will be yours; though the

Canaanites have iron chariots and though they are strong, you can drive them out."

Division of the Rest of the Land

18 The whole assembly of the Israelites gathered at Shiloh and set up the Tent of Meeting there. The country was brought under their control, but there were still seven Israelite tribes who had not yet received their inheritance.

So Joshua said to the Israelites: "How long will you wait before you begin to take possession of the land that the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you? Appoint three men from each tribe. I will send them out to make a survey of the land and to write a description of it, according to the inheritance of each. Then they will return to me. You are to divide the land into seven parts: Judah is to remain in its territory on the south and the house of Joseph in its territory on the north. After you have written descriptions of the seven parts of the land, bring them here to me and I will cast lots for you in the presence of the Lord our God. The Levites, however, do not get a portion among you, because the priestly service of the Lord is their inheritance. And Gad, Reuben and the half-tribe of Manasseh have already received their inheritance on the east side of the Jordan. Moses the servant of the Lord gave it to them."

As the men started on their way to map out the land, Joshua instructed them, "Go and make a survey of the land and write a description of it. Then return to me, and I will cast lots for you here at Shiloh in the presence of the Lord." So the men left and went through the land. They wrote its description on a scroll, town by town, in seven parts, and returned to Joshua in the camp at Shiloh. Joshua then cast lots for them in Shiloh in the presence of the Lord, and there he distributed the land to the Israelites according to their tribal divisions.

Allotment for Benjamin

¹¹The lot came up for the tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan. Their allotted territory lay between the tribes of Judah and Joseph:

¹²On the north side their boundary began at the Jordan, passed the northern slope of Jericho and headed west into the hill country, coming out at the desert of Beth Aven. ¹³From there it crossed to the south slope of Luz (that is, Bethel) and went down to Ataroth Addar on the hill south of Lower Beth Horon.

¹⁴From the hill facing Beth Horon on the

18:3 Missing an Opportunity

Such verses as 17:13 and 18:3 imply that the Israelites could have driven out the Canaanites, but chose not to. They were using the Canaanites for forced labor and demanding tribute from them—perhaps they learned to rely too comfortably on these services. Also, some tribes balked at campaigns because of simple fear (17:16).

17:4 Daughters' Rights

See Numbers 27:1-11 and Numbers 36 for the historical context to these women's appeal.

JOSHUA 18:15

From the boundary turned south along the western side and came out at Kinath Baas, that is, Kadesh Barnea, a town of the people of Edom. This was the western side.

The southern side began at the outskirts of Achan's camp on the west, and the boundary came out at the spring of the waters of Nephtali. The boundary went down to the south of the Valley of Ben Hin-nom, south of the Valley of Rephaim. It continued down the Hinnom Valley along the southern slope of the Jebusite city and so to En Rogel. From there it curved north, went to En She-mesh, continued to Gibeon, which faces the East of Jerusalem, and ran down to the Stone of Boanaim. It continued to the northern slope of Beth Arabah, and on down the eastern slope of Beth Hoglah. It then went to the northern slope of Beth Hoglah and came out at the northern end of the Salt Sea,¹⁸ at the mouth of the Jordan in the south. This was the southern boundary.

The Jordan formed the boundary on the eastern side.

These were the boundaries that marked out the inheritance of the clans of Benjamin on all sides.

The clans of Benjamin, clan by clan, had the following towns:

19Beth Hoglah, Emek Keziz, 20Beth Zemaraim, Bethel, 21Arvim, Parah, 22Kepharsanbam, Ophni and Geba—four towns and their villages.

23Ramah, Beeroth, 24Mizpah, Kezib, 25Mozah, 26Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah, 27Haeleph, the Jebusite city (that is, Jerusalem), Gibeah and Kinath—fourteen towns and their villages.

This was the inheritance of Benjamin for its clans.

Allotment for Simeon

19The second lot came out for the tribe of Simeon, clan by clan. Their inheritance lay within the territory of Judah. 2It included

Beersheba (or Sheba),¹⁸ Moladah, 3Hazar Shimon, Balah, Ezem, 4Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah, 5Ziklag, Beth Marcaboth, Hazar Susah, 6Beth Lebaoth and Sharuhin—thirteen towns and their villages;

Ain, Rimmon, Ether and Ashan—four towns and their villages—⁸and all the villages around these towns as far as Baalath Beer (Ramah in the Negev).

This was the inheritance of the tribe of the Simeonites, clan by clan. 9The inheritance of the Simeonites was taken from the share of Judah, because Judah's portion was more than they needed. So the Simeonites received their inheritance within the territory of Judah.

Allotment for Zebulun

10The third lot came up for Zebulun, clan by clan: The boundary of their inheritance went as

far as Sand. 11Going west it ran to Maralah, touched Dabbesheth, and extended to the ravine near Jokneam. 12It turned east from Sand toward the sunrise to the territory of Kisloth Tabor and went on to Daberath and up to Iaphia. 13Then it continued eastward to Gath Hopher and Eth Kazim. It came out at Rimmon and turned toward Neah. 14Here the boundary went around on the north to Hannathon and ended at the Valley of Iphtah El. 15Included were Kattath, Nahalal, Shimron, Idalah and Bethlehem. There were twelve towns and their villages.

16These towns and their villages were the inheritance of Zebulun, clan by clan.

Allotment for Issachar

17The fourth lot came out for Issachar, clan by clan. 18Their territory included:

Iezreel, Kesulloth, Shunem, 19Hapharaim, Shion, Anaharath, 20Rabbith, Kishion, Ebez, 21Remeth, En Gannim, En Haddah and Beth Pazzez. 22The boundary touched Tabor, Shahazumah and Beth Shemesh, and ended at the Jordan. There were sixteen towns and their villages.

23These towns and their villages were the inheritance of the tribe of Issachar, clan by clan.

Allotment for Asher

24The fifth lot came out for the tribe of Asher, clan by clan. 25Their territory included:

Helkath, Hali, Beten, Acshaph, 26Allammelech, Amad and Mishal. On the west the boundary touched Carmel and Shihor Libnath. 27It then turned east toward Beth Dagon, touched Zebulun and the Valley of Iphtah El, and went north to Beth Emek and Neiel, passing Cabul on the left. 28It went to Abdon,¹⁸ Rehob, Hammon and Kanah, as far as Greater Sidon. 29The boundary then turned back toward Ramah and went to the fortified city of Tyre, turned toward Hosah and came out at the sea in the region of Aczib, 30Ummah, Aphek and Rehob. There were twenty-two towns and their villages.

31These towns and their villages were the inheritance of the tribe of Asher, clan by clan.

Allotment for Naphtali

32The sixth lot came out for Naphtali, clan by clan:

33Their boundary went from Heleph and the large tree in Zaanannim, passing Adami Nekeb and Jabneel to Lakkum and ending at the Jordan. 34The boundary ran west through Aznoth Tabor and came out at Hukkok. It touched Zebulun on the south, Asher on the west and the Jordan on the east. 35The fortified cities were Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakath, Kinnereth, 36Adamah, Ramah, Hazor, 37Kedesh, Edrei, En Hazor, 38Iron, Migdal El, Horem, Beth Anath and Beth Shemesh. There were nineteen towns and their villages.

¹⁸ Septuagint, Hebrew slope facing the Arabah

¹⁹ That is, the Dead Sea

²⁰ Some Hebrew manuscripts (see also Joshua 21:30); most Hebrew manuscripts Ebron

²¹ Or Beersheba, Sheba, 1 Chron. 4:28 does not have

²² Septuagint, Hebrew west,

¹⁸These towns and their villages were the inheritance of the tribe of Naphtali, clan by clan

Allotment for Dan

¹⁹The seventh lot came out for the tribe of Dan, clan by clan. ²⁰The territory of their inheritance

was: Eshtaul, Ir Shemesh, ²¹Shaalabbin, Anaton, Ibtah, ²²Eton, Timnah, Ekron, ²³Eltekeh, Gabbethon, Baalath, ²⁴Jehud, Bene Berak, Gath Rimmon, ²⁵Me Jarkon and Rakon, with the area facing Joppa.

²⁶But the Danites had difficulty taking possession of their territory, so they went up and attacked Leshem, took it, put it to the sword and burned it. They settled in Leshem and named it Dan after their forefather.

These towns and their villages were the inheritance of the tribe of Dan, clan by clan.

Allotment for Joshua

When they had finished dividing the land into its allotted portions, the Israelites gave Joshua son of Nun an inheritance among them, ²⁰as the LORD had commanded. They gave him the town he asked for—Timnath Serah^a in the hill country of Ephraim. And he built up the town and settled there.

These are the territories that Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun and the heads of the tribal clans of Israel assigned by lot at Shiloh in the presence of the LORD at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. And so they finished dividing the land.

Cities of Refuge

20 Then the LORD said to Joshua: ²¹"Tell the Israelites to designate the cities of refuge, as I instructed you through Moses, ²²so that anyone who kills a person accidentally and unintentionally may flee there and find protection from the avenger of blood.

³When he flees to one of these cities, he is to stand in the entrance of the city gate and state his case before the elders of that city. Then they are to admit him into their city and give him a place to live with them. ⁵If the avenger of blood pursues him, they must not surrender the one accused, because he killed his neighbor unintentionally and without malice aforethought. ⁶He is to stay in that city until he has stood trial before the assembly and until the death of the high priest who is serving at that time. Then he may go back to his own home in the town from which he fled."

20:2 Accidents, Not Crimes

The cities of refuge were designed to aid a person who caused an accidental death or "involuntary manslaughter." They provided a sanctuary from revenge. They did not, however, shelter a person who had committed a premeditated, intentional murder. (See Numbers 35:6 and Deuteronomy 4:41-43; 19.)

²⁵So they set apart Kedesh in Galilee in the hill country of Naphtali, Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the hill country of Judah. ²⁶On the east side of the Jordan of Jericho^b they designated Bezer in the desert on the plateau in the tribe of Reuben, Ramoth in Gilead in the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan in the tribe of Manasseh. ²⁷Any of the Israelites or any alien living among them who killed someone accidentally could flee to these designated cities and not be killed by the avenger of blood prior to standing trial before the assembly.

Towns for the Levites

21 Now the family heads of the Levites approached Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the heads of the other tribal families of Israel ^{2a}at Shiloh in Canaan and said to them, "The LORD commanded through Moses that you give us towns to live in, with pasturelands for our livestock." ^{2b}So, as the LORD had commanded, the Israelites gave the Levites the following towns and pasturelands out of their own inheritance:

³The first lot came out for the Kohathites, clan by clan. The Levites who were descendants of Aaron the priest were allotted thirteen towns from the tribes of Judah, Simeon and Benjamin. ⁴The rest of Kohath's descendants were allotted ten towns from the clans of the tribes of Ephraim, Dan and half of Manasseh.

⁵The descendants of Gershon were allotted thirteen towns from the clans of the tribes of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali and the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan.

⁷The descendants of Merari, clan by clan, received twelve towns from the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Zebulun.

⁸So the Israelites allotted to the Levites these towns and their pasturelands, as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

⁹From the tribes of Judah and Simeon they allotted the following towns by name ¹⁰(these towns were assigned to the descendants of Aaron who were from the Kohathite clans of the Levites, because the first lot fell to them):

¹¹They gave them Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron), with its surrounding pastureland, in the hill country of Judah. (Arba was the forefather of Anak.) ¹²But the fields and villages around the city they had given to Caleb son of Jephunneh as his possession.

¹³So to the descendants of Aaron the priest

21:8 No Land for the Levites

As part of their calling to serve God, the Levites got no land in Canaan. Rather, they received 48 towns scattered in the other tribes' lands—four towns from each tribe. This forced them to depend not on their inheritance of the land, but on God (see Numbers 18:20). It dispersed the priests among all the people; this enabled them to instruct the tribes in the law and to lead worship.

^a Also known as Timnath Heres (see Judges 2:9)

^b Jordan of Jericho was possibly an ancient name for the Jordan River.

JOSHUA 21:14

they gave Hebron (a city of refuge for one accused of murder), Libnah, ¹⁴Jattir, Esh-temoa, ¹⁵Holon, Debir, ¹⁶Ain, Juttah and Beth Shemesh, together with their pasturelands—nine towns from these two tribes.

¹⁷And from the tribe of Benjamin they gave them Gibeon, Geba, ¹⁸Anathoth and Almon, together with their pasturelands—four towns

¹⁹All the towns for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, were thirteen, together with their pasturelands

²⁰The rest of the Kohathite clans of the Levites were allotted towns from the tribe of Ephraim:

²¹In the hill country of Ephraim they were given Shechem (a city of refuge for one accused of murder) and Gezer, ²²Kibzaim and Beth Horon, together with their pasturelands—four towns.

²³Also from the tribe of Dan they received Eltekeh, Gibbethon, ²⁴Aijalon and Gath Rimmon, together with their pasturelands—four towns.

²⁵From half the tribe of Manasseh they received Taanach and Gath Rimmon, together with their pasturelands—two towns.

²⁶All these ten towns and their pasturelands were given to the rest of the Kohathite clans.

²⁷The Levite clans of the Gershonites were given: from the half-tribe of Manasseh, Golan in Bashan (a city of refuge for one accused of murder) and Be Eshtarah, together with their pasturelands—two towns;

²⁸from the tribe of Issachar, Kishion, Daberath, ²⁹Jarmuth and En Gannim, together with their pasturelands—four towns,

³⁰from the tribe of Asher, Mishal, Abdon, ³¹Helkath and Rehob, together with their pasturelands—four towns;

³²from the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee (a city of refuge for one accused of murder), Hammoth Dor and Kartan, together with their pasturelands—three towns

³³All the towns of the Gershonite clans were thirteen, together with their pasturelands

³⁴The Merarite clans (the rest of the Levites) were given.

from the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam, Kartah, ³⁵Dimnah and Nahalal, together with their pasturelands—four towns;

³⁶from the tribe of Reuben, Bezer, Jahaz, ³⁷Kedemoth and Mephaath, together with their pasturelands—four towns;

³⁸from the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead (a city of refuge for one accused of murder), Mahanaim, ³⁹Heshbon and Jazer, together with their pasturelands—four towns in all.

⁴⁰All the towns allotted to the Merarite clans, who were the rest of the Levites, were twelve.

⁴¹The towns of the Levites in the territory held by the Israelites were forty-eight in all, together

with their pasturelands. ⁴²Each of these towns had pasturelands surrounding it; this was true for all these towns.

⁴³So the LORD gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their forefathers, and they took possession of it and settled there. ⁴⁴The LORD gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their forefathers. Not one of their enemies withstood them; the LORD handed all their enemies over to them. ⁴⁵Not one of all the LORD's good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.

Eastern Tribes Return Home

22 Then Joshua summoned the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh and said to them, "You have done all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and you have obeyed me in everything I commanded. ³For a long time now—to this very day—you have not deserted your brothers but have carried out the mission the LORD your God gave you. ⁴Now that the LORD your God has given your brothers rest as he promised, return to your homes in the land that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side of the Jordan. ⁵But be very careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you: to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to obey his commands, to hold fast to him and to serve him with all your heart and all your soul."

⁶Then Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their homes. ⁷(To the half-tribe of Manasseh Moses had given land in Bashan, and to the other half of the tribe Joshua gave land on the west side of the Jordan with their brothers.) When Joshua sent them home, he blessed them, ⁸saying, "Return to your homes with your great wealth—with large herds of livestock, with silver, gold, bronze and iron, and a great quantity of clothing—and divide with your brothers the plunder from your enemies."

⁹So the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh left the Israelites at Shiloh in Canaan to return to Gilead, their own land, which they had acquired in accordance with the command of the LORD through Moses.

¹⁰When they came to Geliloth near the Jordan in the land of Canaan, the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh built an imposing altar there by the Jordan. ¹¹And when the Israelites heard that they had built the altar on the border of Canaan at Geliloth near the Jordan on the Israelite side, ¹²the whole assembly of Israel gathered at Shiloh to go to war against them.

¹³So the Israelites sent Phinehas son of Eleazar, the priest, to the land of Gilead—to Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh. ¹⁴With him they sent ten of the chief men, one for each of the tribes of Israel, each the head of a family division among the Israelite clans.

¹⁵When they went to Gilead—to Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh—they said to them: ¹⁶"The whole assembly of the LORD says: 'How could you break faith with the God of Israel like

this? How could you turn away from the LORD and build yourselves an altar in rebellion against him now? Was not the sin of Peor enough for us? Up to this very day we have not cleansed ourselves from that, in even though a plague fell on the community of the LORD! ¹⁸And are you now turning away from the LORD?

¹⁹If you rebel against the LORD today, tomorrow he will be angry with the whole community of Israel. ^{19a}If the land you possess is defiled, come over to the LORD's land, where the LORD's tabernacle stands, and share the land with us. But do not rebel against the LORD or against us by building an altar for yourselves, other than the altar of the LORD our God. ²⁰When Achan son of Zerah acted unfaithfully regarding the devoted things, ^adid not wrath come upon the whole community of Israel? He was not the only one who died for his sin.

²¹Then Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh replied to the heads of the clans of Israel:

The Mighty One, God, the LORD! The Mighty One, God, the LORD! He knows! And let Israel know! If this has been in rebellion or disobedience to the LORD, do not spare us this day. ²³If we have built our own altar to turn away from the LORD and to offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, or to sacrifice fellowship offerings ^b on it, may the LORD himself call us to account.

²⁴No! We did it for fear that some day your descendants might say to ours, 'What do you have to do with the LORD, the God of Israel? ²⁵The LORD has made the Jordan a boundary between us and you—you Reubenites and Gadites! You have no share in the LORD.' So your descendants might cause ours to stop fearing the LORD.

²⁶That is why we said, 'Let us get ready and build an altar—but not for burnt offerings or sacrifices.' ²⁷On the contrary, it is to be a witness between us and you and the generations that follow, that we will worship the LORD at his sanctuary

with our burnt offerings, sacrifices and fellowship offerings. Then in the future your descendants will not be able to say to ours, 'You have no share in the LORD.'

²⁸And we said, 'If they ever say this to us, or to our descendants, we will answer: Look at the replica of the LORD's altar, which our fathers built, not for burnt offerings and sacrifices, but as a witness between us and you.'

²⁹Far be it from us to rebel against the LORD and turn away from him today by building an altar for burnt offerings, grain offerings and sacrifices, other than the altar of the LORD our God that stands before his tabernacle."

³⁰When Phinehas the priest and the leaders of the community—the heads of the clans of the Israelites—heard what Reuben, Gad and Manasseh had to say, they were pleased. ³¹And Phinehas son of Eleazar, the priest, said to Reuben, Gad and Manasseh, "Today we know that the LORD is with us, because you have not acted unfaithfully toward the LORD in this matter. Now you have rescued the Israelites from the LORD's hand."

³²Then Phinehas son of Eleazar, the priest, and the leaders returned to Canaan from their meeting with the Reubenites and Gadites in Gilead and reported to the Israelites. ³³They were glad to hear the report and praised God. And they talked no more about going to war against them to devastate the country where the Reubenites and the Gadites lived.

³⁴And the Reubenites and the Gadites gave the altar this name: A Witness Between Us that the LORD is God.

Joshua's Farewell to the Leaders

23 After a long time had passed and the LORD had given Israel rest from all their enemies around them, Joshua, by then old and well advanced in years, ²summoned all Israel—their elders, leaders, judges and officials—and said to them: "I am old and well advanced in years. ³You yourselves have seen everything the LORD your God has done to all these nations for your sake; it was the LORD your God who fought for you. ⁴Remember how I have allotted as an inheritance for your tribes all the land of the nations that remain—the nations I conquered—between the Jordan and the Great Sea in the west. ⁵The LORD your God himself will drive them out of your way. He will push them out before you, and you will take possession of their land, as the LORD your God promised you.

⁶"Be very strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, without turning aside to the right or to the left. ⁷Do not associate with these nations that remain among you; do not invoke the names of their gods or swear by them. You must not serve them or bow down to them. ⁸But you are to hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have until now.

⁹The LORD has driven out before you great and powerful nations; to this day no one has been able

22:10 Explosive Misunderstanding

Chapter 22 records a misunderstanding that could have led to civil war. Several Israelite tribes built a large altar. This inflamed the other tribes. Weren't the builders grossly violating God's law by erecting an altar, a function only priests should perform? Were these tribes so soon abandoning the rules of worship Moses and Joshua had laid down? Or, perhaps, had they provocatively built their altar on the western side of the Jordan River to stake a claim to others' land? The western tribes soon learned the truth: the easterners had built not an altar, but a monument to commemorate their national unity with the western tribes. A civil war was averted after some heated exchanges. The incident reveals the intensity of religious feeling in the new nation.

^aThe Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them. Traditionally peace offerings, also in verse 27. ^bThat is, the Mediterranean.

decrees and laws. ²⁸And Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God. Then he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak near the holy place of the LORD.

²⁹"See," he said to all the people. "This stone will be a witness against us. It has heard all the words the LORD has said to us. It will be a witness against you if you are untrue to your God."

Buried in the Promised Land

³⁰Then Joshua sent the people away, each to his own inheritance.

³¹After these things, Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of a hundred and ten. ³²And they buried him in the land of his

inheritance, at Timnath Serah^a in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

³¹Israel served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had experienced everything the LORD had done for Israel.

³²And Joseph's bones, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem in the tract of land that Jacob bought for a hundred pieces of silver^b from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. This became the inheritance of Joseph's descendants.

³³And Eleazar son of Aaron died and was buried at Gibeah, which had been allotted to his son Phinehas in the hill country of Ephraim.

JUDGES

INTRODUCTION

Freedom Fighters

These "judges" took up arms to defend their homeland

Whenever the LORD raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge and saved them out of the hands of their enemies as long as the judge lived. 2:18

The "judges" of this book might be called guerrillas or freedom fighters today. These men (and one woman) were renowned not for court cases, but for their military campaigns against foreign invaders. Like all military leaders, they sometimes settled disputes, but the book of Judges, however, is preoccupied not with legal matters, but with the excitement of fighting for freedom.

Israel's judges certainly did not stick to "the rules of proper warfare." Judge Ehud tricked his opponent into a private conference; behind closed doors he pulled out a knife and plunged it into the enemy king's belly (3:12-30). Judge Gideon won a surprise victory in the middle of the night. His small band so confused the occupying army with noise and lights that the enemy soldiers stabbed each other and fled in the darkness (chapter 7). Samson never led an army; his battle tricks have been compared to the pranks of an overgrown juvenile delinquent (chapters 14-16).

Most of the time the Israelites hid in the hills while their enemies, with superior weapons, controlled the plains. (Chariots, like tanks, were devastating in level country but almost useless in muddy or rugged terrain.) Outnumbered, the Israelites relied on ambushes and sneak attacks. They knew every gully, for they were fighting for their homeland. Strategy made up for lack of strength.

Ugliest Stories of the Bible

As a book about early Jewish military heroes, Judges inspires and fascinates. But you can't make the whole book fit that description. If you read strictly looking for heroes, you'd have to ignore half of Judges—and you would miss its most important point about God's work with Israel.

For one thing, Judges' "heroes" were badly flawed. Samson was pitifully vulnerable to his lust for women. Gideon won a battle, then led the nation into idolatry. Jephthah, a former outlaw, apparently knew very little about the God he was supposed to serve.

Add to this the "non-heroic" material: Abimelech, Gideon's son, who slaughtered 70 half-brothers so he could be named king; Jephthah and Gideon, who massacred fellow Israelites who had failed to support them; and the sad characters of the last five chapters of Judges. These contain some of the ugliest stories in the Bible—tales of homosexual assault, idolatry, civil war, thievery, rape, and murder. The book of Judges runs downhill, from bad to worse. You may end up wondering what such material is doing in the Bible.

Every picture has shadows, every suspenseful novel has chapters that look truly dark. In the story of God and his people, Judges is that kind of chapter. Heroes appear sporadically, but humanity remains terribly unheroic.

Enthusiasm Fades

God wanted better things for his people than he got in Judges. He had rescued Israel from slavery in Egypt. He had given them a rich land and presented them with a grand system of worship and government centering on him. He would be no distant God in the heavens—he would live with them.

But after some initial enthusiasm, the Israelites didn't continue the way God had pointed. Instead, they learned to live with the sophisticated people they found as their neighbors—people whose faults included worshipping idols through oxen, pyres and child sacrifice.

The Israelites held the mountains, but the foreigners held valleys, cutting through the land, separated the tribes. Soon each group of isolated Israelites began operating independently. The

next generation lost its sense of national identity. The people worshiped the idol Baal alongside the Lord. Though descended from 12 brothers, they spent more time fighting each other than the foreign oppressors. They violated virtually every moral standard. The last verse of Judges sums it up: "Everyone did as he saw fit." What they saw fit, wasn't.

The Secret of Their Survival

The foreign invasions were no accident, Judges says: they came from God just as surely as the heroic rescuers did. A pattern developed. God allowed suffering as a consequence of the Israelites' disobedience. When things grew really terrible, their attention would turn back to God. He would respond by sending a judge to rescue them. But soon they would fail again. This pattern repeated itself time and again. The Israelites always forgot their need for God, and the dreary cycle ground on.

The secret of Israel's survival was not, then, military heroes or guerrilla tactics. It was the persistent, unwearied love of God himself. Though they forgot him, he did not forget them. He gave innumerable new beginnings. Again and again he sent "judges" to rescue them. He would not let them go. God is the real hero of Judges.

How to Read Judges

You can read Judges as a collection of heroic stories, the most famous of which are Gideon's and Samson's. But together the tales tell a less heroic story.

Read Judges, therefore, on two levels at once. On one level focus on the new beginning God repeatedly offered by sending a judge to rescue Israel. These are character stories with great fascination. You can gain a great deal by studying the strengths and weaknesses of the individual judges.

On another level, read of the deterioration of a nation that quickly forgot what God had done for it. This will help you understand why, in the next stage of Israel's history, God gave the Israelites a king. For background on this change of government, read "The First King," page 237. Another interesting study is the book of Ruth, a lovely story from the time of Judges that shows a softer, more hopeful side.

PLANS FOR READING JUDGES

PLAN 1: An Overview of Judges in 3 Days

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to Judges, and chapter 6, in which God calls Gideon to lead a guerrilla army.
- ☐ Day 2. Read chapter 7, Gideon's victory in battle.
- ☐ Day 3. Read chapter 16, the story of Samson and Delilah, and Samson's death.

PLAN 2: All of Judges in 21 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16
- ☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21

Israel Fights the Remaining Canaanites

1 After the death of Joshua, the Israelites asked the LORD, "Who will be the first to go up and fight for us against the Canaanites?"

The LORD answered: "Judah is to go, I have given the land into their hands."

Then the men of Judah said to the Simeonites their brothers, "Come up with us into the territory allotted to us, to fight against the Canaanites. We in turn will go with you into yours." So the Simeonites went with them.

When Judah attacked, the LORD gave the Canaanites and Perizzites into their hands and they struck down ten thousand men at Bezek. It was there that they found Adoni-Bezek and fought against him, putting to rout the Canaanites and

Perizzites. Adoni-Bezek fled, but they chased him and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and big toes.

Then Adoni-Bezek said, "Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off have picked up scraps under my table. Now God has paid me back for what I did to them." They brought him to Jerusalem and he died there.

The men of Judah attacked Jerusalem also and

1:7 Thumbs and Big Toes

A person lacking thumbs and big toes could not grip a weapon or run quickly. So cutting off those appendages guaranteed a captured enemy would never fight again.

JUDGES 19

took it. They put the city to the sword and set it on fire.

⁴After that, the men of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites living in the hill country, the Negev and the western foothills. ⁵They advanced against the Canaanites living in Hebron (formerly called Kirjath Arba) and defeated Shishai, Ahiman and Talmai.

⁶From there they advanced against the people living in Beth (formerly called Kirjath Sepher). ⁷And Caleb said, "I will give my daughter Acsah in marriage to the man who attacks and captures Kirjath Sepher." ⁸Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it, so Caleb gave his daughter Acsah to him in marriage.

⁹On a day when she came to Othniel, she urged him to ask her father for a field. When she got off her donkey, Caleb asked her, "What can I do for you?"

¹⁰She replied, "Do me a special favor. Since you have given me land in the Negev, give me also springs of water." Then Caleb gave her the upper and lower springs.

¹¹The descendants of Moses' father-in-law, the Kenites, went up from the City of Palm¹⁶ with the men of Judah to live among the people of the Desert of Judah in the Negev near Arad.

¹²Then the men of Judah went with the Simeonites their brothers and attacked the Canaanites living in Zephath, and they totally destroyed the city. Therefore it was called Hormah.¹⁷ ¹³The men of Judah also took Gaza, Ashkelon and Ekron—each city with its territory.

The Lord was with the men of Judah. They took possession of the hill country, but they were unable to drive the people from the plains, because they had iron chariots. ²⁰As Moses had promised, Hebron was given to Caleb, who drove from it the three sons of Anak. ²¹The Benjamites, however, failed to dislodge the Jebusites, who were living in Jerusalem, to this day the Jebusites live there with the Benjamites.

Now the house of Joseph attacked Bethel, and the Lord was with them. ²³When they sent men to spy out Bethel (formerly called Luz), ²⁴the spies saw a man coming out of the city and they said to him, "Show us how to get into the city and we will see that you are treated well." ²⁵So he showed them, and they put the city to the sword but spared the man and his whole family. ²⁶He then went to the land of the Hittites, where he built a city and called it Luz, which is its name to this day.

²⁷But Manasseh did not drive out the people of Beth Shan or Taanach or Dor or Ibleam or Megiddo and their surrounding settlements, for the Canaanites were determined to live in that land. ²⁸When Israel became strong, they pressed the Canaanites into forced labor but never drove them out completely. ²⁹Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites living in Gezer, but the Canaanites continued to live there among them. ³⁰Neither did

Manasseh drive out those living in Beth Shean or Taanach or Dor or Ibleam or Megiddo and their surrounding settlements, for the Canaanites were determined to live in that land. ²⁸When Israel became strong, they pressed the Canaanites into forced labor but never drove them out completely. ²⁹Nor did Ephraim drive out those living in Gezer, but the Canaanites continued to live there among them. ³⁰Neither did Manasseh drive out those living in Beth Shean or Taanach or Dor or Ibleam or Megiddo and their surrounding settlements, for the Canaanites were determined to live in that land.

The Angel of the Lord at Bokim

2 The angel of the Lord went up from Gath to Bokim and said, "I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land that I swore to give to your forefathers. I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you, ²and you shall not make a covenant with the people of this land, but you shall break down their altars.' Yet you have disobeyed me. Why have you done this? ³Now therefore I tell you that I will not drive them out before you; they will be thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you."

⁴When the angel of the Lord had spoken these things to all the Israelites, the people wept aloud, ⁵and they called that place Bokim.⁸ There they offered sacrifices to the Lord.

Disobedience and Defeat

⁶After Joshua had dismissed the Israelites, they went to take possession of the land, each to his own inheritance. ⁷The people served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the Lord had done for Israel.

⁸Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of a hundred and ten. ⁹And they buried him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Heresh¹ in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

¹⁰After that whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel. ¹¹Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals. ¹²They forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them. They provoked the Lord to anger ¹³because they forsook him and served Baal and the Ash-toreths. ¹⁴In his anger against Israel the Lord handed them over to raiders who plundered them. He sold them to their enemies all around, whom

¹⁶ Hebrew, Sepher, and Vulgate Othniel; he urged her

¹⁷ Some versions of the Septuagint and the Vulgate say that the Lord, often by totally destroying them

¹⁸ Hebrew, Hormah

¹⁹ and ²⁰ 24:30

²¹ That is, Jericho

²² Bokim means weepers

²³ The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable

²⁴ Hormah means destruction

²⁵ Hebrew

²⁶ Also known as Timnath Serah (see Joshua

they were no longer able to resist. ¹⁵Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the LORD was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them. They were in great distress.

¹⁶Then the LORD raised up judges,^a who saved them out of the hands of these raiders. ¹⁷Yet they would not listen to their judges but prostituted themselves to other gods and worshiped them. Unlike their fathers, they quickly turned from the way in which their fathers had walked, the way of obedience to the LORD's commands. ¹⁸Whenever the LORD raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge and saved them out of the hands of their enemies as long as the judge lived; for the LORD had compassion on them as they groaned under those who oppressed and afflicted them. ¹⁹But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their fathers, following other gods and serving and worshiping them. They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.

²⁰Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel and said, "Because this nation has violated the covenant that I laid down for their forefathers and has not listened to me, ²¹I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations Joshua left when he died. ²²I will use them to test Israel and see whether they will keep the way of the LORD and walk in it as their forefathers did." ²³The LORD had allowed those nations to remain; he did not drive them out at once by giving them into the hands of Joshua.

3 These are the nations the LORD left to test all those Israelites who had not experienced any of the wars in Canaan ²(he did this only to teach warfare to the descendants of the Israelites who had not had previous battle experience): ³the five rulers of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites living in the Lebanon mountains from Mount Baal Hermon to Lebo^b Hamath. ⁴They were left to test the Israelites to see whether they would obey the LORD's commands, which he had given their forefathers through Moses.

⁵The Israelites lived among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. ⁶They took their daughters in marriage and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

Othniel

The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD; they forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asherahs. ⁸The anger of the LORD burned against Israel so that he sold them into the hands of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram Naharaim,^c to whom the Israelites were subject for eight years. ⁹But when they cried out to the LORD, he raised up for them a deliverer, Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, who saved them. ¹⁰The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, so that he became Israel's judge^d and went to war. The LORD gave Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram into the

hands of Othniel, who overpowered him. ¹¹So the land had peace for forty years, until Othniel son of Kenaz died.

Ehud

¹²Once again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and because they did this evil the LORD gave Eglon king of Moab power over Israel. ¹³Getting the Ammonites and Amalekites to join him, Eglon came and attacked Israel, and they took possession of the City of Palms.^e ¹⁴The Israelites were subject to Eglon king of Moab for eighteen years.

¹⁵Again the Israelites cried out to the LORD, and he gave them a deliverer—Ehud, a left-handed man, the son of Gera the Benjamite. The Israelites sent him with tribute to Eglon king of Moab. ¹⁶Now Ehud had made a double-edged sword about a foot and a half^f long, which he strapped to his right thigh under his clothing. ¹⁷He presented the tribute to Eglon king of Moab, who was a very fat man. ¹⁸After Ehud had presented the tribute, he sent on their way the men who had carried it. ¹⁹At the idols^g near Gilgal he himself turned back and said, "I have a secret message for you, O king."

The king said, "Quiet!" And all his attendants left him.

²⁰Ehud then approached him while he was sitting alone in the upper room of his summer palace^h and said, "I have a message from God for you." As the king rose from his seat, ²¹Ehud reached with his left hand, drew the sword from his right thigh and plunged it into the king's belly. ²²Even the handle sank in after the blade, which came out his back. Ehud did not pull the sword out, and the fat closed in over it. ²³Then Ehud went out to the porchⁱ; he shut the doors of the upper room behind him and locked them.

²⁴After he had gone, the servants came and found the doors of the upper room locked. They said, "He must be relieving himself in the inner room of the house." ²⁵They waited to the point of embarrassment, but when he did not open the doors of the room, they took a key and unlocked them. There they saw their lord fallen to the floor, dead.

²⁶While they waited, Ehud got away. He passed by the idols and escaped to Seirah. ²⁷When he arrived there, he blew a trumpet in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went down with him from the hills, with him leading them.

²⁸"Follow me," he ordered, "for the LORD has given Moab, your enemy, into your hands." So they followed him down and, taking possession of the fords of the Jordan that led to Moab, they allowed no one to cross over. ²⁹At that time they struck down about ten thousand Moabites, all vigorous and strong; not a man escaped. ³⁰That day Moab was made subject to Israel, and the land had peace for eighty years.

^a16 Or leaders; similarly in verses 17-19

^c13 That is, Jencho

the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain

^b3 Or to the entrance to

^f16 Hebrew a cubit (about 0.5 meter)

^g23 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

^e18 That is, Northwest Mesopotamia

^h19 Or the stone quarries; also in verse 26

ⁱ10 Or leader

^j20 The meaning of

JUDGES 3:31

Shamgar

³¹After Ehud came Shamgar son of Anath, who struck down six hundred Philistines with an oxgoad. He too saved Israel

Deborah

4 After Ehud died, the Israelites once again did evil in the eyes of the LORD. ²So the LORD sold them into the hands of Jabin, a king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth Haggoyim. ³Because he had nine hundred iron chariots and had cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years, they cried to the LORD for help.

⁴Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading^a Israel at that time. ⁵She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites came to her to have their disputes decided. ⁶She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, "The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you: 'Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead the way to Mount Tabor. ⁷I will lure Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.'"

⁸Barak said to her, "If you go with me, I will go; but if you don't go with me, I won't go."

⁹"Very well," Deborah said, "I will go with you. But because of the way you are going about this,^b the honor will not be yours, for the LORD will hand Sisera over to a woman." So Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh, ¹⁰where he summoned Zebulun and Naphtali. Ten thousand men followed him, and Deborah also went with him.

¹¹Now Heber the Kenite had left the other Kenites, the descendants of Hobab, Moses' brother-in-law,^c and pitched his tent by the great tree in Zaanannum near Kedesh

¹²When they told Sisera that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor, ¹³Sisera gathered together his nine hundred iron chariots and all the men with him, from Harosheth Haggoyim to the Kishon River.

¹⁴Then Deborah said to Barak, "Go! This is the day the LORD has given Sisera into your hands." Has not the LORD gone ahead of you?" So Barak went down Mount Tabor, followed by ten thousand men. ¹⁵At Barak's advance, the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and army by the sword, and Sisera abandoned his chariot and fled on foot. ¹⁶But Barak pursued the chariots and army as far as

Harosheth Haggoyim. All the troops of Sisera fell by the sword; not a man was left.

¹⁷Sisera, however, fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite^d because there were friendly relations between Jabin king of Hazor and the clan of Heber the Kenite.

¹⁸Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, "Come, my lord, come right in. Don't be afraid." So he entered her tent, and she put a covering over him.

¹⁹"I'm thirsty," he said. "Please give me some water." She opened a skin of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him up.

²⁰"Stand in the doorway of the tent," he told her. "If someone comes by and asks you, 'Is anyone here?' say 'No.'"

²¹But Jael, Heber's wife, picked up a tent peg and a hammer and went quietly to him while he lay fast asleep, exhausted. She drove the peg through his temple into the ground, and he died.

²²Barak came by in pursuit of Sisera, and Jael went out to meet him. "Come," she said, "I will show you the man you're looking for." So he went in with her, and there lay Sisera with the tent peg through his temple—dead.

²³On that day God subdued Jabin, the Canaanite king, before the Israelites. ²⁴And the hand of the Israelites grew stronger and stronger against Jabin, the Canaanite king, until they destroyed him.

The Song of Deborah

5 On that day Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam sang this song:

²"When the princes in Israel take the lead,
when the people willingly offer
themselves—
praise the LORD!

³"Hear this, you kings! Listen, you rulers!
I will sing to^d the LORD, I will sing;
I will make music to^e the LORD, the God of
Israel.

⁴"O LORD, when you went out from Seir,
when you marched from the land of Edom,
the earth shook, the heavens poured,
the clouds poured down water.

⁵The mountains quaked before the LORD, the
One of Sinai,
before the LORD, the God of Israel.

⁶"In the days of Shamgar son of Anath,
in the days of Jael, the roads were
abandoned;

travelers took to winding paths.

⁷Village life^f in Israel ceased,
ceased until I,^g Deborah, arose,
arose a mother in Israel.

⁸When they chose new gods,
war came to the city gates,
and not a shield or spear was seen
among forty thousand in Israel.

⁹My heart is with Israel's princes,

4:9 Honor to a Woman

The only woman leader in Judges, Deborah had won unquestioned respect. She sent for Barak to lead the army, but he was unwilling to go into battle without her. Deborah predicted that the real hero of the battle would be a woman.

^a Traditionally judging
song I will praise

^b Or Warriors

^c Or But on the expedition you are undertaking

^d Or you

^e Or father-in-law

^f Or of

^g Or I with

with the willing volunteers among the people
Praise the Lord!

⁶ You who ride on white donkeys
sitting on your saddle blankets
and you who walk along the road,
consider the voice of the singers¹¹ at the
watering places

They recall the righteous acts of the Lord,
the righteous acts of his warriors¹² in Israel

⁷ Then the people of the Lord
went down to the city gates
⁸ Wake up, wake up, Deborah!
Wake up, wake up, break out in song!
Arise, O Barak!
Take captive your captives, O son of
Abinoam

⁹ Then the men who were left
came down to the nobles
the people of the Lord
came to me with the mighty.
¹⁰ Some came from Ephraim, whose roots were in
Amalek

Benjamin was with the people who followed
you
From Makir captains came down,
from Zebulun those who bear a
commander's staff

¹¹ The princes of Issachar were with Deborah;
yes, Issachar was with Barak,
rushing after him into the valley
In the districts of Reuben
there was much searching of heart

¹² Why did you slay among the campfires
to hear the whistling for the flocks?
In the districts of Reuben
there was much searching of heart.

Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan.
And Dan, why did he linger by the ships?
Asher remained on the coast
and stayed in his coves

¹³ The people of Zebulun risked their very lives;
so did Naphtali on the heights of the field.

¹⁴ Kings came, they fought,
the kings of Canaan fought
at Taanach by the waters of Megiddo,
but they carried off no silver, no plunder.
¹⁵ From the heavens the stars fought,
from their courses they fought against
Sisera

¹⁶ The river Kishon swept them away
the age-old river, the river Kishon
March on, my soul; be strong!

¹⁷ Then thundered the horses' hoofs—
galloping, galloping go his mighty steeds.

¹⁸ 'Curse Meroz,' said the angel of the Lord
Curse its people bitterly,
because they did not come to help the Lord,
to help the Lord against the mighty.

¹⁹ Most blessed of women be Jael,
the wife of Heber the Kenite,

most blessed of tent-dwelling women.

²⁰ He asked for water, and she gave him milk;
in a bowl fit for nobles she brought him
curdled milk

²¹ Her hand reached for the tent peg,
her right hand for the workman's hammer.
She struck Sisera, she crushed his head,
she shattered and pierced his temple.

²² At her feet he sank,
he fell; there he lay.
At her feet he sank, he fell;
where he sank, there he fell—dead.

²³ Through the window peered Sisera's mother;
behind the lattice she cried out,
'Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why is the clatter of his chariots delayed?'

²⁴ The wisest of her ladies answer her;
indeed, she keeps saying to herself,

²⁵ Are they not finding and dividing the spoils:
a girl or two for each man,
colorful garments as plunder for Sisera,
colorful garments embroidered,
highly embroidered garments for my neck—
all this as plunder?'

²⁶ 'So may all your enemies perish, O Lord!
But may they who love you be like the sun
when it rises in its strength.'

Then the land had peace forty years.

Gideon

6 Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. ² Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds. ³ Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country. ⁴ They camped on the land and ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys. ⁵ They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count the men and their camels, they invaded the land to ravage it. ⁶ Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the Lord for help.

⁷ When the Israelites cried to the Lord because of Midian, he sent them a prophet, who said, 'This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ⁸ I snatched you from the power of Egypt and from the hand of all your oppressors. I drove them from before you and gave you their land. ⁹ I said to you, 'I am the Lord your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.' But you have not listened to me.'

¹⁰ The angel of the Lord came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. ¹¹ When the angel of the Lord appeared to

¹¹ Or archers, the meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain

¹² Or villagers

¹³ Or saddlebags

Gideon he said. The Lord is with you. Gideon
replied.

But Gideon replied. If the Lord is with
us, why have all these things happened to us? There are all
these idols in our land and we are in distress. Now the Lord
bring us up out of Egypt. For the Lord has abandoned us and
the angel of the Lord has said to us.

The angel of the Lord said to him and said. Go in the
strength of your hand and serve Israel out of Midian's
hand. For the Lord has said to you.

Gideon said to the angel of the Lord. How can I save
Israel? For I am the weakest of Manasseh. And I
am the least of my family.

The angel of the Lord said to him. I will be with you. And
you shall overcome all the Midianites together.
For the Lord has said to you. I have made you a warrior.

— Judges 6:13-16 (NIV)

your eyes. Give me a sign that it is really you talk-
ing to me. Please do not go away until I come
back and bring my offering and set it before you.

And the Lord said. I will wait until you re-
turn.

Gideon went in, prepared a young goat and
seven ephahs of flour. He made bread without
yeast. Putting the meat in a basket and its broth in
a pot, he brought them out and offered them to
him under the oak.

The angel of God said to him. Take the meat
and the unleavened bread, place them on this
rock, and pour out the broth. And Gideon did so.
With the tip of the staff that was in his hand, the
angel of the Lord touched the meat and the un-
leavened bread. Fire flared from the rock, consum-
ing the meat and the bread. And the angel of the

INSIGHT

Unlikely Leaders

God drew out Gideon's bidden potential

"The Lord said to him, 'Peace. Do not be afraid. You are not going to die.'" 6:23

Gideon made an unlikely leader—hesitant and fearful. We first meet him as he furtively
threshed wheat in a winepress. To thresh wheat openly was to invite the occupying Midianite
army. The Midianites dominated Israel so thoroughly that Israelites could rarely
safely live in caves.

Gideon was planning to heroes until the angel of the Lord came to him with a battle
commission. And then Gideon seemed to ask, trembling,

"How can I lead? My doubts were justified. His family and village worshiped Baal, not the
Lord. The angel was subject to paralyzing tears, even on the eve of battle. Gideon kept
demanding more and more proof that God really was with him—and one miracle was not enough.

Then the Lord seemed to make Gideon's job more formidable. He reduced his army
to 300 men, an army so outnumbered won, that would prove beyond doubt that
the Lord was with him.

God's patience, persistence, and patience brought Gideon to the point of courage. He
encouraged him, directed him, transformed him. Overnight Gideon became a strong and decisive
leader. He used ruses and tricks for scare tactics, enabling his small band to scatter the enemy.
Through hit-and-run operations followed. The little army devastated the scattered Midianites,
and Gideon's triumph brought an era of freedom. Perhaps no one was as surprised as he.

Cast-off Material

The selection of Gideon shows a pattern. At a time when women were regarded as second-class
citizens (see 4:14, 19-24), God chose Deborah, another judge, had been a social
outcast, the leader of a gang of outlaws, before God chose him to lead.

And the pattern's strong not only in Judges. Throughout the Bible, God used cast-off material.
He chose the "weak" because of its great size or sophistication. (In fact, archaeologists report a
city in the desert as a city after the Israelites captured it.) God did not seek the most capable
leader, but the most naturally "good." He chose a small, weak slave tribe, uncultured, with a
lack of resources, for his kindness to them. Time and again the Israelites proved themselves faulty. So
God chose leaders. With this unlikely material God did great things so the world could see that the
glory was his and his alone.

Paul took up this theme when he wrote, over a thousand years later, "Brothers, think of what
you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were
influential, not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame
the wise. God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. . . . Therefore, as it is
written, 'Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.'" (1 Corinthians 1:26-31)

Questions: Do you picture yourself as a leader? Why or why not? What would God have to change
in you to make you a leader?

THE
JOURNAL OF THE
SOCIETY OF THE
SACRED

THE
JOURNAL OF THE
SOCIETY OF THE
SACRED

THE
JOURNAL OF THE
SOCIETY OF THE
SACRED

THE
JOURNAL OF THE
SOCIETY OF THE
SACRED

THE
JOURNAL OF THE
SOCIETY OF THE
SACRED

THE
JOURNAL OF THE
SOCIETY OF THE
SACRED

Israelite. God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands."

¹⁵When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he worshiped God. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, "Get up! The LORD has given the Midianite camp into your hands."

¹⁶Dividing the three hundred men into three companies, he placed trumpets and empty jars in the hands of all of them, with torches inside.

¹⁷"Watch me," he told them. "Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do. ¹⁸When I and all who are with me blow our trumpets, then from all around the camp blow yours and shout, 'For the LORD and for Gideon.'"

¹⁹Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after they had changed the guard. They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands. ²⁰The three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars. Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!"

²¹While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled.

²²When the three hundred trumpets sounded, the LORD caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords. The army fled to Beth Shittah toward Zererah as far as the border of Abel Meholah near Tabbath. ²³Israelites from Naphtali, Asher and all Manasseh were called out, and they pursued the Midianites. ²⁴Gideon sent messengers throughout the hill country of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites and seize the waters of the Jordan ahead of them as far as Beth Barah."

So all the men of Ephraim were called out and they took the waters of the Jordan as far as Beth Barah. ²⁵They also captured two of the Midianite leaders, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued the Midianites and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, who was by the Jordan.

Zebah and Zalmunna

8 Now the Ephraimites asked Gideon, "Why have you treated us like this? Why didn't you call us when you went to fight Midian?" And they criticized him sharply.

²But he answered them, "What have I accomplished compared to you? Aren't the gleanings of Ephraim's grapes better than the full grape harvest of Abiezer? ³God gave Oreb and Zeeb, the Midianite leaders, into your hands. What was I able to do compared to you?" At this, their resentment against him subsided.

⁴Gideon and his three hundred men, exhausted yet keeping up the pursuit, came to the Jordan and crossed it. ⁵He said to the men of Succoth, "Give my troops some bread, they are worn out, and I am still pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian."

⁶But the officials of Succoth said, "Do you already have the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna in your possession? Why should we give bread to your troops?"

⁷Then Gideon replied, "Just for that when the LORD has given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, I will tear your flesh with desert thorns and briers."

⁸From there he went up to Peniel^a and made the same request of them, but they answered as the men of Succoth had. ⁹So he said to the men of Peniel, "When I return in triumph, I will tear down this tower."

¹⁰Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor with a force of about fifteen thousand men, all that were left of the armies of the eastern peoples, a hundred and twenty thousand swordsmen had fallen. ¹¹Gideon went up by the route of the nomads east of Nobah and Jogbehah and fell upon the unsuspecting army. ¹²Zebah and Zalmunna, the two kings of Midian, fled, but he pursued them and captured them, routing their entire army.

¹³Gideon son of Joash then returned from the battle by the Pass of Heres. ¹⁴He caught a young man of Succoth and questioned him, and the young man wrote down for him the names of the seventy-seven officials of Succoth, the elders of the town. ¹⁵Then Gideon came and said to the men of Succoth, "Here are Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you taunted me by saying, 'Do you already have the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna in your possession? Why should we give bread to your exhausted men?'" ¹⁶He took the elders of the town and taught the men of Succoth a lesson by punishing them with desert thorns and briers. ¹⁷He also pulled down the tower of Peniel and killed the men of the town.

¹⁸Then he asked Zebah and Zalmunna, "What kind of men did you kill at Tabor?"

"Men like you," they answered, "each one with the bearing of a prince."

¹⁹Gideon replied, "Those were my brothers, the sons of my own mother. As surely as the LORD lives, if you had spared their lives, I would not kill you." ²⁰Turning to Jether, his oldest son, he said, "Kill them!" But Jether did not draw his sword, because he was only a boy and was afraid.

²¹Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Come, do it yourself. 'As is the man, so is his strength.'" So Gideon stepped forward and killed them, and took the ornaments off their camels' necks.

8:14 Early Literacy

Some scholars argue that much of the Old Testament was handed down by word of mouth and only written at a much later time. This brief mention of a young man's ability to write suggests that literacy was widespread even at this early date—and thus that the Old Testament books could have been written soon after the events they describe.

^a Hebrew Peniel, a variant of Peniel; also in verses 9 and 17

Gideon's Ephod

²²The Israelites said to Gideon, "Rule over us—you, your son and your grandson—because you have saved us out of the hand of Midian."

²³But Gideon told them, "I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. The LORD will rule over you." ²⁴And he said, "I do have one request, that each of you give me an earring from your share of the plunder." (It was the custom of the Ishmaelites to wear gold earrings.)

²⁵They answered, "We'll be glad to give them." So they spread out a garment, and each man threw a ring from his plunder onto it. ²⁶The weight of the gold rings he asked for came to seventeen hundred shekels,^a not counting the ornaments, the pendants and the purple garments worn by the kings of Midian or the chains that were on their camels' necks. ²⁷Gideon made the gold into an ephod, which he placed in Ophrah, his town. All Israel prostituted themselves by worshiping it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and his family.

Gideon's Death

²⁸Thus Midian was subdued before the Israelites and did not raise its head again. During Gideon's lifetime, the land enjoyed peace forty years.

²⁹Jerub-Baal son of Joash went back home to live. ³⁰He had seventy sons of his own, for he had many wives. ³¹His concubine, who lived in Shechem, also bore him a son, whom he named Abimelech. ³²Gideon son of Joash died at a good old age and was buried in the tomb of his father Joash in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

³³No sooner had Gideon died than the Israelites again prostituted themselves to the Baals. They set up Baal-Berith as their god and ³⁴did not remember the LORD their God, who had rescued them from the hands of all their enemies on every side. ³⁵They also failed to show kindness to the family of Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) for all the good things he had done for them.

Abimelech

9 Abimelech son of Jerub-Baal went to his mother's brothers in Shechem and said to them and to all his mother's clan, ²"Ask all the citizens of Shechem, 'Which is better for you: to have all seventy of Jerub-Baal's sons rule over you, or just one man?' Remember, I am your flesh and blood."

³When the brothers repeated all this to the citizens of Shechem, they were inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, "He is our brother."

⁴They gave him seventy shekels^b of silver from the temple of Baal-Berith, and Abimelech used it to hire reckless adventurers, who became his followers. ⁵He went to his father's home in Ophrah and on one stone murdered his seventy brothers, the sons of Jerub-Baal. But Jotham, the youngest son of Jerub-Baal, escaped by hiding. ⁶Then all the citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo gathered beside the great tree at the pillar in Shechem to crown Abimelech king.

⁷When Jotham was told about this, he climbed up on the top of Mount Gerizim and shouted to

them, "Listen to me, citizens of Shechem, so that God may listen to you. ⁸One day the trees went out to anoint a king for themselves. They said to the olive tree, 'Be our king.'

⁹'But the olive tree answered, 'Should I give up my oil, by which both gods and men are honored, to hold sway over the trees?'

¹⁰'Next, the trees said to the fig tree, 'Come and be our king.'

¹¹'But the fig tree replied, 'Should I give up my fruit, so good and sweet, to hold sway over the trees?'

¹²'Then the trees said to the vine, 'Come and be our king.'

¹³'But the vine answered, 'Should I give up my wine, which cheers both gods and men, to hold sway over the trees?'

¹⁴'Finally all the trees said to the thornbush, 'Come and be our king.'

¹⁵'The thornbush said to the trees, 'If you really want to anoint me king over you, come and take refuge in my shade; but if not, then let fire come out of the thornbush and consume the cedars of Lebanon!'

¹⁶'Now if you have acted honorably and in good faith when you made Abimelech king, and if you have been fair to Jerub-Baal and his family, and if you have treated him as he deserves— ¹⁷and to think that my father fought for you, risked his life to rescue you from the hand of Midian ¹⁸(but today you have revolted against my father's family, murdered his seventy sons on a single stone, and made Abimelech, the son of his slave girl, king over the citizens of Shechem because he is your brother)— ¹⁹if then you have acted honorably and in good faith toward Jerub-Baal and his family today, may Abimelech be your joy, and may you be his, too! ²⁰But if you have not, let fire come out from Abimelech and consume you, citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo, and let fire come out from you, citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo, and consume Abimelech!"

²¹Then Jotham fled, escaping to Beer, and he lived there because he was afraid of his brother Abimelech.

²²After Abimelech had governed Israel three years, ²³God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the citizens of Shechem, who acted treacherously against Abimelech. ²⁴God did this in order that the crime against Jerub-Baal's seventy sons, the shedding of their blood, might be avenged on their brother Abimelech and on the citizens of Shechem, who had helped him murder his brothers. ²⁵In opposition to him these citizens of Shechem set men on the hilltops to ambush and rob everyone who passed by, and this was reported to Abimelech.

²⁶Now Gaal son of Ebed moved with his brothers into Shechem, and its citizens put their confidence in him. ²⁷After they had gone out into the fields and gathered the grapes and trodden them, they held a festival in the temple of their god. While they were eating and drinking, they cursed Abimelech. ²⁸Then Gaal son of Ebed said, "Who is

^a26 That is, about 43 pounds (about 19.5 kilograms)

^b4 That is, about 1 3/4 pounds (about 0.8 kilogram)

JUDGES 9:29

Abimelech, and who is Shechem, that we should be subject to him? Isn't he Jerub-Baal's son, and isn't Zebul his deputy? Serve the men of Hamor, Shechem's father! Why should we serve Abimelech? ²⁹If only this people were under my command! Then I would get rid of him. I would say to Abimelech, 'Call out your whole army!'"^a

³⁰When Zebul the governor of the city heard what Gaal son of Ebed said, he was very angry. ³¹Under cover he sent messengers to Abimelech, saying, 'Gaal son of Ebed and his brothers have come to Shechem and are stirring up the city against you. ³²Now then, during the night you and your men should come and lie in wait in the fields. ³³In the morning at sunrise, advance against the city. When Gaal and his men come out against you, do whatever your hand finds to do.'

³⁴So Abimelech and all his troops set out by night and took up concealed positions near Shechem in four companies. ³⁵Now Gaal son of Ebed had gone out and was standing at the entrance to the city gate just as Abimelech and his soldiers came out from their hiding place.

³⁶When Gaal saw them, he said to Zebul, "Look, people are coming down from the tops of the mountains!"

Zebul replied, "You mistake the shadows of the mountains for men."

³⁷But Gaal spoke up again: "Look, people are coming down from the center of the land, and a company is coming from the direction of the soothsayers' tree."

³⁸Then Zebul said to him, "Where is your big talk now, you who said, 'Who is Abimelech that we should be subject to him?' Aren't these the men you ridiculed? Go out and fight them!"

³⁹So Gaal led out^b the citizens of Shechem and fought Abimelech. ⁴⁰Abimelech chased him, and many fell wounded in the flight—all the way to the entrance to the gate. ⁴¹Abimelech stayed in Arumah, and Zebul drove Gaal and his brothers out of Shechem.

⁴²The next day the people of Shechem went out to the fields, and this was reported to Abimelech. ⁴³So he took his men, divided them into three companies and set an ambush in the fields. When he saw the people coming out of the city, he rose to attack them. ⁴⁴Abimelech and the companies with him rushed forward to a position at the entrance to the city gate. Then two companies rushed upon those in the fields and struck them down. ⁴⁵All that day Abimelech pressed his attack against the city until he had captured it and killed its people. Then he destroyed the city and scattered salt over it.

⁴⁶On hearing this, the citizens in the tower of Shechem went into the stronghold of the temple of El-Berith. ⁴⁷When Abimelech heard that they had assembled there, ⁴⁸he and all his men went up Mount Zalmon. He took an ax and cut off some branches, which he lifted to his shoulders. He ordered the men with him, "Quick! Do what you have seen me do!" ⁴⁹So all the men cut branches

and followed Abimelech. They piled them against the stronghold and set it on fire over the people inside. So all the people in the tower of Shechem, about a thousand men and women, also died.

⁵⁰Next Abimelech went to Thebez and besieged it and captured it. ⁵¹Inside the city, however, was a strong tower, to which all the men and women—all the people of the city—fled. They locked themselves in and climbed up on the tower roof. ⁵²Abimelech went to the tower and stormed it. But as he approached the entrance to the tower to set it on fire, ^{53a}a woman dropped an upper millstone on his head and cracked his skull.

⁵⁴Hurriedly he called to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword and kill me, so that they can't say, 'A woman killed him.'"^c So his servant ran him through, and he died. ⁵⁵When the Israelites saw that Abimelech was dead, they went home.

⁵⁶Thus God repaid the wickedness that Abimelech had done to his father by murdering his seventy brothers. ⁵⁷God also made the men of Shechem pay for all their wickedness. The curse of Jotham son of Jerub-Baal came on them.

Tola

10 After the time of Abimelech a man of Issachar, Tola son of Puah, the son of Dodo, rose to save Israel. He lived in Shamir, in the hill country of Ephraim. ²He led Israel twenty-three years; then he died, and was buried in Shamir.

Jair

³He was followed by Jair of Gilead, who led Israel twenty-two years. ⁴He had thirty sons, who rode thirty donkeys. They controlled thirty towns in Gilead, which to this day are called Havvoth Jair.^d ⁵When Jair died, he was buried in Kamon.

Jephthah

⁶Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD. They served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and the gods of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the Ammonites and the gods of the Philistines. And because the Israelites forsook the LORD and no longer served him, ⁷he became angry with them. He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and the Ammonites, ⁸who that year shattered and crushed them. For eighteen years they oppressed all the Israelites on the east side of the Jordan in Gilead, the land of the Amorites. ⁹The Ammonites also crossed the Jordan to fight against Judah, Benjamin and the house of Ephraim, and Israel was in great distress. ¹⁰Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD, "We have sinned against you, forsaking our God and serving the Baals."

¹¹The LORD replied, "When the Egyptians, the Amorites, the Ammonites, the Philistines, ¹²the Sidonians, the Amalekites and the Maonites^e oppressed you and you cried to me for help, did I not save you from their hands? ¹³But you have forsaken me and served other gods, so I will no longer save you. ¹⁴Go and cry out to the gods you have

^a29 Septuagint, Hebrew him "Then he said to Abimelech, 'Call out your whole army'"

^c2 Traditionally judged, also in verse 3

^d4 Or called the settlements of Jair

^e39 Or Gaal went out in the sight of

^f12 Hebrew, some Septuagint manuscripts Madianites

chosen. Let them save you when you are in trouble."

"But the Israelites said to the Lord, "We have chosen you as whatever you think best, but now we are in trouble." Then they got rid of the gods they were worshipping and served the Lord. And the Lord answered them no longer.

The Ammonites were called to arms and fought against Israel. The Israelites assembled and fought at Mizpah. "The leaders of the people of Israel said to each other, "Whoever will launch an attack against the Ammonites will be the head of the tribe of Gilead."

11 Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty warrior. His mother was also bore him sons, and when they were grown up, they drove Jephthah away. "You are not going to get any inheritance in our land," they said. "Because you are the son of an unmarried woman." So Jephthah fled from his brothers and settled in the land of Tob, where a group of adventurers gathered around him and he became their leader.

Some time later when the Ammonites made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob. "Come," they said. "Be our commander, so we can fight the Ammonites."

Jephthah said to them, "Didn't you hate me and drive me from my father's house? Why do you come to me now, when you're in trouble?"

"The elders of Gilead said to him, "Nevertheless, we are turning to you now; come with us to fight the Ammonites, and you will be our head and we will live in Gilead."

Jephthah answered, "Suppose you take me and fight the Ammonites and the Lord gives them into my hands—will I really be your head?"

"The elders of Gilead replied, "The Lord is our God; we will certainly do as you say." So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and commander over them. And he repeated all his words before the people at Mizpah.

Then Jephthah sent messengers to the Ammonite king with the question: "What do you have against us that you have attacked our country?"

The king of the Ammonites answered Jephthah's messengers, "When Israel came up out of Egypt, they took away my land from the Arnon to

the Jabbok, all the way to the Jordan. Now give it back peaceably."

Jephthah sent back messengers to the Ammonite king, saying:

"This is what Jephthah says: Israel did not take the land of Moab or the land of the Ammonites. But when they came up out of Egypt, Israel went through the desert to the Red Sea and on to Kadesh. Then Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, 'Give us permission to go through your country,' but the king of Edom would not listen. They sent also to the king of Moab, and he refused. So Israel stayed at Kadesh.

Next they traveled through the desert, skirted the lands of Edom and Moab, passed along the eastern side of the country of Moab, and camped on the other side of the Arnon. They did not enter the territory of Moab, for the Arnon was its border.

Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon, and said to him, "Let us pass through your country to our own place." Sihon, however, did not trust Israel to pass through his territory. He mustered all his men and encamped at Jahaz and fought with Israel.

Then the Lord, the God of Israel, gave Sihon and all his men into Israel's hands, and they defeated them. Israel took over all the land of the Amorites who lived in that country, capturing all of it from the Arnon to the Jabbok and from the desert to the Jordan.

Now since the Lord, the God of Israel, has driven the Amorites out before his people Israel, what right have you to take it over? Will you not take what your god Chemosh gives you? Likewise, whatever the Lord our God has given us, we will possess. Are you better than Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever quarrel with Israel or fight with them? For three hundred years Israel occupied Heshbon, Aroer, the surrounding settlements and all the towns along the Arnon. Why didn't you retake them during that time? I have not wronged you, but you are doing me wrong by waging war against me. Let the Lord, the Judge, decide the dispute this day between the Israelites and the Ammonites."

The king of Ammon, however, paid no attention to the message Jephthah sent him.

Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah. He crossed Gilead and Manasseh, passed through Mizpah of Gilead, and from there he advanced against the Ammonites. And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord: "If you give the Ammonites into my hands, whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the Lord's, and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering."

Then Jephthah went over to fight the Ammonites, and the Lord gave them into his hands. He devastated twenty towns from Aroer to the vicin-

11:6 A Man Like David

Jephthah, like King David to come, was an outlaw who gained leadership experience at the head of a small band of adventurers. Israel turned to him when they needed military leadership, as they later would turn to David. Yet Jephthah's reputation never equaled David's, and the reason must have something to do with his lack of wisdom. His rash vow to God (11:31) and his harsh answer to a complaint (12:3) each had destructive results.

1. Hebrew: "Am Jabbok" that is, Sea of Reeds

2. Or: Sihon, should not make an agreement for Israel

3. Or: ruler

I am," he said.

So Manoah asked him, "When your words are fulfilled, what is to be the rule for the boy's life and work?"

¹³The angel of the LORD answered, "Your wife must do all that I have told her. ¹⁴She must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, nor drink any wine or other fermented drink nor eat anything unclean. She must do everything I have commanded her.

¹⁵Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, "We would like you to stay until we prepare a young goat for you."

¹⁶The angel of the LORD replied, "Even though you detain me, I will not eat any of your food. But if you prepare a burnt offering, offer it to the LORD." (Manoah did not realize that it was the angel of the LORD.)

¹⁷Then Manoah inquired of the angel of the LORD, "What is your name, so that we may honor you when your word comes true?"

¹⁸ Or is wonderful

¹⁸He replied, "Why do you ask my name? It is beyond understanding."¹⁹Then Manoah took a young goat, together with the grain offering, and sacrificed it on a rock to the LORD. And the LORD did an amazing thing while Manoah and his wife watched: ²⁰As the flame blazed up from the altar toward heaven, the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame. Seeing this, Manoah and his wife fell with their faces to the ground. ²¹When the angel of the LORD did not show himself again to Manoah and his wife, Manoah realized that it was the angel of the LORD.

²²"We are doomed to die!" he said to his wife. "We have seen God!"

²³But his wife answered, "If the LORD had meant to kill us, he would not have accepted a burnt offering and grain offering from our hands, nor shown us all these things or now told us this."

²⁴The woman gave birth to a boy and named him Samson. He grew and the LORD blessed him, ²⁵and the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him while

INSIGHT

Samson: A Weakness for Women

The strongest man of his generation never lived up to his promise

"I have seen a Philistine woman . . . now get her for me as my wife." 14:2

Samson, the strongest man of his generation, was tragically unable to control his lust. When he saw an attractive woman, he wanted her. He first fell for a young woman he saw in a Philistine village just across the valley from his home. His parents tried to dissuade him, since her religion and culture were unacceptable, but he would not listen. Desire was his only rule. The marriage ended in a matter of days and resulted in dozens of deaths.

The famous Delilah was at least the third woman who wanted Samson, according to Judges. She, like his first love, was a Philistine living near his home. Where thousands of men had failed to overcome Samson, a woman succeeded. Thanks to her, he was captured, blinded, and set to work pushing a grinding machine. His final triumph was ironically fitting: blind and bound, brought out like a freak for a hooting crowd's amusement, he destroyed himself while wreaking vengeance on the crowd. At his death, as throughout his life, it was hard to say who suffered most from Samson's hot temper: the Philistines or Samson.

Needed: A Leader

When you think of what God meant Samson to be, his life appears particularly tragic. Israel desperately needed a strong, confident leader, for the Philistines were moving in as masters, and many Israelites were willing to let them. God intended Samson for great things. Of all the judges, only Samson was announced by an angel before he was born (13:3). He was assigned to that special class of people known as Nazirites (described in Numbers 6), whose lives were specially devoted to God. Nazirites never drank wine, went near a dead body, or cut their hair.

Samson never lived up to his promise. Rule 3 was probably the only part of the Nazirite vow he kept—it required little self-discipline to let hair grow.

Despite all Samson's weaknesses, God used him. He is mentioned in the Bible "Hall of Fame" (Hebrews 11:32) as a hero of faith along with Gideon, Barak, and Jephthah, all from Judges. Barely conscious of what it meant to live for God—and given to fits of lust and temper, Samson still had great physical strength, which came supernaturally from God. With it, he pushed back the Philistines—more by accident than by intention—and kept Israel intact.

Samson seems like a train whose engineer has fallen out of the cab, an oversized accident smashing into everything it meets. But for God, there are no accidents. He used the tragedy of Samson's life for good.

Life Questions Which might best be said of you: "Oh, what he might have been!" or "He made the best of his abilities?"

he was in Mahaneh Dan, between Zorah and Esh-taol.

Samson's Marriage

14 Samson went down to Timnah and saw there a young Philistine woman. ²When he returned, he said to his father and mother, "I have seen a Philistine woman in Timnah; now get her for me as my wife."

³His father and mother replied, "Isn't there an acceptable woman among your relatives or among all our people? Must you go to the uncircumcised Philistines to get a wife?"

But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me. She's the right one for me." ⁴(His parents did not know that this was from the Lord, who was seeking an occasion to confront the Philistines; for at that time they were ruling over Israel.) ⁵Samson went down to Timnah together with his father and mother. As they approached the vineyards of Timnah, suddenly a young lion came roaring toward him. ⁶The Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat. But he told neither his father nor his mother what he had done. ⁷Then he went down and talked with the woman, and he liked her.

⁸Some time later, when he went back to marry her, he turned aside to look at the lion's carcass. In it was a swarm of bees and some honey, ⁹which he scooped out with his hands and ate as he went along. When he rejoined his parents, he gave them some, and they too ate it. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey from the lion's carcass.

¹⁰Now his father went down to see the woman. And Samson made a feast there, as was customary for bridegrooms. ¹¹When he appeared, he was given thirty companions.

¹²"Let me tell you a riddle," Samson said to them. "If you can give me the answer within the seven days of the feast, I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty sets of clothes. ¹³If you can't tell me the answer, you must give me thirty linen garments and thirty sets of clothes."

"Tell us your riddle," they said. "Let's hear it."

¹⁴He replied,

Out of the eater, something to eat,
out of the strong, something sweet."

For three days they could not give the answer. ⁴On the fourth day, they said to Samson's

wife, "Coax your husband into explaining the riddle for us, or we will burn you and your father's household to death. Did you invite us here to rub us?"

¹⁶Then Samson's wife threw herself on him, sobbing, "You hate me! You don't really love me. You've given my people a riddle, but you haven't told me the answer."

"I haven't even explained it to my father or mother," he replied, "so why should I explain it to you?" ¹⁷She cried the whole seven days of the feast. So on the seventh day he finally told her, because she continued to press him. She in turn explained the riddle to her people.

¹⁸Before sunset on the seventh day the men of the town said to him,

"What is sweeter than honey?
What is stronger than a lion?"

Samson said to them,

"If you had not plowed with my heifer,
you would not have solved my riddle."

¹⁹Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power. He went down to Ashkelon, struck down thirty of their men, stripped them of their belongings and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle. Burning with anger, he went up to his father's house. ²⁰And Samson's wife was given to the friend who had attended him at his wedding.

Samson's Vengeance on the Philistines

15 Later on, at the time of wheat harvest, Samson took a young goat and went to visit his wife. He said, "I'm going to my wife's room." But her father would not let him go in.

²"I was so sure you thoroughly hated her," he said, "that I gave her to your friend. Isn't her younger sister more attractive? Take her instead."

Samson said to them, "This time I have a right to get even with the Philistines; I will really harm them." ⁴So he went out and caught three hundred foxes and tied them tail to tail in pairs. He then fastened a torch to every pair of tails. ⁵At the torches and let the foxes loose in the standing grain of the Philistines. He burned up the shocks and standing grain, together with the vineyards and olive groves.

When the Philistines asked, "What did this?" they were told, "Samson, the Timnite's woman-law, because his wife was given to his friend."

⁶As the Philistines went up and burned her and her father to death, Samson said to them, "Now you've acted like this, I won't sleep until I get my revenge on you." ⁷He attacked them repeatedly and slaughtered many of them. Then he went down and stayed in a cave in the rock of Etam.

⁸The Philistines went up and camped in Judah, spreading out near Beth. ⁹The men of Judah asked, "Why have you come to fight us?"

"We have come to take Samson prisoner," they answered, "in order to burn as he did to us."

¹⁰Then three thousand men from Judah went

14 | The First Sign of Trouble

Timnah was only ten miles across the valley from Samson's hometown. Apparently, the Philistines and Israelites mixed freely back and forth, and not all Israelites opposed the Philistines (see 1:11). Samson, making the short stroll, was attracted to a young Philistine woman. His lack of concern for differences of religion and his lack of submission to his parents were bad signs.

down to the cave in the rock of Etam and said to Samson. "Don't you realize that the Philistines are waiting for us? What have you done to us?"

He answered, "I merely did to them what they did to me."

They said to him, "We've come to tie you up and hand you over to the Philistines."

Samson said, "Swear to me that you won't kill me."

They answered, "We will only tie you and hand you over to them. We will not kill you, so they bound him with two new ropes and pulled him up from the rock. ¹⁴As he approached the Philistines came toward him shouting. ¹⁵At that time the LORD came upon him in power, and the ropes on his arms became like charred flax, and his bindings dropped from his hands.

¹⁵Finding a donkey's jawbone of a donkey, he grabbed it and struck down a thousand men.

Then Samson said

With a donkey's jawbone
I have made donkeys of them.^a
With a donkey's jawbone
I have killed a thousand men."

When he finished speaking, he threw away the jawbone, and the place was called Ramath Lehi.^b

"Because he was very thirsty, he cried out to the LORD. "You have given your servant this great sign, LORD. Must I now die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?" ¹⁹Then God opened up the hollow place in Lehi, and water came out of it. When Samson drank, his strength returned and he revived. So the spring was called En Hakkore,^c and it is still there in Lehi.

Samson led Israel for twenty years in the days of the Philistines.

Samson and Delilah

16 One day Samson went to Gaza, where he saw a prostitute. He went in to spend the night with her. ²The people of Gaza were told, "Samson is here!" So they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the city gate. They made no move during the night, saying, "At dawn we'll kill him."

But Samson lay there only until the middle of the night. Then he got up and took hold of the doors of the city gate, together with the two posts, and tore them loose, bar and all. He lifted them to

his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron.

⁴Some time later, he fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah. ⁵The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, "See if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength and how we can overpower him so we may tie him up and subdue him. Each one of us will give you eleven hundred shekels^d of silver."

⁶So Delilah said to Samson, "Tell me the secret of your great strength and how you can be tied up and subdued."

⁷Samson answered her, "If anyone ties me with seven fresh thongs^e that have not been dried, I'll become as weak as any other man."

⁸Then the rulers of the Philistines brought her seven fresh thongs that had not been dried, and she tied him with them. ⁹With men hidden in the room, she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" But he snapped the thongs as easily as a piece of string snaps when it comes close to a flame. So the secret of his strength was not discovered.

¹⁰Then Delilah said to Samson, "You have made a fool of me; you lied to me. Come now, tell me how you can be tied."

¹¹He said, "If anyone ties me securely with new ropes that have never been used, I'll become as weak as any other man."

¹²So Delilah took new ropes and tied him with them. Then, with men hidden in the room, she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" But he snapped the ropes off his arms as if they were threads.

¹³Delilah then said to Samson, "Until now, you have been making a fool of me and lying to me. Tell me how you can be tied."

He replied, "If you weave the seven braids of my head into the fabric on the loom, and tighten it with the pin, I'll become as weak as any other man." So while he was sleeping, Delilah took the seven braids of his head, wove them into the fabric ¹⁴and tightened it with the pin.

Again she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" He awoke from his sleep and pulled up the pin and the loom, with the fabric.

¹⁵Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when you won't confide in me? This is the third time you have made a fool of me and haven't told me the secret of your great strength."

¹⁶With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was tired to death.

¹⁷So he told her everything. "No razor has ever been used on my head," he said, "because I have been a Nazirite set apart to God since birth. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man."

¹⁸When Delilah saw that he had told her everything, she sent word to the rulers of the Philistines, "Come back once more; he has told me everything." So the rulers of the Philistines returned

15:14 The Spirit and Samson

Four times (see also 13:25; 14:6,19) Judges comments that "the Spirit of the LORD" came on Samson. The same comment is made of other judges, though less frequently. But the Spirit only gave Samson great strength, as far as we can see; fruits of the Spirit like love and self-control seem lacking from his life.

⁶ Or made a heap or two. the Hebrew for donkey sounds like the Hebrew for heap.

^a Hakkore means caller's spring
as in verses 8 and 9

²⁰ Traditionally judged

⁵ That is, about 28 pounds (about 13 kilograms)

¹⁹ Or bowstrings.

¹³⁻¹⁴ Some Septuagint manuscripts, Hebrew "I can, if you weave the seven braids of my head into the fabric on

loom. ¹⁴ So she

JUDGES 16:19

with the silver in their hands. ¹⁹Having put him to sleep on her lap, she called a man to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so began to subdue him. And his strength left him.

²⁰Then she called, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!"

He awoke from his sleep and thought, "I'll go out as before and shake myself free." But he did not know that the Lord had left him.

²¹Then the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes and took him down to Gaza. Binding him with bronze shackles, they set him to grinding in the prison. ²²But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.

The Death of Samson

²³Now the rulers of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to celebrate, saying, "Our god has delivered Samson, our enemy, into our hands."

²⁴When the people saw him, they praised their god, saying,

"Our god has delivered our enemy into our hands,
the one who laid waste our land
and multiplied our slain."

²⁵While they were in high spirits, they shouted, "Bring out Samson to entertain us." So they called Samson out of the prison, and he performed for them.

When they stood him among the pillars, ²⁶Samson said to the servant who held his hand, "Put me where I can feel the pillars that support the temple, so that I may lean against them." ²⁷Now the temple was crowded with men and women; all the rulers of the Philistines were there, and on the roof were about three thousand men and women watching Samson perform. ²⁸Then Samson prayed to the Lord, "O Sovereign Lord, remember me. O God, please strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes." ²⁹Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other, ³⁰Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus he killed many more when he died than while he lived.

³¹Then his brothers and his father's whole family went down to get him. They brought him back and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father. He had led Israel twenty years.

Micah's Idols

17 Now a man named Micah from the hill country of Ephraim ²said to his mother, "The eleven hundred shekels^a of silver that were taken from you and about which I heard you utter a curse—I have that silver with me; I took it."

^a19 Hebrew, some Septuagint manuscripts and he began to weaken 13 kilograms) ^a4 That is, about 5 pounds (about 2.3 kilograms) 4 ounces (about 110 grams)

Then his mother said, "The Lord bless you, my son!"

³When he returned the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, she said, "I solemnly consecrate my silver to the Lord for my son to make a carved image and a cast idol. I will give it back to you."

⁴So he returned the silver to his mother, and she took two hundred shekels of silver and gave them to a silversmith, who made them into the image and the idol. And they were put in Micah's house.

⁵Now this man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and some idols and installed one of his sons as his priest. ⁶In those days Israel had no king, everyone did as he saw fit.

⁷A young Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, who had been living within the clan of Judah, ⁸left that town in search of some other place to stay. On his way he came to Micah's house in the hill country of Ephraim.

⁹Micah asked him, "Where are you from?"

"I'm a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah," he said, "and I'm looking for a place to stay."

¹⁰Then Micah said to him, "Live with me and be my father and priest, and I'll give you ten shekels^a of silver a year, your clothes and your food." ¹¹So the Levite agreed to live with him, and the young man was to him like one of his sons. ¹²Then Micah installed the Levite, and the young man became his priest and lived in his house. ¹³And Micah said, "Now I know that the Lord will be good to me, since this Levite has become my priest."

Danites Settle in Laish

18 In those days Israel had no king. And in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking a place of their own where they might settle, because they had not yet come into an inheritance among the tribes of Israel. ²So the Danites sent five warriors from Zorah and Eshtaol to spy out the land and explore it. These men represented all their clans. They told them, "Go, explore the land."

The men entered the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah, where they spent the night. ³When they were near Micah's house,

17:6 A State of Anarchy

Four times the final chapters of Judges mention there was "no king." Twice Judges adds that "everyone did as he saw fit." This editorial remark was probably made later, after the monarchy had begun under Saul and David; a king unified the nation. Some problems of this period are evident in verse 5: idolatry and the installation of a priest who did not come from the priestly family. The story that follows shows one group of Israelites raiding another, as though they were enemies, not relatives.

^a31 Traditionally judged

^a2 That is, about 28 pounds (about

^a8 Or To carry on his profession

^a10 That is, about

they recognized the voice of the young Levite; so they turned in there and asked him, "Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? Why are you here?"

He told them what Micah had done for him, and said, "He has hired me and I am his priest."

Then they said to him, "Please inquire of God to see whether our journey will be successful."

He answered them, "Go in peace. Your journey is the LORD's approval."

Then the five men left and came to Laish, where they saw that the people were living in safety, like the Sidonians, unsuspecting and secure. And since their land lacked nothing, they were prosperous. Also, they lived a long way from the Sidonians and had no relationship with anyone else.

When they returned to Zorah and Eshtaol,

their brothers asked them, "How did you find things?"

They answered, "Come on, let's attack them! We have seen that the land is very good. Aren't you going to do something? Don't hesitate to go there and take it over. When you get there, you will find an unsuspecting people and a spacious land that God has put into your hands, a land that lacks nothing whatever."

Then six hundred men from the clan of the Danites, armed for battle, set out from Zorah and Eshtaol. On their way they set up camp near Kiriath Jearim in Judah. This is why the place west of Kiriath Jearim is called Mahaneh Dan to this day. From there they went on to the hill country of Ephraim and came to Micah's house.

Then the five men who had spied out the land of Laish said to their brothers, "Do you know that

The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain. Dan means Dan's camp.

17 Hebrew; some Septuagint manuscripts with the Aramaics

INSIGHT

Hanging by a Thread

Theft, rape, murder, idolatry: Israel was destroying itself

In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit. 17:6

A time comes when you can no longer blame your problems on other people. In Pogo's immortal words, "We have met the enemy, and he is us."

So it is at the end of Judges. The camera zooms in for a closeup, focusing on internal violence. Enemies are no longer in view: the enemy is Israel itself.

They make ugly portraits, these last five chapters. Pointless and violent, they begin with a son stealing from his mother and end with parents agreeing to let their daughters be kidnapped. In between are homosexual and heterosexual gang rape, murder, idolatry, armed robbery, mass slaughter. No enemy does all this: Israelites do it to each other. Clearly, the exalted nation of Israel, God's chosen people, has lost all sense of direction.

Who Can Rescue Them Now?

The first 16 chapters of Judges tell of repeated enemy invasions that moved Israel to call out to God. Hearing his people, God would send a freedom fighter to save them.

In the last five chapters, by contrast, God sends no freedom fighter. No military leader could rescue them from themselves. These chapters instead repeat the solemn words: "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit."

Everyone did as he saw fit" may not sound very negative in our era, which places high value on individualism and personal freedom. But God prizes something more: unity. He wants his people united in love for him and each other. God's law had bound his people to a common worship in the tabernacle and to a common standard of caring for each other. For this the Israelites substituted do-as-you-please religion and a fractured society, where each family or group fought for its own rights alone. The result? These chapters tell the dismal story.

Israel's Worst Enemy

By the end of Judges, Israelites are reduced to fighting themselves. They have adopted their enemies' customs. They worship idols. They are sexually immoral. They lack respect for parents. They cannot remember the pattern of life God had set out. It is hard to say, by the end of Judges, why God should save Israel from their enemies. It is hard to say whether Israelites are the least bit different from their enemies. Israel has become, in fact, her own worst enemy.

Only one glimmer of hope appears: the Israelites' shock at the Benjamites' gang rape. They can still get together to punish such outrages, and they still consult the Lord about them. But they are a far cry from the hopeful people Joshua led into the promised land.

Life Questions: Do your troubles come more from your circumstances or from your own internal weaknesses? What kind of help do you need from God?

JUDGES 18:15

one of these houses has an ephod, other household gods, a carved image and a cast idol. You know what to do." 15So they turned in the night and went to the house of the young Levite at Micah's place and greeted him. 16The six hundred Danites, armed for battle, stood at the entrance to the gate. 17The five men who had spied out the land went inside and took the carved image, the ephod, the other household gods and the cast idol while the priest and the six hundred armed men stood at the entrance to the gate.

18When these men went into Micah's house and took the carved image, the ephod, the other household gods and the cast idol, the priest said to them, "What are you doing?"

19They answered him, "Be quiet! Don't say a word. Come with us, and be our father and priest. Isn't it better that you serve a tribe and clan in Israel as priest rather than just one man's household?" 20Then the priest was glad. He took the ephod, the other household gods and the carved image and went along with the people. 21Putting their little children, their livestock and their possessions in front of them, they turned away and left.

22When they had gone some distance from Micah's house, the men who lived near Micah were called together and overtook the Danites. 23As they shouted after them, the Danites turned and said to Micah, "What's the matter with you that you called out your men to fight?"

24He replied, "You took the gods I made, and my priest, and went away. What else do I have? How can you ask, 'What's the matter with you?'"

25The Danites answered, "Don't argue with us, or some hot-tempered men will attack you, and you and your family will lose your lives." 26So the Danites went their way, and Micah, seeing that they were too strong for him, turned around and went back home.

27Then they took what Micah had made, and his priest, and went on to Laish, against a peaceful and unsuspecting people. They attacked them with the sword and burned down their city. 28There was no one to rescue them because they lived a long way from Sidon and had no relationship with anyone else. The city was in a valley near Beth Rehob.

The Danites rebuilt the city and settled there. 29They named it Dan after their forefather Dan, who was born to Israel—though the city used to be called Laish. 30There the Danites set up for themselves the idols and Jonathan son of Gershom, the son of Moses,^a and his sons were priests for the tribe of Dan until the time of the captivity of the land. 31They continued to use the idols Micah had made, all the time the house of God was in Shiloh.

A Levite and His Concubine

19 In those days Israel had no king. Now a Levite who lived in a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim took a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah. 2But she was unfaithful to him. She left him and went back to her father's

home in Bethlehem, Judah. After she had been there four months, her husband went to her to make her to return. He had with him his servant and two donkeys. She took him into her father's house, and when her father saw him, he gladly welcomed him. 4His father-in-law, the girl's father, prevailed upon him to stay; so he remained with him three days, eating and drinking, and sleeping there.

5On the fourth day they got up early and he said to his father-in-law, "Let me leave, but the girl's father said to his son, 'Stay here with something to eat and drink. It can go.' " 6So the two of them sat down to eat and drink together. Afterward the man said to his father-in-law, "Please stay tonight and enjoy yourself. And when the man got up to go, his father-in-law persuaded him, so he stayed there that night. 7On the morning of the fifth day, when he rose to go, the girl's father said, "Refresh yourself. Wait till afternoon!" So the two of them ate together.

8Then when the man, with his concubine and his servant, got up to leave, his father-in-law, the girl's father, said, "Now look, it's almost evening. Spend the night here, the day is nearly over. Stay and enjoy yourself. Early tomorrow morning you can get up and be on your way home." 10But, unwilling to stay another night, the man left and went toward Jebus (that is, Jerusalem), with his two saddled donkeys and his concubine.

11When they were near Jebus and the day was almost gone, the servant said to his master, "Come, let's stop at this city of the Jebusites and spend the night."

12His master replied, "No. We won't go into an alien city, whose people are not Israelites. We will go on to Gibeah." 13He added, "Come, let's try to reach Gibeah or Ramah and spend the night in one of those places." 14So they went on, and the sun set as they neared Gibeah in Benjamin. 15There they stopped to spend the night. They went and sat in the city square, but no one took them into his home for the night.

16That evening an old man from the hill country of Ephraim, who was living in Gibeah (the men of the place were Benjamites), came in from his work in the fields. 17When he looked and saw the travel-

19:15 A Breach of Hospitality

In the ancient Middle East, hospitality was taken very seriously. When the Levite sat down in the city square of an Israelite city, he expected his relatives to offer him a place to stay. But only an old man from his home area offered the Levite anything—the locals were inhospitable, an ominous sign.

The old man obviously took hospitality seriously. In fact, he urged the hostile mob to rape his daughter and his guest's concubine as a lesser evil than throwing his guest out to them. (His response is identical to Lot's on the eve of Sodom's destruction. See Genesis 19:6-8.)

^a30 An ancient Hebrew scribal tradition, some Septuagint manuscripts and Vulgate, Masoretic Text *Manasseh*

er in the city square, the old man asked, "Where are you going? Where did you come from?"

He answered, "We are on our way from Bethlehem in Judah to a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim where I live. I have been to Bethlehem in Judah and now I am going to the house of the LORD. No one has taken me into his house. ¹⁹We have both straw and fodder for our donkeys and bread and wine for ourselves your servants—me, your maidservant, and the young man with us. We don't need anything."

"You are welcome at my house," the old man said. "Let me supply whatever you need. Only don't spend the night in the square." ²¹So he took him into his house and fed his donkeys. After they had washed their feet, they had something to eat and drink.

While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, "Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him."

²²The owner of the house went outside and said to them, "No, my friends, don't be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don't do this disgraceful thing. ²⁴Look, here is my virgin daughter, and his concubine. I will bring them out to you now, and you can use them and do to them whatever you wish. But to this man, don't do such a disgraceful thing."

²⁵But the men would not listen to him. So the man took his concubine and sent her outside to them, and they raped her and abused her throughout the night, and at dawn they let her go. ²⁶At daybreak the woman went back to the house where her master was staying, fell down at the door and lay there until daylight.

²⁷When her master got up in the morning and opened the door of the house and stepped out to continue on his way, there lay his concubine, fallen in the doorway of the house, with her hands on the threshold. ²⁸He said to her, "Get up; let's go." But there was no answer. Then the man put her on his donkey and set out for home.

²⁹When he reached home, he took a knife and cut up his concubine, limb by limb, into twelve parts and sent them into all the areas of Israel. ³⁰Everyone who saw it said, "Such a thing has never been seen or done, not since the day the Israelites came up out of Egypt. Think about it! Consider it! Tell us what to do!"

Israelites Fight the Benjamites

20 Then all the Israelites from Dan to Beersheba and from the land of Gilead came out as one man and assembled before the LORD in Mizpah. ²The leaders of all the people of the tribes of Israel took their places in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand soldiers armed with swords. ³(The Benjamites heard that the Israelites had gone up to Mizpah.) Then the Israelites said, "Tell us how this awful thing happened."

⁴So the Levite, the husband of the murdered woman, said, "I and my concubine came to Gibeah in Benjamin to spend the night. ⁵During the night the men of Gibeah came after me and surrounded the house, intending to kill me. They raped my concubine, and she died. ⁶I took my concubine cut her into pieces and sent one piece to each region of Israel's inheritance, because they committed this lewd and disgraceful act in Israel. ⁷Now, all you Israelites, speak up and give your verdict."

⁸All the people rose as one man, saying, "None of us will go home. No, not one of us will return to his house. ⁹But now this is what we'll do to Gibeah: We'll go up against it as the lot directs. ¹⁰We'll take ten men out of every hundred from all the tribes of Israel, and a hundred from a thousand, and a thousand from ten thousand, to get provisions for the army. Then, when the army arrives at Gibeah in Benjamin, it can give them what they deserve for all this vileness done in Israel." ¹¹So all the men of Israel got together and united as one man against the city.

¹²The tribes of Israel sent men throughout the tribe of Benjamin, saying, "What about this awful crime that was committed among you? ¹³Now surrender those wicked men of Gibeah so that we may put them to death and purge the evil from Israel."

But the Benjamites would not listen to their fellow Israelites. ¹⁴From their towns they came together at Gibeah to fight against the Israelites. ¹⁵At once the Benjamites mobilized twenty-six thousand swordsmen from their towns, in addition to seven hundred chosen men from those living in Gibeah. ¹⁶Among all these soldiers there were seven hundred chosen men who were left-handed, each of whom could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.

¹⁷Israel, apart from Benjamin, mustered four hundred thousand swordsmen, all of them fighting men.

¹⁸The Israelites went up to Bethel and inquired of God. They said, "Who of us shall go first to fight against the Benjamites?"

The LORD replied, "Judah shall go first."

¹⁹The next morning the Israelites got up and pitched camp near Gibeah. ²⁰The men of Israel went out to fight the Benjamites and took up battle positions against them at Gibeah. ²¹The Benjamites came out of Gibeah and cut down twenty-two thousand Israelites on the battlefield that day. ²²But the men of Israel encouraged one another and again took up their positions where they had stationed themselves the first day. ²³The Israelites went up and wept before the LORD until evening, and they inquired of the LORD. They said, "Shall we go up again to battle against the Benjamites, our brothers?"

The LORD answered, "Go up against them."

²⁴Then the Israelites drew near to Benjamin the second day. ²⁵This time, when the Benjamites came out from Gibeah to oppose them, they cut down another eighteen thousand Israelites, all of them armed with swords.

¹⁰ One Hebrew manuscript, most Hebrew manuscripts Gibeah, a variant of Gibeah

¹⁸ Or to the house of God, also in verse 26

26 Then the Israelites, all the people, went up to Bethel, and there they sat weeping before the LORD. They fasted that day and evening, and presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to the LORD. 27 And the Israelites inquired of the LORD. (In those days the ark of the covenant of God was there, 28 with Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, ministering before it.) They asked, "Shall we go up again to battle with Benjamin our brother, or not?"

The LORD responded, "Go, for tomorrow I will give them into your hands."

29 Then Israel set an ambush around Gibeah. 30 They went up against the Benjamites on the third day and took up positions against Gibeah as they had done before. 31 The Benjamites came out to meet them and were drawn away from the city. They began to inflict casualties on the Israelites as before, so that about thirty men fell in the open field and on the roads—the one leading to Bethel and the other to Gibeah.

32 While the Benjamites were saying, "We are defeating them as before," the Israelites were saying, "Let's retreat and draw them away from the city to the roads."

33 All the men of Israel moved from their places and took up positions at Baal Tamar, and the Israelite ambush charged out of its place on the west of Gibeah. 34 Then ten thousand of Israel's finest men made a frontal attack on Gibeah. The fighting was so heavy that the Benjamites did not realize how near disaster was. 35 The LORD defeated Benjamin before Israel, and on that day the Israelites struck down 25,100 Benjamites, all armed with swords. 36 Then the Benjamites saw that they were beaten.

Now the men of Israel had given way before Benjamin, because they relied on the ambush they had set near Gibeah. 37 The men who had been in ambush made a sudden dash into Gibeah, spread out and put the whole city to the sword. 38 The men of Israel had arranged with the ambush that they should send up a great cloud of smoke from the city, 39 and then the men of Israel would turn in the battle.

The Benjamites had begun to inflict casualties on the men of Israel (about thirty), and they said, "We are defeating them as in the first battle." 40 But when the column of smoke began to rise from the city, the Benjamites turned and saw the smoke of the whole city going up into the sky. 41 Then the men of Israel turned on them, and the men of Benjamin were terrified, because they realized that disaster had come upon them. 42 So they fled before the Israelites in the direction of the desert, but they could not escape the battle. And the men of Israel who came out of the towns cut them down there. 43 They surrounded the Benjamites, chased them and easily overran them in the vicinity of Gibeah on the east. 44 Eighteen thousand Benjamites fell, all of them valiant fighters. 45 As they turned and fled toward the desert to the rock of Rimmon, the Israelites cut down five thousand

men along the roads. They kept pressing after the Benjamites as far as Gidom and struck down two thousand more.

46 On that day twenty-five thousand Benjamite swordsmen fell, all of them valiant fighters. 47 But a hundred men turned and fled into the desert to the rock of Rimmon, where they stayed four months. 48 The men of Israel went back to Benjamin and put all the towns to the sword, including the animals and everything else they found. All the towns they came across they set on fire.

Wives for the Benjamites

21 The men of Israel had taken an oath at Mizpah. Not one of us will give his daughter in marriage to a Benjamite.

The people went to Bethel, where they sat before God unto evening, raising their voices and weeping bitterly. 3 "O LORD, the God of Israel," they cried, "why has this happened to Israel? Why should one tribe be missing from Israel today?"

4 Early the next day the people built an altar and presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings.

5 Then the Israelites asked, "Who from all the tribes of Israel has failed to assemble before the LORD?" For they had taken a solemn oath that anyone who failed to assemble before the LORD at Mizpah should certainly be put to death.

6 Now the Israelites grieved for their brothers, the Benjamites. "Today one tribe is cut off from Israel," they said. 7 "How can we provide wives for those who are left, since we have taken an oath by the LORD not to give them any of our daughters in marriage?" 8 Then they asked, "Which one of the tribes of Israel failed to assemble before the LORD at Mizpah?" They discovered that no one from Jabesh Gilead had come to the camp for the assembly. 9 For when they counted the people, they found that none of the people of Jabesh Gilead were there.

10 So the assembly sent twelve thousand fighting men with instructions to go to Jabesh Gilead and put to the sword those living there, including the women and children. 11 "This is what you are to do," they said. "Kill every male and every woman who is not a virgin." 12 They found among the people living in Jabesh Gilead four hundred young women who had never slept with a man, and they took them to the camp at Shiloh in Canaan.

13 Then the whole assembly sent an offer of peace to the Benjamites at the rock of Rimmon. 14 So the Benjamites returned at that time and were given the women of Jabesh Gilead who had been spared. But there were not enough for all of them.

15 The people grieved for Benjamin, because the LORD had made a gap in the tribes of Israel. 16 And the elders of the assembly said, "With the women of Benjamin destroyed, how shall we provide wives for the men who are left? 17 The Benjamite survivors must have heirs," they said, "so that a tribe of Israel will not be wiped out. 18 We can't give

*26.4 Traditionally peace offerings

uncertain
house of God

*33 Some Septuagint manuscripts and Vulgate, the meaning of the Hebrew for this word is

*33 Hebrew Geth, a variant of Gibeah

*43 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain

*2 Or to the

...houses as when after we had taken
 a walk a word for anyone who gave
 them. After work there in the
 ... of the house in Shohi to the north
 and east of the road that goes from the
 ... and to the north of the house.
 ... they instructed the Benjamites saying: "Go
 ... in the vineyards and watch. When the
 ... Shohi come out to play in the dancing then
 ... the vineyards and each of you take a
 wife from the girls of Shohi and go to the land of
 the Ammonites. When their fathers or brothers com-
 plain to us, we will say to them, 'This is a kindness

by helping them. For neither we did not get wives for
 them during the war and you are stronger and older
 you did not give your daughters to them."
 ... that is what the Benjamites did. While the
 girls were dancing, each man caught one and car-
 ried her off to be his wife. Then they returned to
 their inheritance and rebuilt the towns and settled
 in them.
 ... At that time the Benjamites left that place and
 went home to their fathers and then each to his
 own inheritance.
 ... In those days Israel had no king, everyone did
 as he saw fit.

RUTH

INTRODUCTION

A Rare Bond of Love

Ruth and Naomi lost everything, except their care for each other

Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God . . . May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me. 1:16-17

Ruth and Naomi were unlikely friends: a generation apart, one young and strong, the other middle age. Stranger still, one was the other's mother-in-law and came from a completely different ethnic and religious background. Who would have put them together?

They had lost everything when their husbands died. With no man's help, in their own time of need, they had lost everything. No one else would come to their rescue. They had only each other.

The Woman's Initiative

The book of Ruth is not "two women against the world." Rather, it shows the women taking initiative to find, by God's help, a man who would care for them.

A woman's initiative rarely gets so direct as in Ruth. At her mother-in-law's suggestion, she located where Boaz, a relative, was camping out. She waited until dark, then lay down. When Boaz woke and found her, he didn't have to be told what she was for. He wanted him for a husband. Flattered, he didn't let another man get between them. He made arrangements for marriage.

Society the way God had designed it encouraged men like Boaz to take the responsibility by Old Testament law a farmer had to leave some of his grain behind in his field for the poor to harvest it. And, also by law, a helpless widow had to be taken care of by her husband's family. This was the law by which Boaz claimed Ruth as his own.

God's Invisible Presence

Behind the eloquent story of Ruth looms an invisible power. God is the master of the events, so far as the story tells. But nobody in Ruth doubted that life proceeded in that direction. It was the Lord by whom Ruth went when searching for love. It was the Lord whom Naomi credited for bringing Ruth to Boaz. It was the Lord who brought Ruth into marriage. Finally, the Lord gave them a son, in whom Naomi, her mother-in-law, found deep satisfaction.

The last verses of Ruth show, furthermore, that God's plan extended beyond Ruth's own personal problems. Ruth was a member of the despised Moabites. She was not only accepted her into his family, but also, used her to produce a son, who became the great-grandson turned out to be David. To anyone who thought that God's plan was to save Ruth's life made a striking contradiction.

How to Read Ruth

Ruth, brief enough to read in 15 minutes, is a delight. The author has written the loveliest complete work on a small scale. But because Ruth's author did not intend to write home, it is possible to overlook his deeper meaning. As you read, concentrate on the love bond between Ruth and Naomi. This love, which thrives in suffering, is the key to the book. It gives hope for other people in hard circumstances.

The author of Ruth assumed that readers understood the cultural and religious background of Ruth's time. You may wish to read about it for deeper understanding. Introduction 1-10 describes the background on marriage for a widow to a member of her husband's family. The

redeemer.' Leviticus 25:23-28 gives background on a poor person's property. The allusion to Judges offers historical perspective, for the book of Judges is an overview of the times Ruth lived in.

PLANS FOR READING RUTH

PLAN 1: An Overview of Ruth in 1 Day

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to Ruth and chapter 1, which describes an unusual friendship developing under the unkindest of conditions.

PLAN 2: All of Ruth in 4 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

Naomi and Ruth

1 In the days when the judges ruled,^a there was a famine in the land, and a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. ²The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's name Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilon. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there.

³Now Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, ⁵both Mahlon and Kilon also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.

⁶When she heard in Moab that the LORD had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, Naomi and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. ⁷With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah.

⁸Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the LORD show kindness to you, as you have shown to your dead and to me. ⁹May the LORD grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband."

Then she kissed them and they wept aloud. ¹⁰And said to her, "We will go back with you to your people."

¹¹But Naomi said, "Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? ¹²Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me—even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons—¹³would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the LORD's hand has gone out against me!"

¹⁴At this they wept again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-by, but Ruth clung to her.

¹⁵"Look," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her."

¹⁶But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. ¹⁷Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me." ¹⁸When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.

¹⁹So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi?"

²⁰"Don't call me Naomi,"^b she told them. "Call me Mara,^c because the Almighty^d has made my life very bitter. ²¹I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The LORD has afflicted^e me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me."

²²So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning.

Ruth Meets Boaz

2 Now Naomi had a relative on her husband's side, from the clan of Elimelech, a man of standing, whose name was Boaz.

²And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor."

Naomi said to her, "Go ahead, my daughter." ³So she went out and began to glean in the fields behind the harvesters. As it turned out, she found herself working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelech.

⁴Just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters, "The LORD be with you!"

"The LORD bless you!" they called back.

^a1 Traditionally judged ^b20 Naomi means pleasant; also in verse 21
verse 21 ^c21 Or has testified against

^c20 Mara means bitter

^d20 Hebrew Shaddai; also in

RUTH 2:5

Boaz asked the foreman of his harvesters, "Whose young woman is that?"

"The foreman replied, 'She is the Moabitess who came back from Moab with Naomi.' She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the harvesters.' She went into the field and has worked steadily from morning till now, except for a short rest in the shelter."

"So Boaz said to Ruth, 'My daughter, listen to me. Don't go and glean in another field and don't go away from here. Stay here with my servant girls. Watch the field where the men are harvesting, and follow along after the girls. I have told the men not to touch you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled.'

"At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She exclaimed, 'Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?'

"Boaz replied, 'I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. ¹²May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.

"¹³'May I continue to find favor in your eyes, my lord,' she said. 'You have given me comfort and have spoken kindly to your servant—though I do not have the standing of one of your servant girls.'

"¹⁴At mealtime Boaz said to her, 'Come over here. Have some bread and dip it in the wine vinegar.

When she sat down with the harvesters, he offered her some roasted grain. She ate all she wanted and had some left over. ¹⁵As she got up to glean, Boaz gave orders to his men, 'Even if she gathers among the sheaves, don't embarrass her. ¹⁶Rather, pull out some stalks for her from the bundles and leave them for her to pick up, and don't rebuke her.'

"¹⁷So Ruth gleaned in the field until evening. Then she threshed the barley she had gathered, and it amounted to about an ephah.^a ¹⁸She carried it back to town, and her mother-in-law saw how much she had gathered. Ruth also brought out and gave her what she had left over after she had eaten enough.

"¹⁹Her mother-in-law asked her, 'Where did you

glean today? Where did you work? Blessed be the man who took notice of you!'

Then Ruth told her mother-in-law about the one at whose place she had been working. 'The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz,' she said.

"²⁰'The LORD bless him!' Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. 'He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead.' She added, 'That man is our close relative; he is one of our kinsman-redeemers.'

"²¹Then Ruth the Moabitess said, 'He even said to me, 'Stay with my workers until they finish harvesting all my grain.'"

"²²Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, 'It will be good for you, my daughter, to go with his girls, because in someone else's field you might be harmed.'

"²³So Ruth stayed close to the servant girls of Boaz to glean until the barley and wheat harvests were finished. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

Ruth and Boaz at the Threshing Floor

3 One day Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not try to find a home^b for you, where you will be well provided for? ²Is not Boaz, with whose servant girls you have been, a kinsman of ours? Tonight he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. ³Wash and perfume yourself, and put on your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor, but don't let him know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴When he lies down, note the place where he is lying. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do."

"⁵'I will do whatever you say,' Ruth answered. ⁶So she went down to the threshing floor and did everything her mother-in-law told her to do.

"⁷When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he went over to lie down at the far end of the grain pile. Ruth approached quietly, uncovered his feet and lay down. ⁸In the middle of the night something startled the man, and he turned and discovered a woman lying at his feet.

"⁹'Who are you?' he asked.

"¹⁰'I am your servant Ruth,' she said. 'Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer.'

"¹¹'The LORD bless you, my daughter,' he replied. 'This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor. ¹²And now, my daughter, don't be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of noble character. ¹³Although it is true that I am near of kin, there is a kinsman-redeemer nearer than I. ¹⁴Stay here for the night, and in the morning if he wants to redeem, good; let him redeem. But if he is not willing, as surely as the LORD lives I will do it. Lie here until morning.'

"¹⁵So she lay at his feet until morning, but got up before anyone could be recognized; and he said,

2:7 Caring for the Poor

In the Old Testament God used several welfare programs to help poor people. One, reflected in this passage, was the command to deliberately leave some of the harvest in the field for the poor to gather. Poor people didn't beg for handouts, but worked for what they got. Leviticus 19:9,10 and Deuteronomy 24:19-22 give the directions.

^a17 That is, probably about 3/5 bushel (about 22 liters)

^b1 Hebrew find rest (see Ruth 1:9)

on't let it be known that a woman came to the threshing floor.

She also said, "Bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it over me." When she did so, he took the shawl and covered her with it and returned to town.

When she came to her mother-in-law, Naomi asked her, "What did you do, my daughter?"

She told her everything Boaz had done for her. Naomi added, "He gave me these six measures of grain, saying, 'Don't go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.'"

Then Naomi said, "Wait, my daughter, until you find out what happens. For the man will not rest until the matter is settled today."

Boaz Marries Ruth

Meanwhile Boaz went up to the town gate and sat there. When the kinsman-redeemer he had chosen came along, Boaz said, "Come over here, my friend, and sit down." So he went over and sat down.

Boaz took ten of the elders of the town and said to them, "Sit here." and they did so. Then he said to the kinsman-redeemer, "Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our brother Elimelech. I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you buy it in the presence of these seated men and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, do so. But if you will not, tell me, so I will know. For no one has the right to do it except you, and I am next in line."

"I will redeem it," he said.

Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the land from Naomi and from Ruth the Moabitess, you acquire the dead man's widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property."

At this the kinsman-redeemer said, "Then I cannot redeem it because I might endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself. I cannot do it."

7 (Now in earlier times in Israel, for the redemption and transfer of property to become final, one party took off his sandal and gave it to the other. This was the method of legalizing transactions in Israel.)

8 So the kinsman-redeemer said to Boaz, "Buy it yourself." And he removed his sandal.

9 Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, "Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelech, Kihon and Mahlon. 10 I have also acquired Ruth the Moabitess, Mahlon's widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from the town records. Today you are witnesses!"

11 Then the elders and all those at the gate said, "We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you have standing in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. 12 Through the offspring the Lord gives you by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah."

The Genealogy of David

13 So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. Then he went to her, and the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. 14 The women said to Naomi: "Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a kinsman-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel!" 15 He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth."

16 Then Naomi took the child, laid him in her lap and cared for him. 17 The women living there said, "Naomi has a son." And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

18 This, then, is the family line of Perez:

Perez was the father of Hezron,

19 Hezron the father of Ram,

Ram the father of Amminadab,

20 Amminadab the father of Nahshon,

Nahshon the father of Salmon,⁴

21 Salmon the father of Boaz,

Boaz the father of Obed,

22 Obed the father of Jesse,

and Jesse the father of David.

¹1. Most Hebrew manuscripts, many Hebrew manuscripts, Vulgate and Syriac use "bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it over me." ²2. Vulgate and Syriac, most Hebrew manuscripts use "bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it over me."

³3. Hebrew, Vulgate and Syriac, most Hebrew manuscripts use "bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it over me." ⁴4. Many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac, most Hebrew manuscripts use "bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it over me." ⁵5. Hebrew, Vulgate and Syriac, most Hebrew manuscripts use "bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it over me." ⁶6. Hebrew, Vulgate and Syriac, most Hebrew manuscripts use "bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it over me." ⁷7. Hebrew, Vulgate and Syriac, most Hebrew manuscripts use "bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it over me." ⁸8. Hebrew, Vulgate and Syriac, most Hebrew manuscripts use "bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it over me." ⁹9. Hebrew, Vulgate and Syriac, most Hebrew manuscripts use "bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it over me." ¹⁰10. Hebrew, Vulgate and Syriac, most Hebrew manuscripts use "bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it over me." ¹¹11. Hebrew, Vulgate and Syriac, most Hebrew manuscripts use "bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it over me." ¹²12. Hebrew, Vulgate and Syriac, most Hebrew manuscripts use "bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it over me." ¹³13. Hebrew, Vulgate and Syriac, most Hebrew manuscripts use "bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it over me." ¹⁴14. Many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac, most Hebrew manuscripts use "bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it over me." ¹⁵15. Hebrew, Vulgate and Syriac, most Hebrew manuscripts use "bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it over me." ¹⁶16. Hebrew, Vulgate and Syriac, most Hebrew manuscripts use "bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it over me." ¹⁷17. Hebrew, Vulgate and Syriac, most Hebrew manuscripts use "bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it over me." ¹⁸18. Hebrew, Vulgate and Syriac, most Hebrew manuscripts use "bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it over me." ¹⁹19. Hebrew, Vulgate and Syriac, most Hebrew manuscripts use "bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it over me." ²⁰20. A

1 SAMUEL

INTRODUCTION

What Leadership Requires

Israel, fighting for survival, needed a leader

It is not by strength that one prevails; those who oppose the LORD will be shattered. 2:9

No country, no organization, no family is great without great leadership. But how do you get it? Israel was forced to ask that question during a critical, do-or-die period. Three men rose to the highest power: Samuel, Saul, and David. All were attractive, powerful figures who commanded admiration and respect. Two, David and Samuel, made very successful leaders. The other, Saul, had a promising beginning but ended as a failure.

Fighting for Survival

Israel was fighting for survival. The Philistines had migrated to the region about the same time Israel had escaped from Egypt. Now, from their cities near the Mediterranean coast, they were gradually pushing deeper into the mountains of Israel. They had superior weapons—chariots, in particular. Though less populous than Israel, they were apparently better organized.

Israel had neither central administration nor a regular army. A loose confederation of 12 tribes, Israelites called on each other for help only in emergencies. Occasional inspired leaders—"judges"—took charge of military defense when necessary. The nation had worked that way for well over 100 years, and the tribes seemed too independent to change. But the Philistines were pressing them. A crisis of leadership—a crisis testing the very existence of Israel—was building.

Why Begin with Hannah?

Surprisingly, 1 Samuel opens not with a battle or even with the leadership crisis, but with a very private family problem. Two bitterly jealous wives had a longstanding quarrel, one taunting the other because of her infertility. Hannah, the childless woman, turned to God in desperation, praying and promising to dedicate a son to him. The result was a little boy named Samuel.

Hannah kept her vow to God, and Samuel grew into one of the greatest leaders Israel had ever known. He had a triple role: he served as a prophet who could discern God's will, as a priest who led Israel to worship, and as a military leader. He chose, under God's direction, Israel's first two kings. Samuel's strong personality undergirds the entire book of 1 Samuel, even though he officially retired at the end of chapter 15.

Why begin 1 Samuel with Hannah? Hannah's struggles are Israel's, in miniature. Her frustration forced her to look to God, and as a result her son Samuel served in the tabernacle instead of following in his father's footsteps as a farmer. Hannah's story shows that from bitter pain may come great promise, if that pain leads you to God. The Israelites, who were going to experience a great many more troubles in their history, needed Hannah's example.

God Chooses His Own Leaders

Hannah's story also reminds us that God's leaders don't necessarily come through regulation channels. Ordinarily, Eli's corrupt sons would have carried on national leadership. But God wanted no part of them. Instead, he blessed a woman who had turned to him in her troubles, and he blessed her son as long as that son trusted in him for help. God chose a leader to suit himself, a leader who listened to him. "The LORD declares: 'Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained'" (2:30).

Samuel never forgot that lesson. He anointed Saul as the first king, and then, when Saul failed to honor God, stripped him of his authority. Passing over many impressive men, Samuel chose David, a young shepherd, to replace Saul. Under David, Israel would be transformed into a wealthy, secure kingdom. Was this because David had such natural leadership qualities? First Samuel suggests a different perspective: David succeeded because God chose him for the job,

and because David persistently turned to God for his direction. The best leadership, ultimately, belongs to God

How to Read 1 Samuel

Some of the stories of 1 Samuel—David and Goliath, for instance—are justly famous as great adventures. But you should read for more than excitement. Look for insights into the character required for leadership. Samuel and David were great leaders. Saul, on the other hand, was a miserable failure.

These men led Israel during a crucial, bloody period. Israel had been dominated by a foreign power and, partly because of this, was changing its government to a monarchy. This change in governmental institutions, along with tribal tensions, form the background for the book. A good commentary can help explain this, but you can get much of it for yourself by asking, as you read, three questions: What are the most important national problems facing Israel? What kind of leadership is needed? How do these three leaders (and numerous smaller figures) respond to these needs?

PLANS FOR READING 1 SAMUEL

PLAN 1: An Overview of 1 Samuel in 4 Days

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to 1 Samuel and chapter 3, God's call of Samuel when he was very young.
- ☐ Day 2. Read chapter 16 to see how God chose David, and why.
- ☐ Day 3. Read chapter 17 for the exciting story of David's victory over Goliath, noting the qualities David showed.
- ☐ Day 4. Read chapter 20 for a glimpse of a model friendship between David and Jonathan.

PLAN 2: All of 1 Samuel in 31 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16
☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28 ☐ 29 ☐ 30
☐ 31

The Birth of Samuel

1 There was a certain man from Ramathaim, a Zuphite^a from the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. ²He had two wives; one was called Hannah and the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none.

³Year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the LORD Almighty at Shiloh, where Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the LORD. ⁴Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. ⁵But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the LORD had closed her womb. ⁶And because the LORD had closed her womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. ⁷This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the LORD, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat. ⁸Elkanah her husband would say to her, "Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't

you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?"

⁹Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the LORD's temple.^b ¹⁰In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the LORD. ¹¹And she made a vow, saying, "O LORD Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head."

¹²As she kept on praying to the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. ¹³Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk ¹⁴and said to her, "How long will you keep on getting drunk? Get rid of your wine."

¹⁵"Not so, my lord," Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD. ¹⁶Do not take your servant for a

^a1 Or from Ramathaim Zuphim

^b9 That is, tabernacle

wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief."

¹⁷Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him."

¹⁸She said, "May your servant find favor in your eyes." Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast.

¹⁹Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the LORD and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah lay with Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her. ²⁰So in the course of time Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel,^a saying, "Because I asked the LORD for him."

Hannah Dedicates Samuel

²¹When the man Elkanah went up with all his family to offer the annual sacrifice to the LORD and to fulfill his vow, ²²Hannah did not go. She said to her husband, "After the boy is weaned, I will take him and present him before the LORD, and he will live there always."

²³"Do what seems best to you," Elkanah her husband told her. "Stay here until you have weaned him; only may the LORD make good his word." So the woman stayed at home and nursed her son until she had weaned him.

²⁴After he was weaned, she took the boy with her, young as he was, along with a three-year-old bull,^c an ephah^d of flour and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh. ²⁵When they had slaughtered the bull, they brought the boy to Eli, ²⁶and she said to him, "As surely as you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD. ²⁷I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him. ²⁸So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD." And he worshiped the LORD there.

Hannah's Prayer

2 Then Hannah prayed and said:

"My heart rejoices in the LORD;
in the LORD my horn^e is lifted high.
My mouth boasts over my enemies,
for I delight in your deliverance.

²"There is no one holy^f like the LORD;
there is no one besides you;
there is no Rock like our God.

³"Do not keep talking so proudly
or let your mouth speak such arrogance,
for the LORD is a God who knows,
and by him deeds are weighed.

⁴"The bows of the warriors are broken,
but those who stumbled are armed with strength

⁵Those who were full hire themselves out for food,
but those who were hungry hunger no more

She who was barren has borne seven children,

but she who has had many sons pines away.

⁶"The LORD brings death and makes alive;
he brings down to the graves and raises up.

⁷The LORD sends poverty and wealth;
he humbles and he exalts.

⁸He raises the poor from the dust
and lifts the needy from the ash heap;
he seats them with princes
and has them inherit a throne of honor.

"For the foundations of the earth are the LORD's;
upon them he has set the world.

⁹He will guard the feet of his saints,
but the wicked will be silenced in darkness.

"It is not by strength that one prevails;
¹⁰ those who oppose the LORD will be shattered.

He will thunder against them from heaven;
the LORD will judge the ends of the earth.

"He will give strength to his king
and exalt the horn of his anointed."

¹¹Then Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy ministered before the LORD under Eli the priest.

Eli's Wicked Sons

¹²Eli's sons were wicked men; they had no regard for the LORD. ¹³Now it was the practice of the priests with the people that whenever anyone offered a sacrifice and while the meat was being boiled, the servant of the priest would come with a three-pronged fork in his hand. ¹⁴He would plunge it into the pan or kettle or caldron or pot, and the priest would take for himself whatever the fork brought up. This is how they treated all the Israelites who came to Shiloh. ¹⁵But even before the fat was burned, the servant of the priest would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give the priest some meat to roast; he won't accept boiled meat from you, but only raw."

¹⁶If the man said to him, "Let the fat be burned up first, and then take whatever you want," the servant would then answer, "No, hand it over now; if you don't, I'll take it by force."

¹⁷This sin of the young men was very great in the LORD's sight, for they^h were treating the LORD's offering with contempt.

¹⁸But Samuel was ministering before the LORD—a boy wearing a linen ephod. ¹⁹Each year his mother made him a little robe and took it to him when she went up with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice. ²⁰Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, saying, "May the LORD give you children by this woman to take the place of the one she prayed for and gave to the LORD." Then they would go home. ²¹And the LORD was gracious to Hannah, she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the LORD.

²²Now Eli, who was very old, heard about

^{a20} Samuel sounds like the Hebrew for heard of God

²⁴ Dead Sea Scrolls Septuagint and Syriac Masoreta Text with three bulls

^{c1} Horn here symbolizes strength, also in verse 10

^{f23} Masoreta Text, Dead Sea Scrolls Septuagint and Syriac

²² Or no Holy One

²⁴ That is, probably about 3.5 bushel (about 22 liters)

⁵⁰ Hebrew shul

^{h17} Or men

everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. ²⁴So he said to them, "Why do you do such things? I hear from all the people about these wicked deeds of yours. ²⁵No, my sons, it is not a good report that I hear spreading among the Lord's people. ²⁶If a man sins against another man, God^a may mediate for him, but if a man sins against the Lord, who will intercede for him?" His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke, for it was the Lord's will to put them to death.

²⁷And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the Lord and with men.

Prophecy Against the House of Eli

²⁸Now a man of God came to Eli and said to him, "This is what the Lord says: 'Did I not clearly reveal myself to your father's house when they were in Egypt under Pharaoh? ²⁹I chose your father out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod in my presence. I also gave your father's house all the offerings made with fire by the Israelites. ³⁰Why do you^b scorn my sacrifice and offering that I prescribed for my dwelling? Why do you honor your sons more than me by fattening yourselves on the choice parts of every offering made by my people Israel?'"

³¹"Therefore the Lord, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that your house and your father's house would minister before me forever.' But now the Lord declares: 'Far be it from me! Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained. ³²The time is coming when I will cut short your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your family line ³³and you will see distress in my dwelling. Although good will be done to Israel, in your family line there will never be an old man. ³⁴Every one of you that I do not cut off from my altar will be spared only to blind your eyes with tears and to grieve your heart, and all your descendants will die in the prime of life.

³⁵"And what happens to your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, will be a sign to you—they will both die on the same day. ³⁶I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will do according to

what is in my heart and mind. I will firmly establish his house, and he will minister before my altar forever. ³⁷For a man's life is precious to me; his family line will continue and have descendants before him for a piece of silver and a crust of bread and meat. ³⁸Appoint me to come promptly either so I can have food to eat.'"

The Lord Calls Samuel

³The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli. In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions.

⁴One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. ⁵Then the Lord called Samuel.

Samuel answered, "Here I am." ⁶And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

But Eli said, "I did not call, go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

⁷Again the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

"My son," Eli said, "I did not call, go back and lie down."

⁸Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord. The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

⁹The Lord called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, you called me."

Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. ¹⁰So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'"^c So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹¹The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"

Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

¹²And the Lord said to Samuel: "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears of it tingle. ¹³At that time I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family—from beginning to end. ¹⁴For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about, his sons made themselves contemptible,^d and he failed to restrain them. ¹⁵Therefore, I swore to the house of Eli, 'The guilt of Eli's house will never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering.'"

¹⁶Samuel lay down until morning and then opened the doors of the house of the Lord. He was afraid to tell Eli the vision, ¹⁷but Eli called him and said, "Samuel, my son."

Samuel answered, "Here I am."

¹⁸"What was it he said to you?" Eli asked. "Do not hide it from me. May God deal with you, be it ever so severely, if you hide from me anything he told you." ¹⁹So Samuel told him everything, hiding nothing from him. Then Eli said, "He is the Lord, let him do what is good in his eyes."

2:25 Predestination

Eli's sons disobeyed, the Bible says, because God wanted to put them to death. Does this mean God took away their free choice? To Old Testament writers this "contradiction" seemed less troubling than to us. To them every event occurred only because, ultimately, God let it. Within his overall control people acted freely. In this case, Eli's sons were free to obey or disobey. The author wants us to know, however, that their disobedience was not beyond God's power: he planned to judge their evil activities.

^{a25} Or the judges ^{b29} The Hebrew is plural. tradition and Septuagint sons blasphemed God

^{c3} That is, tabernacle

^{d13} Masoretic Text, an ancient Hebrew script

...and the ark of the LORD was in Shiloh, and Eli the priest sat upon it between the pillars of the porch of the tabernacle. And the children of Israel were scattered throughout the land, because they had no king.

...and the ark of the LORD was in Shiloh, and Eli the priest sat upon it between the pillars of the porch of the tabernacle.

4 The Philistines Capture the Ark

...and the ark of the LORD was in Shiloh, and Eli the priest sat upon it between the pillars of the porch of the tabernacle. And the children of Israel were scattered throughout the land, because they had no king.

...and the ark of the LORD was in Shiloh, and Eli the priest sat upon it between the pillars of the porch of the tabernacle. And the children of Israel were scattered throughout the land, because they had no king.

...and the ark of the LORD was in Shiloh, and Eli the priest sat upon it between the pillars of the porch of the tabernacle. And the children of Israel were scattered throughout the land, because they had no king.

...and the ark of the LORD was in Shiloh, and Eli the priest sat upon it between the pillars of the porch of the tabernacle. And the children of Israel were scattered throughout the land, because they had no king.

...and the ark of the LORD was in Shiloh, and Eli the priest sat upon it between the pillars of the porch of the tabernacle. And the children of Israel were scattered throughout the land, because they had no king.

...and the ark of the LORD was in Shiloh, and Eli the priest sat upon it between the pillars of the porch of the tabernacle. And the children of Israel were scattered throughout the land, because they had no king.

...and the ark of the LORD was in Shiloh, and Eli the priest sat upon it between the pillars of the porch of the tabernacle. And the children of Israel were scattered throughout the land, because they had no king.

...and the ark of the LORD was in Shiloh, and Eli the priest sat upon it between the pillars of the porch of the tabernacle. And the children of Israel were scattered throughout the land, because they had no king.

4:12 The End of Shiloh

The Philistine victory may have led to Shiloh's capture. For the next time we encounter Eli's family, they have moved as a group to Nob. Several Bible passages mention Shiloh's destruction as a punishment for sin (Jeremiah 7:12, 14; 26:6, 9; Psalm 78:60). If Shiloh did fall at this time, its capture must have added greatly to Israel's general sense of despair, for the city was an important site for worship.

on his head. When he arrived, there was Eli sitting on his chair by the side of the road, watching because his heart failed him the ark of God. When the man entered the town and told what had happened, the whole town went up a cry.

Eli heard the outcry and asked, "What is the meaning of this uproar?"

The man hurried over to Eli. "Who was ninety-eight years old and whose eyes were set so that he could not see," Eli said to Eli. "I have just come from the battle line. I fled from it this very day."

Eli asked, "What happened to my son?"

The man who brought the news replied, "Israel has been defeated by the Philistines, and the army has suffered heavy losses. Also your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured."

When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell backward off his chair by the side of the gate. His neck was broken and he died, for he was an old man and heavy. He had led Israel forty years.

His daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant and near the time of delivery. When she heard the news that the ark of God had been captured and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she went into labor and gave birth, but was overcome by her labor pains. As she was dying, the women attending her said, "Don't despair; you have given birth to a son." But she did not respond or pay any attention.

She named the boy Ichabod, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel"—because of the capture of the ark of God and the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband. She said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured."

The Ark in Ashdod and Ekron

After the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they took it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. Then they carried the ark into Dagon's temple and set it beside Dagon. When the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD! They took Dagon and put him back in his place. But the following morning when they rose, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD! His head and hands had been broken off and were lying on the threshold; only his body remained. That is why to this day neither the priests of Dagon nor any others who enter Dagon's temple at Ashdod step on the threshold.

The LORD's hand was heavy upon the people of Ashdod and its vicinity, he brought devastation upon them and afflicted them with tumors. When the men of Ashdod saw what was happening, they said, "The ark of the god of Israel must not stay here with us, because his hand is heavy upon us and upon Dagon our god." So they called together all the rulers of the Philistines and asked them, "What shall we do with the ark of the god of Israel?"

They answered, "Have the ark of the god of

4:12 The Philistines' victory may have led to Shiloh's capture. For the next time we encounter Eli's family, they have moved as a group to Nob. Several Bible passages mention Shiloh's destruction as a punishment for sin (Jeremiah 7:12, 14; 26:6, 9; Psalm 78:60). If Shiloh did fall at this time, its capture must have added greatly to Israel's general sense of despair, for the city was an important site for worship.

Israel moved to Gath.⁹ So they moved the ark of the God of Israel.

⁹But after they had moved it, the LORD's hand was against that city, throwing it into a great panic. He afflicted the people of the city, both young and old, with an outbreak of tumors.¹⁰ So they sent the ark of God to Ekron.

As the ark of God was entering Ekron, the people of Ekron cried out, "They have brought the ark of the god of Israel around to us to kill us and our people."¹¹ So they called together all the rulers of the Philistines and said, "Send the ark of the god of Israel away; let it go back to its own place, or it¹² will kill us and our people." For death had filled the city with panic; God's hand was very heavy upon it.¹² Those who did not die were afflicted with tumors, and the outcry of the city went up to heaven.

The Ark Returned to Israel

6 When the ark of the LORD had been in Philistine territory seven months, ²the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us how we should send it back to its place."

³They answered, "If you return the ark of the god of Israel, do not send it away empty, but by all means send a guilt offering to him. Then you will be healed, and you will know why his hand has not been lifted from you."

⁴The Philistines asked, "What guilt offering should we send to him?"

They replied, "Five gold tumors and five gold rats, according to the number of the Philistine rulers, because the same plague has struck both you and your rulers. ⁵Make models of the tumors and of the rats that are destroying the country, and pay honor to Israel's god. Perhaps he will lift his hand from you and your gods and your land. ⁶Why do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh did? When he^c treated them harshly, did they not send the Israelites out so they could go on their way?"

⁷"Now then, get a new cart ready, with two cows that have calved and have never been yoked. Hitch the cows to the cart, but take their calves away and pen them up. ⁸Take the ark of the LORD and put it on the cart, and in a chest beside it put

the gold objects you are sending back to him as a guilt offering. Send it on its way, ⁹but keep watching it. If it goes up to its own territory, toward Beth Shemesh, then the LORD has brought this great disaster on us. But if it does not, then we will know that it was not his hand that struck us and that it happened to us by chance."

¹⁰So they did this. They took two such cows and hitched them to the cart and penned up their calves. ¹¹They placed the ark of the LORD on the cart and along with it the chest containing the gold rats and the models of the tumors. ¹²Then the cows went straight up toward Beth Shemesh, keeping on the road and lowing all the way; they did not turn to the right or to the left. The rulers of the Philistines followed them as far as the border of Beth Shemesh.

¹³Now the people of Beth Shemesh were harvesting their wheat in the valley, and when they looked up and saw the ark, they rejoiced at the sight. ¹⁴The cart came to the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh, and there it stopped beside a large rock. The people chopped up the wood of the cart and sacrificed the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. ¹⁵The Levites took down the ark of the LORD, together with the chest containing the gold objects, and placed them on the large rock. On that day the people of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices to the LORD. ¹⁶The five rulers of the Philistines saw all this and then returned that same day to Ekron.

¹⁷These are the gold tumors the Philistines sent as a guilt offering to the LORD—one each for Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron. ¹⁸And the number of the gold rats was according to the number of Philistine towns belonging to the five rulers—the fortified towns with their country villages. The large rock, on which^d they set the ark of the LORD, is a witness to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh.

¹⁹But God struck down some of the men of Beth Shemesh, putting seventy^e of them to death because they had looked into the ark of the LORD. The people mourned because of the heavy blow the LORD had dealt them, ²⁰and the men of Beth Shemesh asked, "Who can stand in the presence of the LORD, this holy God? To whom will the ark go up from here?"

²¹Then they sent messengers to the people of Kiriath Jearim, saying, "The Philistines have returned the ark of the LORD. Come down and take it up to your place." ¹So the men of Kiriath Jearim came and took up the ark of the LORD. They took it to Abinadab's house on the hill and consecrated Eleazar his son to guard the ark of the LORD.

Samuel Subdues the Philistines at Mizpah

²It was a long time, twenty years in all, that the ark remained at Kiriath Jearim, and all the people of Israel mourned and sought after the LORD. ³And Samuel said to the whole house of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ash-

6:5 Magic

The Philistine strategy shows traditional thinking, still common in occult or voodoo rites. By sending golden models of the tumors and rats out of the country, the Philistines hoped to send the originals out of the country too. This is similar to the voodoo practice of sticking pins into wax models of your enemies and putting a curse on them.

The Israelites, instead of looking for a curse, appealed to the overwhelming power of a personal God, who could not be manipulated with voodoo or curses.

⁹ Or with tumors in the groin (see Septuagint)

¹¹ Or he

Septuagint), most Hebrew manuscripts villages as far as Greater Abel, where manuscripts and Septuagint 50,070

¹⁶ That is, God

¹⁸ A few Hebrew manuscripts (see also

¹⁹ A few Hebrew manuscripts; most Hebrew

[Faint, mostly illegible text in the left column, appearing to be a translation or commentary.]

[Faint, mostly illegible text in the top right column.]

[Faint, mostly illegible text in the middle right column.]

[Faint, mostly illegible text in the bottom right column, first paragraph.]

[Faint, mostly illegible text in the bottom right column, second paragraph.]

[Faint, mostly illegible text in the bottom right column, third paragraph.]

[Faint, mostly illegible text in the left column, second section.]

[Faint, mostly illegible text in the left column, third section.]

[Faint, mostly illegible text in the left column, fourth section.]

Samuel Anoints Saul

[Faint, mostly illegible text in the right column, fifth paragraph.]

[Faint, mostly illegible text in the right column, sixth paragraph.]

[Faint, mostly illegible text in the right column, seventh paragraph.]

[Faint, mostly illegible text in the right column, eighth paragraph.]

The First King

Every other nation had one—why not Israel?

If both you and the king who reigns over you follow the Lord your God—good! But if you do not obey the Lord, his hand will be against you. 12:14-15

The 12 tribes of Israel were a nation in name only. They had no central government at all. Since conquering Palestine, they had worked together only during emergencies, when inspired judges' military heroes like Gideon, Deborah, and Samson—came forward to lead them into battle.

In Samuel's time, though, the Philistines' military threat wouldn't go away. Israel needed superior leadership but Samuel was an old man. His sons made unappealing successors. What could be done? Looking around them, the tribes noticed that virtually every other country had a king. A king offered two advantages: first, he provided central government; second, since his sons would normally succeed a king, the nation did not have a crisis of leadership every time its leader got old. So the leaders of Israel asked Samuel to appoint a king (8:4-5).

Against God's Will

The idea seems to have been popular with everyone except Samuel and God. Samuel may have been displeased that he and his sons were being rejected. God had a deeper objection: Israel was rejecting his leadership. God told Samuel to warn the elders that a king would oppress his own citizens. Samuel warned of the military draft, of high taxation, of the king's power to make people into slaves (8:10-18).

Was God against a king? Some scholars see the monarchy as a marvelous example of God's using a choice made against his will. God counseled Israel against the very institution that ultimately produced King David, and through him Jesus, King of kings.

Others suggest that God only opposed the motive behind the request. (Deuteronomy 17:14-20 had assumed that the Israelites would eventually want and get a king.) The key is the phrase the elders used: "Then we will be like all the other nations" (8:20). God did not want them to be like all the other nations.

The King Was a Servant

Yet God gave in to their request, bad motives and all. He not only allowed the Israelites a king, he picked out their man. He accepted the monarchy on condition that Israel still consider the Lord as its ultimate ruler (12:14).

Apparently, Israel's king didn't answer to a parliament or court system, but he did answer to God. In short order the first king, Saul, was rejected because he disobeyed God. God rebuked and punished his replacement, David. Most nations' kings held absolute power. In Israel only God was absolute, and the king was his servant.

Life Questions: Have you ever seen God take a bad request made with bad motives and use it for his own purposes?

there is a man of God; he is highly respected, and everything he says comes true. Let's go there now. Perhaps he will tell us what way to take.

Saul said to his servant, "If we go, what can we give the man? The food in our sacks is gone. We have no gift to take to the man of God. What do we have?"

The servant answered him again. "Look," he said, "I have a quarter of a shekel of silver. I will give it to the man of God so that he will tell us what way to take." (Formerly in Israel, if a man went to inquire of God, he would say, "Come, let us go to the seer," because the prophet of today used to be called a seer.)

"Good," Saul said to his servant. "Come, let's go." So they set out for the town where the man of God was.

As they were going up the hill to the town, they met some girls coming out to draw water, and they asked them, "Is the seer here?"

"He is," they answered. "He's ahead of you. Hurry now, he has just come to our town today, for the people have a sacrifice at the high place."

As soon as you enter the town, you will find him before he goes up to the high place to eat. The people will not begin eating until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice; afterward, those who are invited will eat. Go up now; you should find him about this time."

They went up to the town, and as they were entering it, there was Samuel, coming toward them on his way up to the high place.

Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed this to Samuel: "About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him leader over my people Israel; he will deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines. I have looked upon my people, for their cry has reached me."

When Samuel caught sight of Saul, the LORD said to him, "This is the man I spoke to you about; he will govern my people."

Saul approached Samuel in the gateway and asked, "Would you please tell me where the seer's house is?"

"I am the seer," Samuel replied. "Go up ahead of me to the high place, for today you are to eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is in your heart. As for the donkeys you lost three days ago, do not worry about them; they have been found. And to whom

is all the desire of Israel turned, if not to you and all your father's family?"

Saul answered, "But am I not a Benjamite, from the smallest tribe of Israel, and is not my clan the least of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why do you say such a thing to me?"

Then Samuel brought Saul and his servant into the hall and seated them at the head of those who were invited—about thirty in number. Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the piece of meat I gave you, the one I told you to lay aside."

As the cook took up the leg with what was on it and set it in front of Saul, Samuel said, "Here is what has been kept for you. Eat, because it was set aside for you for this occasion, from the time I said, 'I have invited guests.'" And Saul dined with Samuel that day.

After they came down from the high place to the town, Samuel talked with Saul on the roof of his house. They rose about daybreak and Samuel called to Saul on the roof, "Get ready, and I will send you on your way." When Saul got ready, he and Samuel went outside together. As they were going down to the edge of the town, Samuel said to Saul, "Tell the servant to go on ahead of us"—and the servant did so—"but you stay here awhile, so that I may give you a message from God."

10 Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on Saul's head and kissed him, saying, "Has not the LORD anointed you leader over his inheritance?" When you leave me today, you will meet two men near Rachel's tomb, at Zelzah on the border of Benjamin. They will say to you, 'The donkeys you set out to look for have been found. And now your father has stopped thinking about them and is worried about you. He is asking, "What shall I do about my son?"'

Then you will go on from there until you reach the great tree of Tabor. Three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you there. One will be carrying three young goats, another three loaves of bread, and another a skin of wine. They will greet you and offer you two loaves of bread, which you will accept from them.

After that you will go to Gibeah of God, where there is a Philistine outpost. As you approach the town, you will meet a procession of prophets coming down from the high place with lyres, tambourines, flutes and harps being played before them, and they will be prophesying. The Spirit of the LORD will come upon you in power, and you will

9:3 A Donkey Hunt

Saul hunting for donkeys, certainly was not looking for a chance to become king. He was so politically unaware he didn't even know about the great man Samuel. Similarly, Samuel was a small boy when God called him (chapter 3) and David was anointed king while tending sheep (16:11-13). The leaders God appoints are not necessarily those seeking power.

10:5 Musical Prophets

This is one of the earliest references to prophets in the Bible. Under the kings, prophets became much more significant, possibly because they so often spoke out against the kings. The description of the prophets' musical procession is intriguing, though we can only guess what exactly they were doing. Unquestionably, the Spirit's powerful effect on Saul made a startling change in him (verse 11).

prophecy with them, and you will be changed into a different person. ⁷Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you.

⁸"Go down ahead of me to Gilgal. I will surely come down to you to sacrifice burnt offerings and fellowship offerings," but you must wait seven days until I come to you and tell you what you are to do.

Saul Made King

⁹As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day. ¹⁰When they arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he joined in their prophesying. ¹¹When all those who had formerly known him saw him prophesying with the prophets, they asked each other, "What is this that has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"

¹²A man who lived there answered, "And who is their father?" So it became a saying: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" ¹³After Saul stopped prophesying, he went to the high place.

¹⁴Now Saul's uncle asked him and his servant, "Where have you been?"

"Looking for the donkeys," he said. "But when we saw they were not to be found, we went to Samuel."

¹⁵Saul's uncle said, "Tell me what Samuel said to you."

¹⁶Saul replied, "He assured us that the donkeys had been found." But he did not tell his uncle what Samuel had said about the kingship.

¹⁷Samuel summoned the people of Israel to the LORD at Mizpah ¹⁸and said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I brought Israel up out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the power of Egypt and all the kingdoms that oppressed you.' ¹⁹But you have now rejected your God, who saves you out of all your calamities and distresses. And you have said, 'No, set a king over us.' So now present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and clans."

²⁰When Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. ²¹Then he brought forward the tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan, and Matri's clan was chosen. Finally Saul son of Kish was chosen. But when they looked for him, he was not to be found. ²²So they inquired further of the LORD, "Has the man come here yet?"

And the LORD said, "Yes, he has hidden himself among the baggage."

²³They ran and brought him out, and as he stood among the people he was a head taller than any of the others. ²⁴Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see the man the LORD has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people."

Then the people shouted, "Long live the king!"

²⁵Samuel explained to the people the regulations of the kingship. He wrote them down on a scroll and deposited it before the LORD. Then Samuel dismissed the people, each to his own home.

²⁶Saul also went to his home in Gibeah, accompanied by valiant men whose hearts God had touched. ²⁷But some troublemakers said, "How can this fellow save us?" They despised him and brought him no gifts. But Saul kept silent.

Saul Rescues the City of Jabesh

11 Nahash the Ammonite went up and besieged Jabesh Gilead. And all the men of Jabesh said to him, "Make a treaty with us, and we will be subject to you."

²But Nahash the Ammonite replied, "I will make a treaty with you only on the condition that I gouge out the right eye of every one of you and so bring disgrace on all Israel."

³The elders of Jabesh said to him, "Give us seven days so we can send messengers throughout Israel; if no one comes to rescue us, we will surrender to you."

⁴When the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and reported these terms to the people, they all wept aloud. ⁵Just then Saul was returning from the fields, behind his oxen, and he asked, "What is wrong with the people? Why are they weeping?" Then they repeated to him what the men of Jabesh had said.

⁶When Saul heard their words, the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he burned with anger. ⁷He took a pair of oxen, cut them into pieces, and sent the pieces by messengers throughout Israel, proclaiming, "This is what will be done to the oxen of anyone who does not follow Saul and Samuel." Then the terror of the LORD fell on the people, and they turned out as one man. ⁸When Saul mustered them at Bezek, the men of Israel numbered three hundred thousand and the men of Judah thirty thousand.

⁹They told the messengers who had come, "Say to the men of Jabesh Gilead, 'By the time the sun is hot tomorrow, you will be delivered.' " When the messengers went and reported this to the men of Jabesh, they were elated. ¹⁰They said to the Ammonites, "Tomorrow we will surrender to you, and you can do to us whatever seems good to you."

¹¹The next day Saul separated his men into three divisions; during the last watch of the night they broke into the camp of the Ammonites and slaughtered them until the heat of the day. Those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.

Saul Confirmed as King

¹²The people then said to Samuel, "Who was it that asked, 'Shall Saul reign over us?' Bring these men to us and we will put them to death."

¹³But Saul said, "No one shall be put to death today, for this day the LORD has rescued Israel."

¹⁴Then Samuel said to the people, "Come, let us go to Gilgal and there reaffirm the kingship." ¹⁵So all the people went to Gilgal and confirmed Saul as king in the presence of the LORD. There they sacrificed fellowship offerings^a before the LORD, and Saul and all the Israelites held a great celebration.

Samuel's Farewell Speech

12 Samuel said to all Israel: "I have listened to everything you said to me and have set a king over you. Now you have a king as your leader. As for me, I am old and gray, and my sons are here with you. I have been your leader from my youth until this day. Where I stand, Testify to me in the presence of the LORD and his appointed: Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed? From whose hand have I accepted a bribe to make me shut my eyes? If I have done any of these things, will I take them?"

"You have not cheated or oppressed us," they replied. "You have not taken anything from anyone's hand."

Samuel said to them: "The LORD is witness against you, and his appointed is witness this day: They have not found anything in my hand."

Then all the people said:

"Then Samuel said to the people: 'It is the LORD who appointed Moses and Aaron and brought your forefathers up out of Egypt.' Now then, stand here, because I am going to confront you with evidence before the LORD as to all the rights and promises by the LORD for you and your fathers."

"After Isaac entered Egypt, they cried to the LORD for help, and the LORD sent Moses and Aaron who brought your forefathers out of Egypt and led them to this place."

"But they forgot the LORD their God, so he sold them into the hand of Sisera, the commander of the army of Hazor, and into the hands of the Philistines and the king of Moab, who fought against them. They cried out to the LORD and said: 'We have sinned; we have forsaken the LORD and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths. But now deliver us from the hands of our enemies, and we will serve you.' Then the LORD sent Jerub-Baal,¹ Barak, Gideon, and Samuel,² and he delivered you from the hands of your enemies on every side, so that you lived securely."

"But when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites was moving against you, you said to me: 'No, we want a king to rule over us'—even though the LORD your God was your king. ¹³Now here is the king you have chosen, the one you asked for: see, the LORD has set a king over you. ¹⁴Now you fear the LORD and serve and obey him and do not rebel against his commands, and if both you and the king who reigns over you follow the LORD your God—good! ¹⁵But if you do not obey the LORD, and if you rebel against his commands, his hand will be against you, as it was against your fathers."

"Now then, stand still and see this great thing the LORD is about to do before your eyes! ¹⁷Is it not wheat harvest now? I will call upon the LORD to send thunder and rain. And you will realize what

an evil thing you did in the eyes of the LORD when you asked for a king."

"Then Samuel called upon the LORD, and that same day the LORD sent thunder and rain. So all the people stood in awe of the LORD and of Samuel."

"The people all said to Samuel, 'Pray to the LORD your God for your servants so that we will not die, for we have added to all our other sins the evil of asking for a king.'"

"Do not be afraid," Samuel replied. "You have done all this evil, yet do not turn away from the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. ²¹Do not turn away after useless idols. They can do you no good, nor can they rescue you, because they are useless. ²²For the sake of his great name the LORD will not reject his people, because the LORD was pleased to make you his own. ²³As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right. ²⁴But be sure to fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you. ²⁵Yet if you persist in doing evil, both you and your king will be swept away."

Samuel Rebukes Saul

13 Saul was thirty¹ years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty-² two years.

"Saul" chose three thousand men from Israel; two thousand were with him at Micmash and in the hill country of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan at Gibeah in Benjamin. The rest of the men he sent back to their homes."

"Jonathan attacked the Philistine outpost at Geba, and the Philistines heard about it. Then Saul had the trumpet blown throughout the land and said, 'Let the Hebrews hear!' ⁴So all Israel heard the news. 'Saul has attacked the Philistine outpost, and now Israel has become a stench to the Philistines.' And the people were summoned to join Saul at Gilgal."

"The Philistines assembled to fight Israel, with three thousand chariots, six thousand charioteers, and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Micmash, east of Beth Aven. ⁶When the men of Israel saw that their situation was critical and that their army was hard pressed, they hid in caves and thickets, among the rocks, and in pits and cisterns. ⁷Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead."

"Saul remained at Gilgal, and all the troops with him were quaking with fear. ⁸He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and Saul's men began to scatter. ⁹So he said, 'Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings.' And Saul offered up the burnt offering. ¹⁰Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him."

¹ Some Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac. Hebrew: Bedan.

² A few late manuscripts of the Septuagint. Hebrew does not have thirty.

¹ Hebrew: thirty. Some Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac. Hebrew: thirty thousand.

² Or: and when he had reigned over Israel two years. ¹³ Hebrew: some Septuagint.

¹⁴ Traditionally: peace offerings.

¹⁵ See the round.

¹⁶ Some.

¹¹"What have you done?" asked Samuel.

Saul replied, "When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Micmash, ¹²I thought, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the LORD's favor.' So I felt compelled to offer this burnt offering."

"You acted foolishly," Samuel said. "You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. ¹⁴But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the LORD's command."

¹⁵Then Samuel left Gilgal and went up to Gibeah in Benjamin, and Saul counted the men who were with him. They numbered about six hundred.

Israel Without Weapons

¹⁶Saul and his son Jonathan and the men with them were staying in Gibeah¹ in Benjamin, while the Philistines camped at Micmash. ¹⁷Raiding parties went out from the Philistine camp in three detachments. One turned toward Ophrah in the vicinity of Shual, ¹⁸another toward Beth Horon, and the third toward the borderland overlooking the Valley of Zeboim facing the desert.

¹⁹Not a blacksmith could be found in the whole land of Israel, because the Philistines had said,

"Otherwise the Hebrews will make swords or spears!" ²⁰So all Israel went down to the Philistines to have their plowshares, mattocks, axes and sickles sharpened. ²¹The price was two thirds of a shekel² for sharpening plowshares and mattocks, and a third of a shekel³ for sharpening forks and axes and for repointing goads.

²²So on the day of the battle not a soldier with Saul and Jonathan had a sword or spear in his hand, only Saul and his son Jonathan had them.

Jonathan Attacks the Philistines

²³Now a detachment of Philistines had gone out **14** to the pass at Micmash. ¹One day Jonathan son of Saul said to the young man bearing his armor, "Come, let's go over to the Philistine

outpost on the other side." But he did not tell his father.

Saul was staying on the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree in Migron. With him were about six hundred men, among whom was Ahijah, who was wearing an ephod. He was a son of Ichabod's brother Ahitub son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD's priest in Shiloh. No one was aware that Jonathan had left.

⁴On each side of the pass that Jonathan intended to cross to reach the Philistine outpost was a cliff; one was called Bozez, and the other Seneh. ⁵One cliff stood to the north toward Micmash, the other to the south toward Geba.

⁶Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, "Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. Perhaps the LORD will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the LORD from saving, whether by many or by few."

⁷"Do all that you have in mind," his armor-bearer said. "Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul."

⁸Jonathan said, "Come, then; we will cross over toward the men and let them see us. ⁹If they say to us, 'Wait there until we come to you,' we will stay where we are and not go up to them. ¹⁰But if they say, 'Come up to us,' we will climb up, because that will be our sign that the LORD has given them into our hands."

¹¹So both of them showed themselves to the Philistine outpost. "Look!" said the Philistines. "The Hebrews are crawling out of the holes they were hiding in." ¹²The men of the outpost shouted to Jonathan and his armor-bearer, "Come up to us and we'll teach you a lesson."

So Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, "Climb up after me; the LORD has given them into the hand of Israel."

¹³Jonathan climbed up, using his hands and feet, with his armor-bearer right behind him. The Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer followed and killed behind him. ¹⁴In that first attack Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed some twenty men in an area of about half an acre.⁴

Israel Routs the Philistines

¹⁵Then panic struck the whole army—those in the camp and field, and those in the outposts and raiding parties—and the ground shook. It was a panic sent by God.⁵

¹⁶Saul's lookouts at Gibeah of Benjamin saw the army melting away in all directions. ¹⁷Then Saul said to the men who were with him, "Mustering the forces and see who has left us." When they did, it was Jonathan and his armor-bearer who were not there.

¹⁸Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God." (At that time it was with the Israelites.)⁶ ¹⁹While Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the Philistine camp increased more and more. So Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand."

¹ Hebrew Septuagint: Gilga, and went his way; the rest of the people went after Saul to meet the army, and they went out of Gilgal.

² Two Hebrew manuscripts, most Hebrew manuscripts Geba, a variant of Gibeah. ³ Septuagint; Hebrew plowshares.

⁴ Hebrew pim, that is, about 1/4 ounce (about 8 grams).

⁵ That is, about 1/8 ounce (about 4 grams).

⁶ Hebrew half a yoke;

a "yoke" was the land plowed by a yoke of oxen in one day.

⁷ Or a terrible panic.

⁸ Hebrew, Septuagint: Bring the ephod.

(At that time he wore the ephod before the Israelites.)

20 Then Saul and all his men assembled and went to the battle. They found the Philistines in total confusion, striking each other with their swords. Some Hebrews who had previously been with the Philistines and had gone up with them to their camp went over to the Israelites who were with Jonathan. 21 When all the Israelites who were in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were on the run, they joined the battle in hot pursuit. 22 So the LORD rewarded Israel that day, and the battle moved on beyond Beth Aven.

Jonathan Eats Honey

23 Now the men of Israel were in distress that day, for Saul and his army had bound the people under an oath, saying, "Curse be any man who eats food today." So none of the troops tasted food.

24 Jonathan and his armor-bearer entered the woods, and when they went to the honey ozing out of the ground, Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, "Let me taste a little of this honey, because I am hungry." But Jonathan had not heard that Saul and his army had bound the people with the oath, so he did not tell him of the oath that was in his heart. 25 Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, "Taste a little of this honey." He raised his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened. 26 Then Jonathan told his armor-bearer, "Your father has bound the army under a strict oath, saying, 'Curse be any man who eats food today.' That is why none of the troops has tasted food."

27 Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, "My father has made trouble for the army, for now my eyes have brightened because I have tasted a little of this honey. 28 How much more would I have been if the men had eaten of the plunder they took from their enemies! For I have not done the slaughter of the Philistines, and I have not tasted of the plunder."

29 That day, after the Israelites had struck down the Philistines at Michmash to Ajalon, they were pursuing them. They pursued on the plunder and, taking sheep, cattle and calves, they butchered them on the ground and ate them, together with the bread. 30 Then someone said to Saul, "Look, the men are fleeing against the LORD by eating the plunder they have taken."

31 Jonathan answered him, "He said, 'Roll a large stone here at once.' 32 Then he said, 'Go out and strike the Philistines and tell them, 'Each of you bring the carcass of a sheep, and slaughter them here and eat them. Do not sin against the LORD by eating the carcass of your fellow Israelite.'"

33 So Jonathan brought his ox that night and slaughtered it there. Then Saul built an altar to the LORD. It was the first time he had done this.

34 Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night and plunder them till dawn, and let us not leave one of them alive."

35 "Do whatever seems best to you," they replied.

But the priest said, "Let us inquire of God here."

36 Saul asked God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will you give them into Israel's hand?" But God did not answer him that day.

37 Saul therefore said to his armor-bearer, "Come here, all you who are leaders of the army, and let us find out what sin has been committed today. As surely as the LORD who rescues Israel lives, even if it lies with my son Jonathan, he must die." But not one of the men said a word.

38 Saul then said to all the Israelites, "You stand over there, I and Jonathan my son will stand over here."

39 "Do what seems best to you," the men replied.

40 Then Saul prayed to the LORD, the God of Israel, "Give me the right answer." 41 And Jonathan and Saul were taken by lot, and the men were cleared. 42 Saul said, "Cast the lot between me and Jonathan my son." And Jonathan was taken.

43 Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done."

44 So Jonathan told him, "I merely tasted a little honey with the end of my staff. And now must I die?"

45 Saul said, "May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if you do not die, Jonathan."

46 But the men said to Saul, "Should Jonathan die—he who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel? Never! As surely as the LORD lives, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground, for he did this today with God's help." So the men rescued Jonathan, and he was not put to death.

47 Then Saul stopped pursuing the Philistines, and they withdrew to their own land.

48 After Saul had assumed rule over Israel, he fought against their enemies on every side. Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he inflicted punishment on them. 49 He fought valiantly and defeated the Amalekites, delivering Israel from the hands of those who had plundered them.

Saul's Family

50 Saul's sons were Jonathan, Ishvi and Malki-Shua. The name of his older daughter was Merab, and that of the younger was Michal. 51 His wife's name was Ahinoam daughter of Ahimaaz. The name of the commander of Saul's army was Abner son of Ner, and Ner was Saul's uncle. 52 Saul's father Kish and Abner's father Ner were sons of Abiel.

53 All the days of Saul there was bitter war with the Philistines, and whenever Saul saw a mighty or brave man, he took him into his service.

The Lord Rejects Saul as King

15 Samuel said to Saul, "I am the one the LORD sent to anoint you king over his people Israel; so listen now to the message from the LORD. 2 This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'I will pun-

23 Or his strength was renewed

27 Or his strength was renewed

29 Or my strength was renewed

41 Hebrew

23 Or his strength was renewed

27 Or his strength was renewed

29 Or my strength was renewed

41 Hebrew

23 Or his strength was renewed

27 Or his strength was renewed

29 Or my strength was renewed

41 Hebrew

23 Or his strength was renewed

27 Or his strength was renewed

29 Or my strength was renewed

41 Hebrew

23 Or his strength was renewed

27 Or his strength was renewed

29 Or my strength was renewed

41 Hebrew

ish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. "Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them: put to death men and women, chil-

dren and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys."

So Saul summoned the men and mustered them at Belem: two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men from Judah. Saul

*1. The Hebrew verb refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the Lord, often by totally destroying them; also in verses 1, 9, 11, 18, 20 and 21.

INSIGHT

Why Saul Was Rejected

A leader who failed under pressure

"Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king." 15:23

Saul had everything going for him. Tall and handsome, he struck people with his appearance. God chose him as the first king in the history of Israel. Soon after he was secretly anointed, God's Spirit came on him—an encounter with God that affected his entire personality.

Almost immediately Saul led a successful rescue operation, saving the people of a besieged city from mutilation. He was then publicly crowned king, even though he himself did no politicking for the office. (In fact, he hid during the selection.) He wisely refrained from allowing his opponents to be punished. Instead, he united all 12 tribes behind him, even though he himself came from a small, minority tribe.

Saul chose the best young men to serve in his army. One of them, David, was not only a skilled general, but also a loyal follower who would never oppose Saul—even when he had good reason. David married Saul's daughter, and Saul's oldest son, Jonathan, became David's best friend. This should have cemented an alliance, sealing Saul's success.

Deterioration under Pressure

Yet Saul's life went tragically wrong. The first sign of trouble, as 1 Samuel tells the story, came not long after he became king. While preparing for a campaign against the Philistines, Saul grew impatient. Samuel, scheduled to lead in the proper spiritual preparation for battle, was seven days late. Saul's men began to desert, and Saul decided he could wait no longer. He himself began to make the religious sacrifices that Samuel, as priest, was supposed to make. Just then Samuel arrived. He blasted Saul (13:13-14). Saul's hastiness, insignificant though it may seem, showed an inner weakness: his willingness to compromise God's directions under pressure.

The battle came soon afterwards, and Israel won miraculously. But in the victory Saul acted sometimes indecisive, sometimes rash. He could not decide to attack. Then he made a boastful vow that disrupted the Israelite army, allowing the Philistines to escape.

Attempted Murder

Sometime later Saul compromised again in a high-pressure situation, not following the precise instructions God had given for a military campaign (15:3). Again, Samuel caught him in the act. This time he accused Saul of rebelling against God. Samuel's words must have rung in Saul's head the rest of his life: "Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king" (15:23).

Without God's and Samuel's support, Saul lost his sense of confidence. An evil spirit began to torment him. Instead of building an alliance with David, Saul drove David away, causing him to run for his life in the desert. Eventually fear reduced Saul to a quivering, helpless jellyfish, incapable of leadership. In that condition he and his army lost a historic battle to the Philistines, allowing them to regain control. In the battle, both Saul and Jonathan were killed.

Why Saul Failed

The book of 1 Samuel doesn't psychoanalyze Saul; it merely reports what happened. The facts do point to a moral, though. Saul had begun with all the opportunity in the world. He only lacked, it seems, a strong compulsion to obey God no matter what. Under pressure he bent the rules. He lost God's backing. He grew fearful, rash, and jealous.

Saul's poor leadership left Israel worse off than at the beginning. The kingdom David inherited from Saul was again under Philistine military domination, and it was divided between north and south. Saul shows the unique tragedy of a poor leader. He fails not just himself. Inevitably he drags others down with him.

Life Questions: When you are put in the role of leader, how do you respond to pressure? Are Saul's weaknesses your weaknesses?

went to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the ravine. ⁶Then he said to the Kenites, "Do not go away. Leave the Amalekites so that I do not find you along with them, for you showed kindness to all the Israelites when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites moved away from the Amalekites."

⁷Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way from Havilah to Shur, to the east of Egypt. ⁸He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword. ⁹But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves^a and lambs—everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed.

¹⁰Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel. ¹¹"I am grieved that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions." Samuel was troubled, and he cried out to the LORD all that night.

¹²Early in the morning Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, but he was told, "Saul has gone to Carmel. There he has set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal."

¹³When Samuel reached him, Saul said, "The LORD bless you! I have carried out the LORD's instructions."

¹⁴But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?"

¹⁵Saul answered, "The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the LORD your God, but we totally destroyed the rest."

¹⁶"Stop!" Samuel said to Saul. "Let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night."

"Tell me," Saul replied.

¹⁷Samuel said, "Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel. ¹⁸And he sent you on a mission, saying, 'Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; make war on them until you have wiped them out.' ¹⁹Why did you not

obey the LORD? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the LORD?"

But I did obey the LORD," Saul said. "I went on the mission the LORD assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king. ²¹The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the LORD your God at Gilgal."

But Samuel replied:

Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices

as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD?

To obey is better than sacrifice,

and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

²³For rebellion is like the sin of divination,

and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.

Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,

he has rejected you as king."

²⁴Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned. I violated the LORD's command and your instructions. I was afraid of the people and so I gave in to them. ²⁵Now I beg you, forgive my sin and come back with me, so that I may worship the LORD."

²⁶But Samuel said to him, "I will not go back with you. You have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you as king over Israel."

²⁷As Samuel turned to leave, Saul caught hold of the hem of his robe, and it tore. ²⁸Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to one of your neighbors—to one better than you. ²⁹He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind."

³⁰Saul replied, "I have sinned. But please honor me before the elders of my people and before Israel, come back with me, so that I may worship the LORD your God." ³¹So Samuel went back with Saul, and Saul worshiped the LORD.

³²Then Samuel said, "Bring me Agag king of the Amalekites."

Agag came to him confidently,^b thinking, "Surely the bitterness of death is past."

³³But Samuel said,

"As your sword has made women childless, so will your mother be childless among women."

And Samuel put Agag to death before the LORD at Gilgal.

³⁴Then Samuel left for Ramah, but Saul went up to his home in Gibeah of Saul. ³⁵Until the day Samuel died, he did not go to see Saul again, though Samuel mourned for him. And the LORD was grieved that he had made Saul king over Israel.

Samuel Anoints David

16 The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and

15:8 Old Enemies

The Israelites had first encountered the Amalekites, a semi-nomadic group of pitiless raiders, on their way out of Egypt. Due to the Amalekites' unprovoked attack, Moses had declared that God wanted Amalek wiped out (Exodus 17:8-16; Deuteronomy 25:17-19). The hostility continued. Typically, the Amalekites would sweep into unprotected towns and villages on the edge of the southern desert, killing and looting, leaving the survivors without food. Though Samuel's order to Saul is hard to understand, knowing the Amalekites' reputation makes it easier to sympathize with. For a more general explanation of holy war, see "Is a War Ever Holy?" page 190.

^a Or the grown bulls; the meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain.

^b Or him trembling; yet

be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king."

²But Samuel said, "How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me."

The LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate."

⁴Samuel did what the LORD said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, "Do you come in peace?"

⁵Samuel replied, "Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD."

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

⁸Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either." ⁹Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, "Nor has the LORD chosen this one." ¹⁰Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The LORD has not chosen these." ¹¹So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?"

"There is still the youngest," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep."

Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives."

¹²So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy with a fine appearance and handsome features.

Then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; he is the one."

¹³So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah.

David in Saul's Service

¹⁴Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil¹⁷ spirit from the LORD tormented him.

¹⁵Saul's attendants said to him, "See, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you." ¹⁶Let our lord command his servants here to search for someone who can play the harp. He will play when the evil spirit from God comes upon you, and you will feel better.

¹⁷So Saul said to his attendants, "Find someone who plays well and bring him to me."

¹⁸One of the servants answered, "I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the harp. He is a brave man and a warrior. He

speaks well and is a fine-looking man. And the LORD is with him."

¹⁹Then Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, "Send me your son David, who is with the sheep."

²⁰So Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a skin of wine and a young goat and sent them with his son David to Saul.

²¹David came to Saul and entered his service. Saul liked him very much, and David became one of his armor-bearers. ²²Then Saul sent word to Jesse, saying, "Allow David to remain in my service, for I am pleased with him."

²³Whenever the spirit from God came upon Saul, David would take his harp and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.

David and Goliath

17 Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war and assembled at Socoh in Judah. They pitched camp at Ephes Dammim, between Socoh and Azekah. ²Saul and the Israelites assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah and drew up their battle line to meet the Philistines. ³The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the valley between them.

⁴A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. He was over nine feet¹⁴ tall. ⁵He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels¹⁵; ⁶on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. ⁷His spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels.¹⁶ His shield bearer went ahead of him.

⁸Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. ⁹If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us." ¹⁰Then the Philistine said, "This day I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other." ¹¹On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.

¹²Now David was the son of an Ephrathite

17:4 Why Everyone Watched Goliath

Wars in ancient times were sometimes decided by "representative combat": champions from each side would fight, and the results of their combat would determine the battle's result. People believed the outcome of the fight was controlled by the warriors' gods more than by the two sides' military strength.

Saul lacked confidence in God's support. His terror demoralized the Israelite army. David, by contrast, was as confident in his God as Goliath was scornful of God's people.

¹⁷ Some Septuagint manuscripts. Hebrew *not gather around* and a giant, about 3 meters.

¹⁸ Septuagint.

¹⁴ Or *armored*, also in verses 15, 16 and 23.

¹⁵ That is, about 125 pounds (about 57 kilograms).

¹⁶ That is, about 15 pounds (about 7

¹⁷ Hebrew *was* *not*

1 SAMUEL 17:13

named Jesse, who was from Bethlehem in Judah. ¹³When Saul's time came, Jesse's three oldest sons went to fight in the war. The firstborn was Eliab, the second was Amnon, and the third, David, was the youngest. The three sons followed Saul, but David went back and took care of his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

¹⁴When the Philistine came forward to fight, he came to the camp and took his stand.

¹⁵Then Saul said to his son David, "Take this armor and these ten loaves of bread and hurry to their camp."

¹⁶David gave the armor and the loaves to the commander of the army.

¹⁷David's brothers are and bring them. ¹⁸They are with Saul and all the men of Israel in the Valley of Elah, fighting against the Philistines.

¹⁹David left the flock with a shepherd and set out, as Jesse had told him, to the camp as the army was gathered there.

²⁰When the Philistine saw David, he came forward to fight him. ²¹David left his things with the shepherd and ran to the battle lines.

²²As he was talking with the champion from Gath, he shouted his usual challenge, and David heard it. ²³When the Israelites saw the man, they were afraid of him in great fear.

²⁴Now the Israelites were saying, "Do you see how this man is?" He comes out to fight the Philistine. ²⁵He comes out to fight the Philistine. ²⁶He comes out to fight the Philistine.

²⁷Now the Israelites were saying, "Do you see how this man is?" He comes out to fight the Philistine. ²⁸He comes out to fight the Philistine. ²⁹He comes out to fight the Philistine.

³⁰Now the Israelites were saying, "Do you see how this man is?" He comes out to fight the Philistine. ³¹He comes out to fight the Philistine. ³²He comes out to fight the Philistine.

³³Now the Israelites were saying, "Do you see how this man is?" He comes out to fight the Philistine. ³⁴He comes out to fight the Philistine. ³⁵He comes out to fight the Philistine.

³⁶Now the Israelites were saying, "Do you see how this man is?" He comes out to fight the Philistine. ³⁷He comes out to fight the Philistine. ³⁸He comes out to fight the Philistine.

³⁹Now the Israelites were saying, "Do you see how this man is?" He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁴⁰He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁴¹He comes out to fight the Philistine.

⁴²Now the Israelites were saying, "Do you see how this man is?" He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁴³He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁴⁴He comes out to fight the Philistine.

⁴⁵Now the Israelites were saying, "Do you see how this man is?" He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁴⁶He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁴⁷He comes out to fight the Philistine.

⁴⁸Now the Israelites were saying, "Do you see how this man is?" He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁴⁹He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁵⁰He comes out to fight the Philistine.

⁵¹Now the Israelites were saying, "Do you see how this man is?" He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁵²He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁵³He comes out to fight the Philistine.

⁵⁴Now the Israelites were saying, "Do you see how this man is?" He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁵⁵He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁵⁶He comes out to fight the Philistine.

⁵⁷Now the Israelites were saying, "Do you see how this man is?" He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁵⁸He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁵⁹He comes out to fight the Philistine.

⁶⁰Now the Israelites were saying, "Do you see how this man is?" He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁶¹He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁶²He comes out to fight the Philistine.

⁶³Now the Israelites were saying, "Do you see how this man is?" He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁶⁴He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁶⁵He comes out to fight the Philistine.

⁶⁶Now the Israelites were saying, "Do you see how this man is?" He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁶⁷He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁶⁸He comes out to fight the Philistine.

⁶⁹Now the Israelites were saying, "Do you see how this man is?" He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁷⁰He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁷¹He comes out to fight the Philistine.

⁷²Now the Israelites were saying, "Do you see how this man is?" He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁷³He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁷⁴He comes out to fight the Philistine.

⁷⁵Now the Israelites were saying, "Do you see how this man is?" He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁷⁶He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁷⁷He comes out to fight the Philistine.

⁷⁸Now the Israelites were saying, "Do you see how this man is?" He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁷⁹He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁸⁰He comes out to fight the Philistine.

⁸¹Now the Israelites were saying, "Do you see how this man is?" He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁸²He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁸³He comes out to fight the Philistine.

⁸⁴Now the Israelites were saying, "Do you see how this man is?" He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁸⁵He comes out to fight the Philistine. ⁸⁶He comes out to fight the Philistine.

boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth."

⁴⁸But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, ⁴⁹I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. ⁵⁰Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. ⁵¹The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."

Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you."

⁵²Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. ⁵³David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them.

⁵⁴"I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "because I am not used to them." So he took them off.

⁵⁵Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.

⁵⁶Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David.

⁵⁷He looked David over and saw that he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome, and he despised him.

⁵⁸He said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

⁵⁹"Come here," he said, "and I'll give you flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field."

⁶⁰David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁶¹Today the LORD will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. ⁶²All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands."

⁶³As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. ⁶⁴Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground.

⁶⁵So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, without a sword in his hand; he struck down the Philistine and killed him.

⁶⁶David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine's sword and drew it from the scabbard. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword.

⁶⁷When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran. ⁶⁸Then the men of

* That is, probably about 85 bushes, about 22 m.

*19 Hebrew: thousand

*20 Or some stone, or some pledge of goods

Israel and Judah surged forward with a shout and pursued the Philistines to the entrance of Gath⁵² and to the gates of Ekron. Their dead were strewn along the Shaaraim road to Gath and Ekron. ⁵³When the Israelites returned from chasing the Philistines, they plundered their camp. ⁵⁴David took the Philistine's head and brought it to Jerusalem, and he put the Philistine's weapons in his tent.

⁵⁵As Saul watched David going out to meet the Philistine, he said to Abner, commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is that young man?"

Abner replied, "As surely as you live, O king, I don't know."

⁵⁶The king said, "Find out whose son this young man is."

⁵⁷As soon as David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with David still holding the Philistine's head.

⁵⁸"Whose son are you, young man?" Saul asked him.

David said, "I am the son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem."

Saul's Jealousy of David

18 After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. ²From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house. ³And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. ⁴Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.

⁵Whatever Saul sent him to do, David did it so successfully⁵⁹ that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the people, and Saul's officers as well.

⁶When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines and lutes. ⁷As they danced, they sang:

"Saul has slain his thousands,
and David his tens of thousands."

⁸Saul was very angry; this refrain galled him. "They have credited David with tens of thousands," he thought, "but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?" ⁹And from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David.

¹⁰The next day an evil spirit from God came forcefully upon Saul. He was prophesying in his house, while David was playing the harp, as he usually did. Saul had a spear in his hand ¹¹and he hurled it, saying to himself, "I'll pin David to the wall." But David eluded him twice.

¹²Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with David but had left Saul. ¹³So he sent David away from him and gave him command over a thousand men, and David led the troops in their campaigns. ¹⁴In everything he did he had

great success,⁶⁰ because the LORD was with him. ¹⁵When Saul saw how successful⁶¹ he was, he was afraid of him. ¹⁶But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he led them in their campaigns.

¹⁷Saul said to David, "Here is my older daughter Merab. I will give her to you in marriage; only serve me bravely and fight the battles of the LORD." For Saul said to himself, "I will not raise a hand against him. Let the Philistines do that!"

¹⁸But David said to Saul, "Who am I, and what is my family or my father's clan in Israel, that I should become the king's son-in-law?" ¹⁹So when the time came for Merab, Saul's daughter, to be given to David, she was given in marriage to Adriel of Meholah.

²⁰Now Saul's daughter Michal was in love with David, and when they told Saul about it, he was pleased. ²¹"I will give her to him," he thought, "so that she may be a snare to him and so that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." So Saul said to David, "Now you have a second opportunity to become my son-in-law."

²²Then Saul ordered his attendants: "Speak to David privately and say, 'Look, the king is pleased with you, and his attendants all like you; now become his son-in-law.'"

²³They repeated these words to David. But David said, "Do you think it is a small matter to become the king's son-in-law? I'm only a poor man and little known."

²⁴When Saul's servants told him what David had said, ²⁵Saul replied: "Say to David, 'The king wants no other price for the bride than a hundred Philistine foreskins, to take revenge on his enemies.'"⁶² Saul's plan was to have David fall by the hands of the Philistines.

²⁶When the attendants told David these things, he was pleased to become the king's son-in-law. So before the allotted time elapsed, ²⁷David and his men went out and killed two hundred Philistines. He brought their foreskins and presented the full number to the king so that he might become the king's son-in-law. Then Saul gave him his daughter Michal in marriage.

²⁸When Saul realized that the LORD was with David and that his daughter Michal loved David, ²⁹Saul became still more afraid of him, and he remained his enemy the rest of his days.

³⁰The Philistine commanders continued to go out to battle, and as often as they did, David met with more success than the rest of Saul's officers, and his name became well known.

18:27 David the Warrior

David's bloody prize proved that his battle claims were not exaggerated. Foreskins would come from Philistines, since other tribes of the area, like Israel, practiced circumcision.

⁵² Some Septuagint manuscripts, Hebrew a valley
⁵⁹ Or bravely

⁶⁰ Or wisely

⁶¹ Or injurious

⁶² Or he was very wise

⁶³ Or

¹⁹ Or however

³⁰ Or David acted more wisely

1990

10

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are listed below them.

[illegible]

1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered. This involves understanding the context and the specific requirements of the task.

[illegible][illegible]

1940

...
...
...
...
...

（三）

1. What is the main purpose of the document?
 2. What are the key findings of the study?
 3. What are the implications of the findings?
 4. What are the limitations of the study?
 5. What are the conclusions of the study?

一、政治思想：热爱祖国，热爱社会主义，热爱集体，热爱劳动，热爱科学，热爱和平，热爱家乡，热爱亲人，热爱朋友，热爱生命，热爱自然，热爱一切美好的事物。

[Faint handwritten notes at the bottom of the page]

[illegible]

David and Jonathan

20 Then David fled from Gath at Ramah and went to Gath and asked, "What have I done? Why is my enemy? Then have I multiplied my enemies that he is trying to take my life?"

"You're absolutely right! You are not giving
 it any kind of fatherly consent. As an thing great
 or small, without consulting me, I'll be damned if
 I'll let it happen!" - I said so!

38. I feel not an with and said Your father
 & your mother that I have found favor in your
 eyes & he has said to humbly Jonathan must
 at least this is he will be general Yet as surely
 as the sun rises and as you live there is only a
 gap between me and death

11/24/1941
 11/24/1941
 11/24/1941

David said, 'Look tomorrow is the New Year festival, and I am supposed to dine with the king. Do let me go and hide in the field until the feast is over, the day after tomorrow. All your father owes me at all, tell him. David earnestly asked the king to let him go to Bethlehem, his home-town, because an annual sacrifice is being made there to his whole clan. If he says, 'Very well, then your servant is safe. But if he keeps his temper, you can be sure that he is determined to harm me. So let me now show kindness to your servant, let me have brought him into a covenant with you before the king. If I am guilty, then kill me yourself. If he sends me over to your father.'

* Never. Koushan said. If I had the least inkling that my father was determined to harm you, we would not have been here."

"I have asked: Who will tell me if your father answers you honestly?"

Case: Another said "let's go out into the
park so they were there together."

27 Then Jonathan said to David, "By the LORD, the God of Israel, I will surely sound out my father as this time the day after tomorrow." If he is favor-

10-23 Saul—A Prophet

The Spirit of God came upon Saul so that he prophesied. He rejected God's Spirit and continued his evil path.

ably disposed toward you, will I not send you word and let you know?" But if my father is inclined to harm you, may the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely: if I do not let you know and send you away safely. May the Lord be with you as he has been with my father. But show me unfailing kindness like that of the Lord as long as I live, so that I may not be killed, and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family—not even when the Lord has cut off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth."

So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the Lord call David's enemies to account." And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.

Then Jonathan said to David: "Tomorrow is the New Moon festival. You will be missed, because your seat will be empty. The day after tomorrow, toward evening, go to the place where you hid when this trouble began, and wait by the stone Ezel. I will shoot three arrows to the side of it, as though I were shooting at a target. Then I will send a boy and say, 'Go, find the arrows.' If I say to him, 'Look, the arrows are on this side of you; bring them here,' then come, because, as surely as the Lord lives, you are safe, there is no danger. But if I say to the boy, 'Look, the arrows are beyond you,' then you must go, because the Lord has sent you away. And about the matter you and I discussed—remember, the Lord is witness between you and me forever."

So David hid in the field, and when the New Moon festival came, the king sat down to eat. He sat in his customary place by the wall, opposite Jonathan,⁴ and Abner sat next to Saul, but David's place was empty. Saul said nothing that day, for he thought, "Something must have happened to David to make him ceremonially unclean—surely he is unclean." But the next day, the second day of the month, David's place was empty again. Then Saul said to his son Jonathan, "Why hasn't the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today?"

Jonathan answered, "David earnestly asked me for permission to go to Bethlehem. He said, 'Let me go, because our family is observing a sacrifice in the town and my brother has ordered me to be there. If I have found favor in your eyes, let me get away to see my brothers.' That is why he has not come to the king's table."

Saul's anger flared up at Jonathan and he said to him, "You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don't I know that you have sided with the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of the mother who bore you? As long as the son of Jesse lives on this earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now send and bring him to me, for he must die!"

"Why should he be put to death? What has he done?" Jonathan asked his father. But Saul hurled his spear at him to kill him. Then Jonathan knew that his father intended to kill David.

Jonathan got up from the table in fierce anger;

on that second day of the month he did not eat, because he was grieved at his father's shameful treatment of David.

In the morning Jonathan went out to the field for his meeting with David. He had a small boy with him, and he said to the boy, "Run and find the arrows I shoot." As the boy ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. When the boy came to the place where Jonathan's arrow had fallen, Jonathan called out after him, "Isn't the arrow beyond you?" Then he shouted, "Hurry! Go quickly! Don't stop!" The boy picked up the arrow and returned to his master. (The boy knew nothing of all this; only Jonathan and David knew.) Then Jonathan gave his weapons to the boy and said, "Go, carry them back to town."

After the boy had gone, David got up from the south side of the stone, and bowed down before Jonathan three times, with his face to the ground. Then they kissed each other and wept together—but David wept the most.

Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.'" Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town.

David at Nob

21 David went to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. Ahimelech trembled when he met him, and asked, "Why are you alone? Why is no one with you?"

David answered Ahimelech the priest, "The king charged me with a certain matter and said to me, 'No one is to know anything about your mission and your instructions.' As for my men, I have told them to meet me at a certain place. Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever you can find."

But the priest answered David, "I don't have any ordinary bread on hand; however, there is some consecrated bread here—provided the men have kept themselves from women."

David replied, "Indeed women have been kept from us, as usual whenever I set out. The men's things are holy even on missions that are not holy. How much more so today!" So the priest

21:4 Disobeying the Law

David was desperate when he reached Nob. He did not even have food. He lied about his situation. Then he ate consecrated bread that was supposed to be reserved for the priests. (A thousand years later Jesus raised the issue of the consecrated bread, suggesting that keeping the ritual laws mattered less than David's survival *Matthew* 12:3,4.)

David later admitted that he had been wrong to go to Nob and endanger the priests. Saul, suspicious of their involvement, slaughtered them (22:17-18).

⁴²⁵ Septuagint, Hebrew well Jonathan arose

⁴⁵ Or from us in the past few days since

⁴⁵ Or bodies

gave him the consecrated bread since there was no bread there except the bread of the Presence that had been removed from before the Lord and replaced by hot bread on the day it was taken away.

Now one of Saul's servants was there that day, detained before the Lord, he was Doeg the Edomite, Saul's head shepherd.

David asked Ahimelech, "Don't you have a spear or a sword here? I haven't brought my sword or any other weapon, because the king's business was urgent."

The priest replied, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, is here, it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If

INSIGHT

A Sense of God's Timing

Two leaders locked in a death struggle—with one refusing to fight

"I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life. May the Lord judge between you and me." 24:11-12

Saul was the right and legal king of Israel, living in luxury. David had been secretly anointed as his replacement, but he lived in the desert, scrabbling to survive. Saul had a professional army, David a small band composed of family members and an assortment of outlaws.

Twice Saul accidentally fell into David's hands, but David refused to kill him. He felt that would violate God's will. He would not use his sword to become king. He fought not to win but to survive.

Survival was not easy. You can read between the lines of chapters 21-31 and see a great drama unfolding. Saul is clearly deteriorating. Can David hold on long enough to outlast him?

At first David ran from one place to another, alone and completely vulnerable. Then, when 400 outlaws gathered around him, the local people turned him in twice (23:19; 26:1). Perhaps they feared that Saul would slaughter them the way he had the Nob priests (22:6-23).

David survived and managed to keep his army intact. He even built popular support by providing military protection to his neighbors. But eventually he saw that his position was impossible. "One of these days I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul," he said (27:1). He left Israel and became, with his army, a hired soldier for one of the Philistine kings.

Sooner or later David's double-agent act would have been found out. In fact, when the Philistines planned a major military effort against Israel, David barely escaped having to fight his own people.

Time on His Side

Throughout his wilderness period, David's position was desperate. David had one precious asset only: God had promised he would be king. David believed this promise even when his situation looked very bad. He would wait for God's timing.

A sense of timing, people say, is essential to leadership. You must know when to act boldly and when to wait patiently, when to bend and when to stand firm. David had that critical sense of timing because he trusted God's control of events.

Life Questions What makes you impatient? What can you learn about patience from David's life?

the 11 there is no sword here but that

12 There is no sword here but that

David at Gath

13 But the servants of Achish
his David, the king of the land
they sing about in their dances

14 And his thousands

15 And his tens of thousands

16 And he took these words to heart and was very
grieved of Achish king of Gath. Also he pre-
sented him in their presence and while he
was there he acted like a madman, mak-
ing marks on the doors of the gate and letting
savage run down his beard.

17 Achish said to his servants, "Look at the man!
Why have I brought him to me? 18 And I so short-
sighted that you have to bring this fellow here
to make this in front of me? Must this man
be here?"

David at Adullam and Mizpah

22 David left Gath and escaped to the cave of
Adullam. When his brothers and his fa-
ther's servants heard about it, they went down
to him there. All those who were in distress or in
debt or discontented gathered around him, and he
became their leader. About four hundred men
were with him.

23 Then there David went to Mizpah in Moab and
said to the king of Moab, "Would you let my father
and mother come and stay with you until I learn
what God will do for me?" 24 So he left them with
the king of Moab and they stayed with him as
long as David was in the stronghold.

25 But the prophet Gad said to David, "Do not
stay in the stronghold. Go into the land of Judah."
So David left and went to the forest of Hereth.

Saul Kills the Priests of Nob

26 Now Saul heard that David and his men had
been discovered. And Saul, spear in hand, was
seated under the tamarisk tree on the hill at Gibe-
ah, with all his officials standing around him. 27 Saul
said to them, "Listen, men of Benjamin! Will the
son of Jesse give all of you fields and vineyards?
Will he make all of you commanders of thousands
and commanders of hundreds? 28 Is that why you
have all conspired against me? No one tells me
when my son makes a covenant with the son of
Jesse. None of you is concerned about me or tells
me that my son has incited my servant to lie in wait
for me, as he does today."

29 But Doeg the Edomite, who was standing with

Saul's officials, said, "I saw the son of Jesse come
to Ahimelech son of Ahitub at Nob. 10 Ahimelech
inquired of the Lord for him, he also gave him
provisions and the sword of Goliath the Philis-
tine."

11 Then the king sent for the priest Ahimelech
son of Ahitub and his father's whole family, who
were the priests at Nob, and they all came to the
king. 12 Saul said, "Listen now, son of Ahitub."

13 "Yes, my lord," he answered.

14 Saul said to him, "Why have you conspired
against me, you and the son of Jesse, giving him
bread and a sword and inquiring of God for him,
so that he has rebelled against me and lies in wait
for me, as he does today?"

15 Ahimelech answered the king, "Who of all
your servants is as loyal as David, the king's son-
in-law, captain of your bodyguard and highly re-
spected in your household? 16 Was that day the
first time I inquired of God for him? Of course not!
Let not the king accuse your servant or any of his
father's family, for your servant knows nothing at
all about this whole affair."

17 But the king said, "You will surely die, Ahime-
lech, you and your father's whole family."

18 Then the king ordered the guards at his side:
"Turn and kill the priests of the Lord, because
they too have sided with David. They knew he was
fleeing, yet they did not tell me."

But the king's officials were not willing to raise a
hand to strike the priests of the Lord.

19 The king then ordered Doeg, "You turn and
strike down the priests." So Doeg the Edomite
turned and struck them down. That day he killed
eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod. 20 He
also put to the sword Nob, the town of the priests,
with its men and women, its children and infants,
and its cattle, donkeys and sheep.

21 But Abiathar, a son of Ahimelech son of Ahi-
tub, escaped and fled to join David. 22 He told Da-
vid that Saul had killed the priests of the Lord.
23 Then David said to Abiathar: "That day, when
Doeg the Edomite was there, I knew he would be
sure to tell Saul. I am responsible for the death of
your father's whole family. 24 Stay with me; don't
be afraid, the man who is seeking your life is seek-
ing mine also. You will be safe with me."

22:20 A Traumatic Career

Abiathar was the sole survivor of Saul's slaughter
of the priests—a foolish massacre that must have
alienated a great many of Saul's potential
supporters. The slaughter partly fulfilled God's
prediction in 2:31-36 that Eli's family would suffer
and be cut off from the high priest's office.

Having survived that day's trauma, Abiathar
became a priest for David and his men (23:6,9;
30:7,8). When David became king, he named
Abiathar one of two high priests. Later Abiathar,
having backed a rebellious faction against
Solomon, was dismissed and exiled. The prediction
made in Eli's day came fully true (1 Kings 2:26-27).

22:3 Long-lost Relatives

Afraid that Saul would hold his family ransom,
David took his parents to the neighboring kingdom
of Moab for safekeeping. Why Moab? Possibly
because he had distant relatives there. His great
grandmother, Ruth, had come from Moab.

1 SAMUEL 23:1

David Saves Keilah

23 When David was told, "Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are looting the threshing floors," ²he inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?"

The LORD answered him, "Go, attack the Philistines and save Keilah."

³But David's men said to him, "Here in Judah we are afraid. How much more, then, if we go to Keilah against the Philistine forces!"

⁴Once again David inquired of the LORD, and the LORD answered him, "Go down to Keilah, for I am going to give the Philistines into your hand."

⁵So David and his men went to Keilah, fought the Philistines and carried off their livestock. He inflicted heavy losses on the Philistines and saved the people of Keilah. ⁶(Now Abiathar son of Ahimelech had brought the ephod down with him when he fled to David at Keilah.)

Saul Pursues David

⁷Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah, and he said, "God has handed him over to me, for David has imprisoned himself by entering a town with gates and bars." ⁸And Saul called up all his forces for battle, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men.

⁹When David learned that Saul was plotting against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod." ¹⁰David said, "O LORD, God of Israel, your servant has heard definitely that Saul plans to come to Keilah and destroy the town on account of me. ¹¹Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me to him? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O LORD, God of Israel, tell your servant."

And the LORD said, "He will."

¹²Again David asked, "Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me and my men to Saul?"

And the LORD said, "They will."

¹³So David and his men, about six hundred in number, left Keilah and kept moving from place to place. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he did not go there.

¹⁴David stayed in the desert strongholds and in the hills of the Desert of Ziph. Day after day Saul searched for him, but God did not give David into his hands.

¹⁵While David was at Horesh in the Desert of Ziph, he learned that Saul had come out to take his life. ¹⁶And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God. ¹⁷"Don't be afraid," he said. "My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father Saul knows this." ¹⁸The two of them made a covenant before the LORD. Then Jonathan went home, but David remained at Horesh.

¹⁹The Ziphites went up to Saul at Gibeah and said, "Is not David hiding among us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hakilah, south of Jeshimon? ²⁰Now, O king, come down whenever it pleases you to do so, and we will be responsible for handing him over to the king."

²³ Or me at Nacon

²⁰ Sela Hammahlekoth means rock of parting

²¹Saul replied, "The LORD bless you for your concern for me. ²²Go and make further preparation. Find out where David usually goes and who has seen him there. They tell me he is very crafty. ²³Find out about all the hiding places he uses and come back to me with definite information." Then I will go with you; if he is in the area, I will track him down among all the clans of Judah."

²⁴So they set out and went to Ziph ahead of Saul. Now David and his men were in the Desert of Maon, in the Arabah south of Jeshimon. ²⁵Saul and his men began the search, and when David was told about it, he went down to the rock and stayed in the Desert of Maon. When Saul heard this, he went into the Desert of Maon in pursuit of David.

²⁶Saul was going along one side of the mountain, and David and his men were on the other side, hurrying to get away from Saul. As Saul and his forces were closing in on David and his men to capture them, ²⁷a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Come quickly! The Philistines are raiding the land." ²⁸Then Saul broke off his pursuit of David and went to meet the Philistines. That is why they call this place Sela Hammahlekoth. ²⁹And David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of En Gedi.

David Spares Saul's Life

24 After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, "David is in the Desert of En Gedi." ²So Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel and set out to look for David and his men near the Crag of the Wild Goats.

³He came to the sheep pens along the way; a cave was there, and Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were far back in the cave. ⁴The men said, "This is the day the LORD spoke of when he said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.'" Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

⁵Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe. ⁶He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, or lift my hand against him; for he is the anointed of the LORD." ⁷With these words David rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul left the cave and went his way.

⁸Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, "My lord the king!" When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. ⁹He said to

24:5 David's Bad Conscience

David was conscience-stricken after he cut a corner from Saul's robe. Why? Possibly because, to people of that day, a man looked ridiculous with his clothes cut short. See 2 Samuel 10:4,5 for a case where cutting a garment was a deliberate insult that led to war.

⁴ Or "Today the LORD is saying

Saul: Why do you listen when men say, 'David is bent on harming you?' Of this day you have seen with your own eyes how the Lord delivered you from my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you, I said, 'I will not lift my hand against my master, because he is the Lord's anointed.'¹¹ See, my father, look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. Now understand and recognize that I am not guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life.¹² May the Lord judge between you and me. And may the Lord avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you.¹³ As the old saying goes, 'From evildoers come evil deeds,' so my hand will not touch you.

¹⁴ "Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog? A flea?¹⁵ May the Lord be our judge and decide between us. May he consider my cause and uphold it; may he vindicate me by delivering me from your hand."

¹⁶ When David finished saying this, Saul asked, "Is that your voice, David my son?" And he wept aloud.¹⁷ "You are more righteous than I," he said. "You have treated me well, but I have treated you badly.¹⁸ You have just now told me of the good you did to me; the Lord delivered me into your hands, but you did not kill me.¹⁹ When a man finds his enemy, does he let him get away unharmed? May the Lord reward you well for the way you treated me today.²⁰ I know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands.²¹ Now swear to me by the Lord that you will not cut off my descendants or wipe out my name from my father's family."

²² So David gave his oath to Saul. Then Saul returned home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

David, Nabal and Abigail

25 Now Samuel died, and all Israel assembled and mourned for him; and they buried him at his home in Ramah.

Then David moved down into the Desert of Maon.^a ² A certain man in Maon, who had property there at Carmel, was very wealthy. He had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep, which he was shearing in Carmel.³ His name was Nabal

and his wife's name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband, a Calebite, was surly and mean in his dealings.

⁴ While David was in the desert, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep.⁵ So he sent ten young men and said to them, "Go up to Nabal at Carmel and greet him in my name.⁶ Say to him, 'Long life to you! Good health to you and your household! And good health to all that is yours!'"

⁷ "Now I hear that it is sheep-shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not mistreat them, and the whole time they were at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing.⁸ Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore be favorable toward my young men, since we come at a festive time. Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them."

⁹ When David's men arrived, they gave Nabal this message in David's name. Then they waited.

¹⁰ Nabal answered David's servants, "Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days.¹¹ Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shepherds, and give it to men coming from who knows where?"

¹² David's men turned around and went back. When they arrived, they reported every word.¹³ David said to his men, "Put on your swords!" So they put on their swords, and David put on his. About four hundred men went up with David, while two hundred stayed with the supplies.

¹⁴ One of the servants told Nabal's wife Abigail: "David sent messengers from the desert to give our master his greetings, but he hurled insults at them.¹⁵ Yet these men were very good to us. They did not mistreat us, and the whole time we were out in the fields near them nothing was missing.¹⁶ Night and day they were a wall around us all the time we were herding our sheep near them.¹⁷ Now think it over and see what you can do, because disaster is hanging over our master and his whole household. He is such a wicked man that no one can talk to him."

¹⁸ Abigail lost no time. She took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs^b of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys.¹⁹ Then she told her servants, "Go on ahead; I'll follow you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

²⁰ As she came riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, there were David and his men descending toward her, and she met them.²¹ David had just said, "It's been useless—all my watching over this fellow's property in the desert so that nothing of his was missing. He has paid me back evil for good.²² May God deal with David,^c be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him!"

²³ When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before David with her face to the ground.²⁴ She fell at his feet and

24:21 The Survival of a Family

Slaughtering the rival's entire family was normal practice when one would-be king won out over another. Such action tended to lessen the probability that the rival family would compete for the throne again. Jonathan, David's closest friend, is asking David not to follow that course when he becomes king. Because of their relationship, David let Jonathan's son Mephibosheth live (2 Samuel 9).

^a Some Septuagint manuscripts, Hebrew *Paran* manuscripts, Hebrew *with David's enemies*

^b That is, probably about a bushel (about 37 liters)

^c Some Septuagint

said "My lord, let the blame be on me alone. Please let your servant speak to you, hear what your servant has to say. ²⁵May my lord pay no attention to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name is Fool, and folly goes with him. But as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my master sent.

²⁶"Now since the LORD has kept you, my master, from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, as surely as the LORD lives and as you live, may your enemies and all who intend to harm my master be like Nabal. ²⁷And let this gift, which your servant has brought to my master, be given to the men who follow you. ²⁸Please forgive your servant's offense, for the LORD will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my master, because he fights the LORD's battles. Let no wrongdoing be found in you as long as you live. ²⁹Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my master will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the LORD your God. But the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling. ³⁰When the LORD has done for my master every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him leader over Israel, ³¹my master will not have on his conscience^a the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself. And when the LORD has brought my master success, remember your servant."

³²David said to Abigail, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. ³³May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands. ³⁴Otherwise, as surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, who has kept me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak."

³⁵Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought him and said, "Go home in peace. I have heard your words and granted your request."

³⁶When Abigail went to Nabal, he was in the house holding a banquet like that of a king. He was in high spirits and very drunk. So she told him nothing until daybreak. ³⁷Then in the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him all these things, and his heart failed him and he became like a stone. ³⁸About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal and he died.

³⁹When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Praise be to the LORD, who has upheld my cause against Nabal for treating me with contempt. He has kept his servant from doing wrong and has brought Nabal's wrongdoing down on his own head."

Then David sent word to Abigail, asking her to become his wife. ⁴⁰His servants went to Carmel and said to Abigail, "David has sent us to you to take you to become his wife."

⁴¹She bowed down with her face to the ground and said, "Here is your maidservant, ready to

serve you and wash the feet of my master's servants." ⁴²Abigail quickly got on a donkey and, attended by her five maids, went with David's messengers and became his wife. ⁴³David had also married Ahinoam of Jezreel, and they both were his wives. ⁴⁴But Saul had given his daughter Michal, David's wife, to Paltiel^a son of Laish, who was from Gallim.

David Again Spares Saul's Life

26 The Ziphites went to Saul at Gibeah and said, "Is not David hiding on the hill of Hakilah, which faces Jeshimon?"

²So Saul went down to the Desert of Ziph, with his three thousand chosen men of Israel, to search there for David. ³Saul made his camp beside the road on the hill of Hakilah facing Jeshimon, but David stayed in the desert. When he saw that Saul had followed him there, ⁴he sent out scouts and learned that Saul had definitely arrived.^b

⁵Then David set out and went to the place where Saul had camped. He saw where Saul and Abner son of Ner, the commander of the army, had lain down. Saul was lying inside the camp, with the army encamped around him.

⁶David then asked Ahimelech the Hittite and Abishai son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, "Who will go down into the camp with me to Saul?"

"I'll go with you," said Abishai.

⁷So David and Abishai went to the army by night, and there was Saul, lying asleep inside the camp with his spear stuck in the ground near his head. Abner and the soldiers were lying around him.

⁸Abishai said to David, "Today God has delivered your enemy into your hands. Now let me pin him to the ground with one thrust of my spear; I won't strike him twice."

⁹But David said to Abishai, "Don't destroy him! Who can lay a hand on the LORD's anointed and be guiltless? ¹⁰As surely as the LORD lives," he said, "the LORD himself will strike him; either his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish. ¹¹But the LORD forbid that I should lay a hand on the LORD's anointed. Now get the spear and water jug that are near his head, and let's go."

¹²So David took the spear and water jug near Saul's head, and they left. No one saw or knew about it, nor did anyone wake up. They were all sleeping, because the LORD had put them into a deep sleep.

¹³Then David crossed over to the other side and stood on top of the hill some distance away, there was a wide space between them. ¹⁴He called out to the army and to Abner son of Ner, "Aren't you going to answer me, Abner?"

Abner replied, "Who are you who calls to the king?"

¹⁵David said, "You're a man, aren't you? And who is like you in Israel? Why didn't you guard your lord the king? Someone came to destroy your lord the king. ¹⁶What you have done is not good. As surely as the LORD lives, you and your men deserve to die, because you did not guard your

^a Hebrew Palti, a variant of Paltiel

^b Or had come to Nacon

master the LORD's anointed. Look around you. Where are the king's spear and water jug that were near his head?

Saul recognized David's voice and said, "Is this you, David my son?"

David replied, "Yes it is, my lord the king."

Saul added, "Why is my lord pursuing his servant? What have I done, and what wrong am I doing?"

Now let my lord the king listen to his servant's words. If the LORD has incited you against me, then may he accept an offering. If, however, men have done it, may they be cursed before the LORD! They have now driven me from my share in the LORD's inheritance and have said, 'Go, serve other gods.' Now do not let my blood fall to the ground far from the presence of the LORD. The king of Israel has come out to look for a flea—as one hunts a partridge in the mountains."

Then Saul said, "I have sinned. Come back, David my son. Because you considered my life precious today, I will not try to harm you again. Surely I have acted like a fool and have erred greatly."

"Here is the king's spear," David answered.

"Let one of your young men come over and get it."

The LORD rewards every man for his righteousness and faithfulness. The LORD delivered you into my hands today, but I would not lay a hand on the LORD's anointed. As surely as I valued your life today, so may the LORD value my life and deliver me from all trouble."

Then Saul said to David, "May you be blessed, my son David; you will do great things and surely triumph."

So David went on his way, and Saul returned home.

David Among the Philistines

But David thought to himself, "One of these days I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul. The best thing I can do is to escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will give up searching for me anywhere in Israel, and I will slip out of his hand."

So David and the six hundred men with him left and went over to Achish son of Maach king of Gath. David and his men settled in Gath with Achish. Each man had his family with him, and David had his two wives: Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail of Carmel, the widow of Nabal. When Saul was told that David had fled to Gath, he no longer searched for him.

Then David said to Achish, "If I have found favor in your eyes, let a place be assigned to me in one of the country towns, that I may live there. Why should your servant live in the royal city with you?"

So on that day Achish gave him Ziklag, and it has belonged to the kings of Judah ever since. David lived in Philistine territory a year and four months.

Now David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Girzites and the Amalekites. (From ancient times these peoples had lived in the land extending to Shur and Egypt.) Whenever David attacked an area, he did not leave a man or

woman alive, but took sheep and cattle, donkeys and camels, and clothes. Then he returned to Achish.

When Achish asked, "Where did you go raiding today?" David would say, "Against the Negev of Judah" or "Against the Negev of Jerahmeel" or "Against the Negev of the Kenites." He did not leave a man or woman alive to be brought to Gath, for he thought, "They might inform on us and say, 'This is what David did.'" And such was his practice as long as he lived in Philistine territory. Achish trusted David and said to himself, "He has become so odious to his people, the Israelites, that he will be my servant forever."

Saul and the Witch of Endor

In those days the Philistines gathered their forces to fight against Israel. Achish said to David, "You must understand that you and your men will accompany me in the army."

David said, "Then you will see for yourself what your servant can do."

Achish replied, "Very well, I will make you my bodyguard for life."

Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in his own town of Ramah. Saul had expelled the mediums and spiritists from the land.

The Philistines assembled and came and set up camp at Shunem, while Saul gathered all the Israelites and set up camp at Gilboa. When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid; terror filled his heart. He inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets. Saul then said to his attendants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, so I may go and inquire of her."

"There is one in Endor," they said.

So Saul disguised himself, putting on other clothes, and at night he and two men went to the

27:8 David's Double Game

The Philistines accepted David because they thought he would fight against his own people. Had they known that he retained his Israelite loyalty, they would never have trusted him. So David had to pretend that he was raiding the Israelites, while actually he raided Israel's nomadic enemies. To keep his game secret, he took no prisoners, for it might be noticed that none of them were Israelites.

28:4 Battle Strategy

For their massive assault from Shunem, the Philistines tried a new tactic. They had fought previous battles in the mountains, rough terrain where their chariots were next to useless. Now they chose strategically important level ground that Israel had to defend. The Valley of Jezreel is the only part of Palestine where you can go from west to east without crossing mountains. A Philistine victory here would cut Israel in half.

woman. "Consult a spirit for me," he said, "and bring up for me the one I name."

⁹But the woman said to him, "Surely you know what Saul has done. He has cut off the mediums and spiritists from the land. Why have you set a trap for my life to bring about my death?"

¹⁰Saul swore to her by the LORD, "As surely as the LORD lives, you will not be punished for this."

¹¹Then the woman asked, "Whom shall I bring up for you?"

"Bring up Samuel," he said.

¹²When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out at the top of her voice and said to Saul, "Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!"

¹³The king said to her, "Don't be afraid. What do you see?"

The woman said, "I see a spirit^a coming up out of the ground."

¹⁴"What does he look like?" he asked.

"An old man wearing a robe is coming up," she said.

Then Saul knew it was Samuel, and he bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground.

¹⁵Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?"

"I am in great distress," Saul said. "The Philistines are fighting against me, and God has turned away from me. He no longer answers me, either by prophets or by dreams. So I have called on you to tell me what to do."

¹⁶Samuel said, "Why do you consult me, now that the LORD has turned away from you and become your enemy? ¹⁷The LORD has done what he predicted through me. The LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hands and given it to one of your neighbors—to David. ¹⁸Because you did not obey the LORD or carry out his fierce wrath against the Amalekites, the LORD has done this to you today. ¹⁹The LORD will hand over both Israel and you to the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The LORD will also hand over the army of Israel to the Philistines."

²⁰Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, filled with fear because of Samuel's words. His strength was gone, for he had eaten nothing all that day and night.

²¹When the woman came to Saul and saw that he was greatly shaken, she said, "Look, your maidservant has obeyed you. I took my life in my hands and did what you told me to do. ²²Now please listen to your servant and let me give you some food so you may eat and have the strength to go on your way."

²³He refused and said, "I will not eat."

But his men joined the woman in urging him, and he listened to them. He got up from the ground and sat on the couch.

²⁴The woman had a fattened calf at the house, which she butchered at once. She took some flour, kneaded it and baked bread without yeast. ²⁵Then she set it before Saul and his men, and they ate. That same night they got up and left.

Achish Sends David Back to Ziklag

29 The Philistines gathered all their forces at Aphek and Israel camped by the spring in Jezreel. ²As the Philistine rulers marched with their units of hundreds and thousands, David and his men were marching at the rear with Achish. ³The commanders of the Philistines asked, "What about these Hebrews?"

Achish replied, "Is this not David, who was an officer of Saul king of Israel? He has already been with me for over a year, and from the day he left Saul until now, I have found no fault in him."

⁴But the Philistine commanders were angry with him and said, "Send the man back, that he may return to the place you assigned him. He must not go with us into battle, or he will turn against us during the fighting. How better could he regain his master's favor than by taking the heads of our own men? ⁵Isn't this the David they sang about in their dances:

"Saul has slain his thousands,
and David his tens of thousands?"

⁶So Achish called David and said to him, "As surely as the LORD lives, you have been reliable, and I would be pleased to have you serve with me in the army. From the day you came to me until now, I have found no fault in you, but the rulers don't approve of you. ⁷Turn back and go in peace; do nothing to displease the Philistine rulers."

⁸"But what have I done?" asked David. "What have you found against your servant from the day I came to you until now? Why can't I go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"

⁹Achish answered, "I know that you have been as pleasing in my eyes as an angel of God; nevertheless, the Philistine commanders have said, 'He must not go up with us into battle.' ¹⁰Now get up early, along with your master's servants who have come with you, and leave in the morning as soon as it is light."

¹¹So David and his men got up early in the morning to go back to the land of the Philistines, and the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

David Destroys the Amalekites

30 David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day. Now the Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag. They had attacked Ziklag and burned it, ²and had taken captive the women and all who were in it, both young and old. They killed none of them, but carried them off as they went on their way.

³When David and his men came to Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. ⁴So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep. ⁵David's two wives had been captured—Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. ⁶David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him, each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God.

^a13 Or see spirits, or see gods

David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech: "Bring me the ephod." Abiathar said to him, "And David inquired of the LORD?" And David said to him, "This raiding party? Will I not inquire of the LORD?"

He answered, "You will certainly take them and succeed in the rescue." And the six hundred men with him came to the Besor Ravine, where some stayed behind, for two hundred men were too exhausted to cross the ravine. But David and four hundred men continued the pursuit.

They found an Egyptian in a field and brought him to David. They gave him water to drink and food to eat—¹²part of a cake of pressed figs and two cakes of raisins. He ate and was revived, for he had not eaten any food or drunk any water for three days and three nights.

David asked him, "To whom do you belong, and where do you come from?"

He said, "I am an Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite. My master abandoned me when I became ill three days ago. ¹⁴We raided the Negev of the Kerethites and the territory belonging to Judah and the Negev of Caleb. And we burned Ziklag."

David asked him, "Can you lead me down to this raiding party?"

He answered, "Swear to me before God that you will not kill me or hand me over to my master, and I will take you down to them."

He led David down, and there they were, scattered over the countryside, eating, drinking and reveling because of the great amount of plunder they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from Judah. ¹⁷David fought them from dusk until the evening of the next day, and none of them got away, except four hundred young men who rode off on camels and fled. ¹⁸David recovered everything the Amalekites had taken, including his two wives. ¹⁹Nothing was missing: young or old, boy or girl, plunder or anything else they had taken. David brought everything back. ²⁰He took all the flocks and herds, and his men drove them ahead of the other livestock, saying, "This is David's plunder."

Then David came to the two hundred men who had been too exhausted to follow him and who were left behind at the Besor Ravine. They came out to meet David and the people with him. As David and his men approached, he greeted them. ²²But all the evil men and troublemakers among David's followers said, "Because they did not go out with us, we will not share with them the plunder we recovered. However, each man may take his wife and children and go."

David replied, "No, my brothers, you must not do that with what the LORD has given us. He has protected us and handed over to us the forces that came against us. ²⁴Who will listen to what you say? The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike." ²⁵David made this a statute and ordinance for Israel from that day to this.

²⁶When David arrived in Ziklag, he sent some of the plunder to the elders of Judah, who were his friends, saying, "Here is a present for you from the plunder of the LORD's enemies."

He sent it to those who were in Bethel, Ramoth Negev and Jattir; ²⁸to those in Aroer, Siphmoth, Eshtemoa ²⁹and Racal; to those in the towns of the Jerahmeelites and the Kenites; ³⁰to those in Hormah, Bor Ashan, Athach ³¹and Hebron; and to those in all the other places where David and his men had roamed.

Saul Takes His Life

31 Now the Philistines fought against Israel; the Israelites fled before them, and many fell slain on Mount Gilboa. ²The Philistines pressed hard after Saul and his sons, and they killed his sons Jonathan, Abinadab and Malki-Shua. ³The fighting grew fierce around Saul, and when the archers overtook him, they wounded him critically.

Saul said to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword and run me through, or these uncircumcised fellows will come and run me through and abuse me."

But his armor-bearer was terrified and would not do it; so Saul took his own sword and fell on it. ⁵When the armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he too fell on his sword and died with him. ⁶So Saul and his three sons and his armor-bearer and all his men died together that same day.

When the Israelites along the valley and those across the Jordan saw that the Israelite army had fled and that Saul and his sons had died, they abandoned their towns and fled. And the Philistines came and occupied them.

The next day, when the Philistines came to strip the dead, they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. ⁹They cut off his head and stripped off his armor, and they sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines to proclaim the news in the temple of their idols and among their people. ¹⁰They put his armor in the temple of the Ashtoreths and fastened his body to the wall of Beth Shan.

When the people of Jabesh Gilead heard of what the Philistines had done to Saul, ¹²all their valiant men journeyed through the night to Beth Shan. They took down the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall of Beth Shan and went to Jabesh, where they burned them. ¹³Then they took their bones and buried them under a tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and they fasted seven days.

31:11 Loyal Friends in Death

Saul's first military action as king had been the rescue of Jabesh Gilead (chapter 11). Through all these years its citizens had not forgotten. When they heard of the disgraceful display of Saul's and his sons' bodies, they undertook a dangerous night mission to steal the bodies and give them proper burial.

2 SAMUEL

INTRODUCTION

The Life of King David

From herding sheep to ruling a nation

"I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel." 7:8

The Bible is filled with strong personalities, but none leads David in the parade. His life was a whirlwind, from which striking images flash. We see him playing his harp, writing poems, fighting battles, faking insanity, dancing jubilantly in praise of God. We watch his tear-streaked face when he learns of his closest friend's death. We see him on his rooftop, gazing down lustfully on Bathsheba's bath. We see Nathan point his finger at him, accusing him of adultery and murder. We hear David's guilty, anguished voice crying to God for the life of his infant child. We see David's bowed head as he stumbles out of Jerusalem, pursued by his murderous son.

David survived the crises of a dozen lives. Somehow he always bounced back. Somehow he maintained a passionate trust in God. First and Second Samuel don't paint him as a flawless character, nor as a perfect model of strength and courage. David had striking weaknesses. Yet he appeals to us as he did to the Israelites: he was completely, passionately alive. Whatever he did, right or wrong, he did with his whole heart. In his love for God, he held nothing back.

Healing the Wounds of War

While 1 Samuel tells of David's youth and his long exile, 2 Samuel focuses on David as king, leading, uniting, inspiring his people. His time in the desert was over. Different qualities of leadership were required in a king.

David inherited a country in ruins. His fellow Southerners recognized him as the new king. But Saul's son, backed by a powerful general, launched a civil war for the throne. Ugly infighting followed: intrigue, murder, and treachery.

Even after David's rivals were eliminated, peace was uneasy. Unless David could heal the wounds of war, resentment might smolder in the hearts of the Northerners. David's decisive action showed wisdom and firmness. He justly punished murderers who expected his gratitude. He showed respect for his enemies by mourning their deaths. From his first day in office David behaved as the king of all the people, not just his loyal followers. The Northern tribes soon came over to him, submitting to his leadership (5:1-3).

David's next move was to capture Jerusalem. People said it couldn't be done; mountainous Jerusalem was impregnable. David did it, and made Jerusalem his new political and religious capital. Located on the border between North and South, Jerusalem symbolized a new national unity based on trust in God.

That was just the beginning. David led the unified tribes to do what they had barely dreamed of: they defeated the dreaded Philistines once and for all. Almost overnight the tiny, threatened nation of Israel became safe. Secure borders opened expanded trade, and Israel boomed. (David's son Solomon reaped most of the wealth from this.) Naturally, David's popularity increased.

A Murderer and an Adulterer

But David's reign held ironic tragedies, too. Second Samuel makes no effort to hide them. David could lead a nation but not his own children. His ineffective parenting nearly destroyed all he had done when his heartless son Absalom led a rebellion. Second Samuel portrays David without retouching his blemishes: he was a murderer and an adulterer and a leader capable of cruelty.

Nevertheless, he was Israel's greatest king. Even at his lowest points, his great strength of character showed. He was never vengeful with his enemies. He took full responsibility for his mistakes. He managed to remember that he had started out as a mere shepherd. He held power only by the grace of God—and he believed that God had every right to take power away.

Through his love for God and his sense of astonished gratefulness for what God had done for

him, David became a living embodiment of the Israel God wanted. Like all truly great leaders, he made his country thrive not just by what he did, but by who he was.

How to Read 2 Samuel

2 Samuel continues, without a break, the story begun in 1 Samuel—the two were originally one book. The difference is that David, who once sought only to survive, now seeks to unify a badly divided country. His greater responsibilities put extra stress on his leadership qualities. You can study his life with leadership in mind. You can also study chapters 11–20 to see the cancerous effects of a leader's private sins and poor family leadership.

Chapters 21–24 seem to be an appendix, bringing in other important events and facts of David's reign. Much of 2 Samuel's story is also told in 1 Chronicles 11–21, often word for word the same.

PLANS FOR READING 2 SAMUEL

PLAN 1: An Overview of 2 Samuel in 3 Days

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to 2 Samuel, and chapter 6, in which the ark of the covenant was brought to Jerusalem and David danced before the Lord
- ☐ Day 2. Read chapter 11, in which David's adultery with Bathsheba led to murder
- ☐ Day 3. Read chapter 12 for the dramatic account of the prophet Nathan coming to confront David.

PLAN 2: All of 2 Samuel in 24 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16
☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24

David Hears of Saul's Death

1 After the death of Saul, David returned from defeating the Amalekites and stayed in Ziklag two days. **2** On the third day a man arrived from Saul's camp, with his clothes torn and with dust on his head. When he came to David, he fell to the ground to pay him honor.

3 "Where have you come from?" David asked him.

He answered, "I have escaped from the Israelite camp."

4 "What happened?" David asked. "Tell me."

He said, "The men fled from the battle. Many of them fell and died. And Saul and his son Jonathan are dead."

5 Then David said to the young man who brought him the report, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?"

6 "I happened to be on Mount Gilboa," the young man said, "and there was Saul, leaning on his spear, with the chariots and riders almost upon him. **7** When he turned around and saw me, he called out to me, and I said, 'What can I do?'"

8 "He asked me, 'Who are you?'"

" 'An Amalekite,' I answered."

9 "Then he said to me, 'Stand over me and kill me! I am in the throes of death, but I'm still alive.'"

10 "So I stood over him and killed him, because I knew that after he had fallen he could not survive. And I took the crown that was on his head and the

band on his arm and have brought them here to my lord."

11 Then David and all the men with him took hold of their clothes and tore them. **12** They mourned and wept and fasted till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the army of the Lord and the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

13 David said to the young man who brought him the report, "Where are you from?"

"I am the son of an alien, an Amalekite," he answered.

14 David asked him, "Why were you not afraid to lift your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?"

15 Then David called one of his men and said, "Go, strike him down!" So he struck him down, and he died. **16** For David had said to him, "Your blood be on your own head. Your own mouth testified against you when you said, 'I killed the Lord's anointed.'"

David's Lament for Saul and Jonathan

17 David took up this lament concerning Saul and his son Jonathan, **18** and ordered that the men of Judah be taught this lament of the bow (it is written in the Book of Jashar):

19 "Your glory, O Israel, lies slain on your heights.

How the mighty have fallen!

20 "Tell it not in Gath,

proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon,
lest the daughters of the Philistines be glad,
lest the daughters of the uncircumcised
rejoice

21 "O mountains of Gilboa,
may you have neither dew nor rain,
nor fields that yield offerings of grain.
For there the shield of the mighty was defiled,
the shield of Saul—no longer rubbed with
oil.

22 From the blood of the slain,
from the flesh of the mighty,
the bow of Jonathan did not turn back,
the sword of Saul did not return unsatisfied.

23 "Saul and Jonathan—
in life they were loved and gracious,
and in death they were not parted.
They were swifter than eagles,
they were stronger than lions.

24 "O daughters of Israel,
weep for Saul,
who clothed you in scarlet and finery,
who adorned your garments with ornaments
of gold

25 "How the mighty have fallen in battle!
Jonathan lies slain on your heights.

26 I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother;
you were very dear to me.
Your love for me was wonderful,
more wonderful than that of women.

27 "How the mighty have fallen!
The weapons of war have perished!"

David Anointed King Over Judah

2 In the course of time, David inquired of the
LORD. "Shall I go up to one of the towns of
Judah?" he asked

The LORD said, "Go up."

David asked, "Where shall I go?"

"To Hebron," the LORD answered.

3 So David went up there with his two wives,
Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Na-
bal of Carmel. 4 David also took the men who were
with him, each with his family, and they settled in
Hebron and its towns. 5 Then the men of Judah
came to Hebron and there they anointed David
king over the house of Judah.

When David was told that it was the men of
Jabesh Gilead who had buried Saul, 6 he sent mes-
sengers to the men of Jabesh Gilead to say to them,
"The LORD bless you for showing this kindness to
Saul your master by burying him. 7 May the LORD
now show you kindness and faithfulness, and I
too will show you the same favor because you have
done this. 8 Now then, be strong and brave, for
Saul your master is dead, and the house of Judah
has anointed me king over them."

War Between the Houses of David and Saul

8 Meanwhile, Abner son of Ner, the commander

of Saul's army, had taken Ish-Bosheth son of Saul
and brought him over to Mahanaim. 9 He made
him king over Gilead, Ashur^a and Jezreel, and
also over Ephraim, Benjamin and all Israel.

10 Ish-Bosheth son of Saul was forty years old
when he became king over Israel, and he reigned
two years. The house of Judah, however, followed
David. 11 The length of time David was king in
Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years
and six months.

12 Abner son of Ner, together with the men of
Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, left Mahanaim and went
to Gibeon. 13 Joab son of Zeruiah and David's men
went out and met them at the pool of Gibeon. One
group sat down on one side of the pool and one
group on the other side.

14 Then Abner said to Joab, "Let's have some of
the young men get up and fight hand to hand in
front of us."

"All right, let them do it," Joab said.

15 So they stood up and were counted off—
twelve men for Benjamin and Ish-Bosheth son of
Saul, and twelve for David. 16 Then each man
grabbed his opponent by the head and thrust his
dagger into his opponent's side, and they fell
down together. So that place in Gibeon was called
Helkath Hazzurim.^b

17 The battle that day was very fierce, and Abner
and the men of Israel were defeated by David's
men.

18 The three sons of Zeruiah were there: Joab,
Abishai and Asahel. Now Asahel was as fleet-foot-
ed as a wild gazelle. 19 He chased Abner, turning
neither to the right nor to the left as he pursued
him. 20 Abner looked behind him and asked, "Is
that you, Asahel?"

"It is," he answered.

21 Then Abner said to him, "Turn aside to the
right or to the left; take on one of the young men
and strip him of his weapons." But Asahel would
not stop chasing him.

22 Again Abner warned Asahel, "Stop chasing
me! Why should I strike you down? How could I
look your brother Joab in the face?"

23 But Asahel refused to give up the pursuit; so
Abner thrust the butt of his spear into Asahel's
stomach, and the spear came out through his back.
He fell there and died on the spot. And every man
stopped when he came to the place where Asahel
had fallen and died.

24 But Joab and Abishai pursued Abner, and as
the sun was setting, they came to the hill of Am-
mah, near Giah on the way to the wasteland of
Gibeon. 25 Then the men of Benjamin rallied be-
hind Abner. They formed themselves into a group
and took their stand on top of a hill.

26 Abner called out to Joab, "Must the sword
devour forever? Don't you realize that this will end
in bitterness? How long before you order your
men to stop pursuing their brothers?"

27 Joab answered, "As surely as God lives, if you
had not spoken, the men would have continued
the pursuit of their brothers until morning."

^a Or Asher

^b 16 Helkath Hazzurim means field of daggers or field of hostilities.

^c 27 Or spoken this morning, the men would not have taken up the pursuit of their brothers, or spoken, the men would have given up the pursuit of their brothers by morning

Joab took them the trumpet, and all the men
came to a halt. They no longer pursued Israel, nor
did they fight anymore.
Then Abner and his men marched
across the Jordan, and came to
the whole Bethroun and came to

turned from pursuing Abner and
his men. Besides Asahel, nineteen of
his men were missing. But David's
men were hundred and sixty. Benia-
min were with Abner. They took Asahel
and him in his father's tomb at Bethlehem,
and his men marched all night and ar-
rived in the daybreak.

3 The war between the house of Saul and the
house of David lasted a long time. David grew
stronger, while the house of Saul
grew weaker and weaker.

These were born to David in Hebron:
the firstborn was Amnon the son of Ahin-
oah the Gileadite;
the second, Kileash the son of Abigail the
woman of Nabal of Carmel;
the third, Absalom the son of Maacah
the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur;
the fourth, Adoniah the son of Haggith,
the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital;
and the sixth, Ithrean the son of David's
wife Eglah.

These were born to David in Hebron.

Abner Goes Over to David

During the war between the house of Saul and
the house of David, Abner had been strengthening
his own position in the house of Saul. Now Saul
had had a concubine named Rizpah daughter of
Aiah. And Ish-Bosheth said to Abner, "Why did
you sleep with my father's concubine?"

Abner was very angry because of what Ish-
Bosheth said and he answered, "Am I a dog's
head—on Judah's side? This very day I am loyal to
the house of your father Saul and to his family and
friends. I haven't handed you over to David. Yet
now you accuse me of an offense involving this
woman. May God deal with Abner, be it ever so

severely. If I do not do for David what the Lord
promised him on oath¹⁰ and transfer the kingdom
from the house of Saul and establish David's
throne over Israel and Judah from Dan to Beer-
sheba." Ish-Bosheth did not dare to say another
word to Abner, because he was afraid of him.

11 Then Abner sent messengers on his behalf to
say to David, "Whose land is it? Make an agree-
ment with me, and I will help you bring all Israel
over to you."

12 "Good," said David. "I will make an agree-
ment with you. But I demand one thing of you: Do
not come into my presence unless you bring Mi-
chal daughter of Saul when you come to see me."

14 Then David sent messengers to Ish-Bosheth son
of Saul, demanding, "Give me my wife Michal,
whom I betrothed to myself for the price of a hun-
dred Philistine foreskins."

15 So Ish-Bosheth gave orders and had her taken
away from her husband Paltiel son of Laish. Her
husband, however, went with her, weeping be-
hind her all the way to Bahurim. Then Abner said
to him, "Go back home!" So he went back.

17 Abner conferred with the elders of Israel and
said, "For some time you have wanted to make
David your king. Now do it! For the Lord prom-
ised David, 'By my servant David I will rescue my
people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and
from the hand of all their enemies.'"

19 Abner also spoke to the Benjamites in person.
Then he went to Hebron to tell David everything
that Israel and the whole house of Benjamin want-
ed to do. 20 When Abner, who had twenty men
with him, came to David at Hebron, David pre-
pared a feast for him and his men. 21 Then Abner
said to David, "Let me go at once and assemble all
Israel for my lord the king, so that they may make
a compact with you, and that you may rule over all
that your heart desires." So David sent Abner
away, and he went in peace.

Joab Murders Abner

22 Just then David's men and Joab returned from
a raid and brought with them a great deal of plun-
der. But Abner was no longer with David in He-
bron, because David had sent him away, and he
had gone in peace. 23 When Joab and all the sol-
diers with him arrived, he was told that Abner son
of Ner had come to the king and that the king had
sent him away and that he had gone in peace.

24 So Joab went to the king and said, "What have
you done? Look, Abner came to you. Why did you
let him go? Now he is gone! 25 You know Abner son
of Ner; he came to deceive you and observe your
movements and find out everything you are do-
ing."

26 Joab then left David and sent messengers after
Abner, and they brought him back from the well of
Sirah. But David did not know it. 27 Now when
Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside
into the gateway, as though to speak with him
privately. And there, to avenge the blood of his
brother Asahel, Joab stabbed him in the stomach,
and he died.

3:7 Women in Politics

In David's time, women were political symbols.
Abner's sleeping with Saul's concubine would have
suggested that he had his eyes on becoming king
himself. Later, when Absalom drove his father
David out of Jerusalem, he slept with David's
concubines in public, demonstrating to all eyes
that he had taken over from his father (16:22).

David sometimes may have married for political
benefit. One wife, Absalom's mother (verse 3), was
a princess from a neighboring country; the
marriage undoubtedly promoted good foreign
relations. David's request that Michal be returned
to him (though she had remarried, verses 14-16)
made political sense: an alliance with Saul's
daughter would tie Saul's family to the palace.

¹⁰ Or morning, or reason; the meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

Later, when David heard about this, he said, "I and my kingdom are forever innocent before the Lord concerning the blood of Abner son of Ner. May his blood fall upon the head of Joab and upon all his father's house! May Joab's house never be without someone who has a running sore or leprosy or who leans on a crutch or who falls by the sword or who lacks food."

Joab and his brother Abishai murdered Abner because he had killed their brother Asahel in the battle at Gibeon.

Then David said to Joab and all the people with him, "Tear your clothes and put on sackcloth and walk in mourning in front of Abner." King David himself walked behind the bier. They buried Abner in Hebron, and the king wept aloud at Abner's tomb. All the people wept also.

The king sang this lament for Abner

Should Abner have died as the lawless die?

Your hands were not bound,

your feet were not fettered

You fell as one falls before wicked men.

And all the people wept over him again.

Then they all came and urged David to eat something while it was still day, but David took an oath, saying, "May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if I taste bread or anything else before the sun sets."

All the people took note and were pleased; indeed, everything the king did pleased them.

So on that day all the people and all Israel knew that the king had no part in the murder of Abner son of Ner.

Then the king said to his men, "Do you not realize that a prince and a great man has fallen in Israel this day? And today, though I am the anointed king, I am weak, and these sons of Zeruah are too strong for me. May the Lord repay the evildoer according to his evil deeds!"

Ish-Bosheth Murdered

When Ish-Bosheth son of Saul heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he lost courage, and all Israel became alarmed. Now Saul's son had two men who were leaders of raiding bands. One was named Baanah and the other Recab; they were sons of Rimmon the Beerothite from the tribe of Benjamin—Beeroth is considered part of Benjamin—because the people of Beeroth fled to Gittaim and have lived there as aliens to this day.

Jonathan son of Saul had a son who was lame in both feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled, but as she hurried to leave, he fell and became crippled. His name was Mephibosheth.)

Now Recab and Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, set out for the house of Ish-Bosheth, and they arrived there in the heat of the day while he was taking his noonday rest. They went into the inner part of the house as if to get some wheat, and they stabbed him in the stomach. Then Recab and his brother Baanah slipped away.

They had gone into the house while he was lying on the bed in his bedroom. After they stabbed and killed him, they cut off his head. Taking it with them, they traveled all night by way of the Arabah. They brought the head of Ish-Bosheth to David at Hebron and said to the king, "Here is the head of Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, your enemy, who tried to take your life. This day the Lord has avenged my lord the king against Saul and his offspring."

David answered Recab and his brother Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, "As surely as the Lord lives, who has delivered me out of all trouble, when a man told me, 'Saul is dead,' and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and put him to death in Ziklag. That was the reward I gave him for his news! How much more—when wicked men have killed an innocent man in his own house and on his own bed—should I not now demand his blood from your hand and rid the earth of you!"

So David gave an order to his men, and they killed them. They cut off their hands and feet and hung the bodies by the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-Bosheth and buried it in Abner's tomb at Hebron.

David Becomes King Over Israel

All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "We are your own flesh and blood. In the past, while Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns. And the Lord said to you, 'You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.'"

When all the elders of Israel had come to King David at Hebron, the king made a compact with them at Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel.

David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

David Conquers Jerusalem

The king and his men marched to Jerusalem to attack the Jebusites, who lived there. The Jebusites said to David, "You will not get in here, even the blind and the lame can ward you off." They thought, "David cannot get in here." Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion, the City of David.

On that day, David said, "Anyone who con-

5:6 Choosing a Capital

In trying to unify the Northern and Southern tribes, David wanted a capital that offended neither side. He found it in Jerusalem, on the border between North and South and belonging to neither.

²⁹ The Hebrew word was used for various diseases affecting the skin, but necessarily leprosy.

quers the Jebusites will have to use the water shafts to reach those 'lame and blind' who are David's enemies.¹⁷ That is why they say, "The blind and lame' will not enter the palace."

David then took up residence in the fortress and called it the City of David. He built up the area around it, from the supporting terraces inward.¹⁸ And he became more and more powerful, because the LORD God Almighty was with him.

¹⁹Now Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with cedar logs and carpenters and stonemasons, and they built a palace for David.²⁰ And David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel and had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.

²¹After he left Hebron, David took more concubines and wives in Jerusalem, and more sons and daughters were born to him. ²²These are the names of the children born to him there: Shamua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, ²³Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, ²⁴Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet.

David Defeats the Philistines

¹When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, they went up in full force to search for him, but David heard about it and went down to the stronghold. ²Now the Philistines had come and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim; ³so David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I go and attack the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?"

The LORD answered him, "Go, for I will surely hand the Philistines over to you."

⁴So David went to Baal Perazim, and there he defeated them. He said, "As waters break out, the LORD has broken out against my enemies before me." So that place was called Baal Perazim.⁵ ⁶The Philistines abandoned their idols there, and David and his men carried them off.

⁷Once more the Philistines came up and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim; ⁸so David inquired of the LORD, and he answered, "Do not go straight up, but circle around behind them and attack them in front of the balsam trees. ⁹As soon as you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, move quickly, because that will mean the LORD has gone out in front of you to strike the Philistine army." ¹⁰So David did as the LORD commanded him, and he struck down the Philistines all the way from Gibeon¹¹ to Gezer.

The Ark Brought to Jerusalem

6 David again brought together out of Israel chosen men, thirty thousand in all. ²He and all his men set out from Baalah of Judah¹ to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the Name,² the name of the LORD Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim that are on the ark. ³They set the ark of God on a new cart and brought it from the house of Abinadab, which was

on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart "with the ark of God on it," and Ahio was walking in front of it. ⁴David and the whole house of Israel were celebrating with all their might before the LORD, with songs and with harps, lyres, tambourines, sistrums and cymbals.

⁵When they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled. ⁶The LORD's anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore God struck him down and he died there beside the ark of God.

⁷Then David was angry because the LORD's wrath had broken out against Uzzah, and to this day that place is called Perez Uzzah.⁸

⁹David was afraid of the LORD that day and said, "How can the ark of the LORD ever come to me?" ¹⁰He was not willing to take the ark of the LORD to be with him in the City of David. Instead, he took it aside to the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. ¹¹The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite for three months, and the LORD blessed him and his entire household.

¹²Now King David was told, "The LORD has blessed the household of Obed-Edom and everything he has, because of the ark of God." So David went down and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with rejoicing. ¹³When those who were carrying the ark of the LORD had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. ¹⁴David, wearing a linen ephod, danced before the LORD with all his might, ¹⁵while he and the entire house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouts and the sound of trumpets.

¹⁶As the ark of the LORD was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, she despised him in her heart.

¹⁷They brought the ark of the LORD and set it in its place inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and David sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings¹⁸ before the LORD. ¹⁸After he had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD Almighty. ¹⁹Then he gave a loaf of bread, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins to each person in the whole crowd of Israelites, both men and women. And all the people went to their homes.

²⁰When David returned home to bless his household, Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, "How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, disrobing in the sight of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!"

²¹David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me rather than your father or anyone

¹⁸ Or use scaling hooks

¹⁹ Or are hated by David

¹⁹ Or the Millo

²⁰ Baal Perazim means the lord who breaks out

²⁵ Septuagint (see also 1 Chron. 14:16), Hebrew Geba

¹² That is, Kirjath Jearim, Hebrew Baia Judah, a variant of Baalah of Judah

²² Hebrew, Septuagint and Vulgate do not have the Name

cart "and they brought it with the ark of God from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill"

Chronicles 13:8 Masoretic Text celebrating before the LORD with all kinds of instruments made of pure

¹⁵ See Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint and 1

against Uzzah

²⁷ Traditionally peace offerings, also in verse 18

¹⁸ Perez Uzzah means outbreak

...the Lord Almighty says I took you from
...and from following the flock to be
...I have been with
...you have gone and I have not
...from before you. Now I
...your name great like the names of
...men of the earth. And I will
...people Israel and will
...that they can have a home of
...I will also give you rest from
...

Chapter 29

...the Lord Almighty says I took you from
...and from following the flock to be
...I have been with
...you have gone and I have not
...from before you. Now I
...your name great like the names of
...men of the earth. And I will
...people Israel and will
...that they can have a home of
...I will also give you rest from
...

...the Lord Almighty says I took you from
...and from following the flock to be
...I have been with
...you have gone and I have not
...from before you. Now I
...your name great like the names of
...men of the earth. And I will
...people Israel and will
...that they can have a home of
...I will also give you rest from
...

...the Lord Almighty says I took you from
...and from following the flock to be
...I have been with
...you have gone and I have not
...from before you. Now I
...your name great like the names of
...men of the earth. And I will
...people Israel and will
...that they can have a home of
...I will also give you rest from
...

...declares to you that the Lord
...establish a house for you. When
...are over and you rest with your
...I will raise up your offspring to suc-
...you, who will come from your own
...and I will establish his kingdom. He is
...who will build a house for my Name
...will establish the throne of his kingdom
...will be his father, and he will be
...son. When he does wrong, I will punish
...with the rod of men, with floggings in-
...facted by men. But my love will never be
...taken away from him, as I took it away from
...Saul, whom I removed from before you.
Your house and your kingdom will endure

...the Lord Almighty says I took you from
...and from following the flock to be
...I have been with
...you have gone and I have not
...from before you. Now I
...your name great like the names of
...men of the earth. And I will
...people Israel and will
...that they can have a home of
...I will also give you rest from
...

Chapter 29

...the Lord Almighty says I took you from
...and from following the flock to be
...I have been with
...you have gone and I have not
...from before you. Now I
...your name great like the names of
...men of the earth. And I will
...people Israel and will
...that they can have a home of
...I will also give you rest from
...

...the Lord Almighty says I took you from
...and from following the flock to be
...I have been with
...you have gone and I have not
...from before you. Now I
...your name great like the names of
...men of the earth. And I will
...people Israel and will
...that they can have a home of
...I will also give you rest from
...

27 And now, Lord God, keep forever the
promise you have made concerning your ser-
vant and his house. (As you promised, 26a)
that your name will be great forever. Then
men will say, 'The Lord Almighty is God over
Israel.' And the house of your servant David
will be established before you.

27a) Lord Almighty, God of Israel, you
have revealed this to your servant, saying, 'I
will build a house for you.' So your servant
has found courage to offer you this prayer.
28) Sovereign Lord, you are God! Your words
are trustworthy, and you have promised these
good things to your servant. 29) Now be-
pleased to bless the house of your servant,
that it may continue forever in your sight; for
you, O Sovereign Lord, have spoken, and
with your blessing the house of your servant
will be blessed forever."

7:16 God's Great Promise

The Lord's promise to sustain David's ancestors
suggested that Israel would never lack the
leadership they needed. God never permanently
voided this promise. Even after Israel was
conquered and lost political independence, the
Israelites were still looking for a king in David's
line—the Messiah.

27a) Some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint, most Hebrew manuscripts you
28) See Septuagint
29) Hebrew manuscripts you and and before your people whom you redeemed from Egypt from the nations and their gods

David's Victories

8 In the course of time, David defeated the Philistines and subdued them, and he took Melchiammah from the control of the Philistines.

David also defeated the Moabites. He made them lie down on the ground and measured them off with a length of cord. Every two lengths of them were put to death, and the third length was allowed to live. So the Moabites became subject to David and brought tribute.

Moreover, David fought Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah, when he went to restore his control along the Euphrates River. David captured a thousand of his chariots, seven thousand charioteers^a and twenty thousand foot soldiers. He hamstringed all but a hundred of the chariot horses.

When the Arameans of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David struck down twenty-two thousand of them. He put garrisons in the Aramean kingdom of Damascus, and the Arameans became subject to him and brought tribute. The LORD gave David victory wherever he went.

David took the gold shields that belonged to the officers of Hadadezer and brought them to Jerusalem. From Tebah^b and Berothai, towns that belonged to Hadadezer, King David took a great quantity of bronze.

When Tou^c king of Hamath heard that David had defeated the entire army of Hadadezer, he sent his son Joram^d to King David to greet him and congratulate him on his victory in battle over Hadadezer, who had been at war with Tou. Joram brought with him articles of silver and gold and bronze.

King David dedicated these articles to the LORD, as he had done with the silver and gold from all the nations he had subdued: Edome^e and Moab, the Ammorites and the Philistines, and Amalek. He also dedicated the plunder taken from Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

And David became famous after he returned from striking down eighteen thousand Edomites^f in the Valley of Salt.

He put garrisons throughout Edom, and all the Edomites became subject to David. The LORD gave David victory wherever he went.

8:4 Not Ready for Chariots

Chariots were as great an innovation in weaponry as were guns centuries later. However, chariots required trained charioteers. Since David hamstringed all but 100 chariot horses, he may have lacked such trained personnel. Israel could defend the mountains, where chariots were of little use, but they were not ready to take on big armies on the surrounding plains.

David's Officials

David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all his people. Jehiah son of Zeruah was over the army; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was recorder; Zadok son of Ahitub and Ahimelech son of Abiathar were priests; Benaiah was secretary; Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over the Kerethites and Pelethites; and David's sons were royal advisers.^g

David and Mephibosheth

9 David asked, "Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

Now there was a servant of Saul's household named Ziba. They called him to appear before David, and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?"

"Your servant," he replied.

The king asked, "Is there no one still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness?"

Ziba answered the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet."

"Where is he?" the king asked.

Ziba answered, "He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar."^h

So King David had him brought from Lo Debar, from the house of Makir son of Ammiel.

When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor.

David said, "Mephibosheth!"

"Your servant," he replied.

"Don't be afraid," David said to him, "for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table."ⁱ

Mephibosheth bowed down and said, "What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?"

Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, "I have given your master's grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family. You and your sons and your servants are to farm the land for him and bring in the crops, so that your master's grandson may be provided for. And Mephibosheth, grandson of your master, will always eat at my table." (Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.)

Then Ziba said to the king, "Your servant will do whatever my lord the king commands his servant to do." So Mephibosheth ate at David's^j table like one of the king's sons.

Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica, and all the members of Ziba's household were servants of Mephibosheth. And Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, because he always ate at the king's table, and he was crippled in both feet.

^a Septuagint (see also Dead Sea Scrolls and 1 Chron. 18:4) Masoretic Text captured seventeen hundred of his charioteers. Septuagint manuscripts (see also 1 Chron. 18:8); Hebrew *Beiah*.

variant of *Hadorai*.

^b Some Hebrew manuscripts. Septuagint and Syriac (see also 1 Chron. 18:11), most Hebrew manuscripts.

^c 13 A few Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint and Syriac (see also 1 Chron. 18:12) most Hebrew manuscripts. Aram (that is, Arameans).

^d Or were priests.

^e Septuagint, Hebrew my

^f See note

^g Hebrew *Tou*, a variant of *Tou*, also in verse 10.

^h A

David Through the Ammonites.

10 In the spring of the year the king of the Ammonites sent his messengers to Hiram king of Tyre, saying, "I will show kindness to you as my father did to you. Now send me a chariot and horses, that I may fight with the Syrians, and that I may be victorious over them."

Hiram sent him to the land of the Ammonites, and his messengers went to Hiram. But David's messengers were in Hamath, and they were saying to him, "The king of the Ammonites has sent messengers to Hiram king of Tyre, saying, 'I will show kindness to you as my father did to you. Now send me a chariot and horses, that I may fight with the Syrians, and that I may be victorious over them.'"

So David sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites, saying, "I have heard that you are saying to Hiram king of Tyre, 'I will show kindness to you as my father did to you. Now send me a chariot and horses, that I may fight with the Syrians, and that I may be victorious over them.'"

But the king of the Ammonites answered David's messengers, saying, "My master Hiram has sent me horses and chariots, and soldiers from Beth Shammash, as well as the king of Maacah, and also twelve thousand men."

So David sent Joab out with the king's army, and the king's men. The Ammonites were in battle formation at the city gate, while the Arameans of Maacah and the men of Tob and Maacah were in the open country.

When David saw that there were battle lines in front of him, he selected some of the king's men and deployed them against the Ammonites. He put the rest of the men under the command of Abishai his brother and deployed them against the Arameans. Joab said, "If the Ammonites are too strong for me, then you are to come to my rescue. But if the Arameans are too strong for me, then you are to come to my rescue." So David and his men fought bravely for our people and for the Lord. The Lord will do what is good and pleasant.

Then David and the troops with him advanced against the Arameans, and they fled before him. When the Ammonites saw that the Arameans were fleeing, they fled before Abishai and went back to their own land. So David returned from fighting the Ammonites and came to Jerusalem.

When the Arameans saw that they had been routed by Israel, they regrouped. Hadadezer had Arameans brought from beyond the River, they went to meet with Shobach the commander of Hadadezer's army leading them.

When David was told of this, he gathered all Israel, crossed the Jordan and went to Helam. The Arameans formed their battle lines to meet David and fought against him. But they fled before Israel, and David killed seven hundred of their horsemen and forty thousand of their foot soldiers. He also struck down Shobach the com-

mander of their army, and he died there. When David's men who were vassals of Hadadezer saw that Israel had defeated them, they made peace with the Israelites and became subject to them. So the Arameans were afraid to help the Ammonites any more.

David and Bathsheba

11 In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's army, the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.

One day David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" Then David and messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (She had purified herself from her uncleanness.) Then she went back home. The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."

So David sent this word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent him to David. When Uriah came to him, David asked him how the war was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house.

When David was told, "Uriah did not go home," he asked him, "Haven't you just come from a distance? Why didn't you go home?"

Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my master Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open fields. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!"

Then David said to him, "Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. At David's invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants; he did not go home.

In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. In it he wrote, "Put Uriah in

11:11 A Military Hero

Israelite soldiers had no sexual relations while they were preparing for battle. (See, for instance, 1 Samuel 21:5.) Uriah refused to sleep with Bathsheba because he remembered duty before pleasure. He is mentioned (in 23:39) as one of the Thirty, a group of leading warriors under David.

¹ That is, the Egyptians.

² Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 1 Chron. 19:18); Hebrew horsemen.

³ Or with her.

⁴ That is, the Egyptians.

the most time where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die.

21So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uzzah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were. 22When the men of the city came out and fought, a great Joab saw many of the men in David's army fall; moreover, Uriah the Hittite was dead.

23Joab sent David a full account of the battle. 24He instructed the messenger: "When you have finished giving the king this account of the battle, 25the king's anger may flare up, and he may ask you, 'Why did you get so close to the city to fight? Didn't you know they would shoot arrows from

the wall?' 26Who killed Abimelech son of Jerub-Besheth? Didn't a woman throw an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died in Hebeze? Why did you get so close to the wall?' If he asks you this, then say to him, 'Also, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead.'"

27The messenger set out, and when he arrived he told David everything Joab had sent him to say.

28The messenger said to David, "The men overpowered us and came out against us in the open, but we drove them back to the entrance to the city gate. 29Then the archers shot arrows at your servants from the wall, and some of the king's men died. Moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead."

Ask the class to read this passage (that is, 2 Samuel 11:24-29).

INSIGHT

Adultery and Murder

The king could do as he pleased—or so he thought

David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die!" . . . Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man!" 12:5,7

An ancient and enduring tradition teaches that the people on top make the rules—they don't have to live by them. Lots of leaders in history have followed this course, taking the women they wanted, the money they wanted, the privileges they wanted.

Nobody, therefore, challenged David's right to sleep with another man's wife. David saw Bathsheba, lusted for her, and sent for her, as far as we know neither his servants nor Bathsheba lodged a protest. Only when she got pregnant did a problem arise. Then David, who had had no thought of marrying Bathsheba, found himself in a jam. He called her husband, Uriah, home on leave from the army, hoping that Uriah would sleep with his wife and later be unable to prove the child belonged to another father.

Uriah's single-minded devotion to duty spoiled David's plan. David rewarded Uriah with murder. Again, not a word of protest was filed: what the king wanted the king got, no questions asked. The murder of Uriah took other good men with him, but David showed no regrets. He was at his worst: cold as iron, arrogant in his power.

After a mourning period, Bathsheba came into his house and he married her. A good many people must have known what had happened—the servants knew, at any rate—but the Bible doesn't report that any of them were displeased. It only says, "The thing David had done displeased the LORD" (11:27).

Who Will Challenge the King?

Who would have the courage—or the authority—to challenge the king? In most nations, no one. But Israel had this distinctive: its ultimate king was not David, but God. And God had his spokesmen, the prophets. He sent Nathan to David.

Nathan cleverly captivated David with a heartrending story about a rich man who had abused his power. He offered the case to David, the highest judge in Israel. David knew exactly how to judge such a case: the man deserved death! When he said so, Nathan turned David's own judgment around: "You are the man!"

In this dramatic scene David's greatness showed itself. He could easily have had Nathan killed. Or he could have laughed and shown him out of the palace. Instead, "David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the LORD'" (12:13). David recognized that God was the true king of Israel.

Nathan's confrontation with David set the standard for centuries of conflict between kings and prophets. Time and again an Old Testament prophet went to the palace—sometimes risking his life—and told the king that God would punish him for what he was doing. The kings, rich and powerful by birth, did not have to listen. In fact, they rarely did. David was a great king partly because he did not act with the normal pride of a king. When confronted with the truth, he repented.

Life Questions: What determines your choices? Your own desires? Or your understanding of God's will? Think of some recent decisions you have made and apply this question to them.

and it seemed impossible for him to do anything to her

³Now Amnon had a friend named Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother. Jonadab was a very shrewd man. ⁴He asked Amnon, "Why do you, the king's son, look so haggard morning after morning? Won't you tell me?"

Amnon said to him, "I'm in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister."

⁵"Go to bed and pretend to be ill," Jonadab said. "When your father comes to see you, say to him, 'I would like my sister Tamar to come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare the food in my sight so I may watch her and then eat it from her hand.'"

⁶So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. When the king came to see him, Amnon said to him, "I would like my sister Tamar to come and make some special bread in my sight, so I may eat from her hand."

⁷David sent word to Tamar at the palace: "Go to the house of your brother Amnon and prepare some food for him." ⁸So Tamar went to the house of her brother Amnon, who was lying down. She took some dough, kneaded it, made the bread in his sight and baked it. ⁹Then she took the pan and served him the bread, but he refused to eat.

"Send everyone out of here," Amnon said. So everyone left him. ¹⁰Then Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food here into my bedroom so I may eat from your hand." And Tamar took the bread she had prepared and brought it to her brother Amnon in his bedroom. ¹¹But when she took it to him to eat, he grabbed her and said, "Come to bed with me, my sister."

¹²"Don't, my brother!" she said to him. "Don't force me. Such a thing should not be done in Israel! Don't do this wicked thing. ¹³What about me? Where could I get rid of my disgrace? And what about you? You would be like one of the wicked fools in Israel. Please speak to the king; he will not keep me from being married to you." ¹⁴But he refused to listen to her, and since he was stronger than she, he raped her.

¹⁵Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her. Amnon said to her, "Get up and get out!"

¹⁶"No!" she said to him. "Sending me away would be a greater wrong than what you have already done to me."

But he refused to listen to her. ¹⁷He called his personal servant and said, "Get this woman out of here and bolt the door after her." ¹⁸So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. She was wearing a richly ornamented^a robe, for this was the kind of garment the virgin daughters of the king wore. ¹⁹Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the ornamented^b robe she was wearing. She put her hand on her head and went away, weeping aloud as she went.

²⁰Her brother Absalom said to her, "Has that Amnon, your brother, been with you? Be quiet now, my sister; he is your brother. Don't take this

thing to heart." And Tamar lived in her brother Absalom's house, a desolate woman.

²¹When King David heard all this, he was furious. ²²Absalom never said a word to Amnon, either good or bad, he hated Amnon because he had disgraced his sister Tamar.

Absalom Kills Amnon

²³Two years later, when Absalom's sheep-shearers were at Baal Hazor near the border of Ephraim, he invited all the king's sons to come there. ²⁴Absalom went to the king and said, "Your servant has had shearers come. Will the king and his officials please join me?"

²⁵"No, my son," the king replied. "All of us should not go; we would only be a burden to you." Although Absalom urged him, he still refused to go, but gave him his blessing.

²⁶Then Absalom said, "If not, please let my brother Amnon come with us."

The king asked him, "Why should he go with you?" ²⁷But Absalom urged him, so he sent with him Amnon and the rest of the king's sons.

²⁸Absalom ordered his men, "Listen! When Amnon is in high spirits from drinking wine and I say to you, 'Strike Amnon down,' then kill him. Don't be afraid. Have not I given you this order? Be strong and brave." ²⁹So Absalom's men did to Amnon what Absalom had ordered. Then all the king's sons got up, mounted their mules and fled.

³⁰While they were on their way, the report came to David: "Absalom has struck down all the king's sons; not one of them is left." ³¹The king stood up, tore his clothes and lay down on the ground; and all his servants stood by with their clothes torn.

³²But Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother, said, "My lord should not think that they killed all the princes; only Amnon is dead. This has been Absalom's expressed intention ever since the day Amnon raped his sister Tamar. ³³My lord the king should not be concerned about the report that all the king's sons are dead. Only Amnon is dead."

³⁴Meanwhile, Absalom had fled.

Now the man standing watch looked up and saw many people on the road west of him, coming down the side of the hill. The watchman went and told the king, "I see men in the direction of Horonaim, on the side of the hill."^c

³⁵Jonadab said to the king, "See, the king's sons are here; it has happened just as your servant said."

³⁶As he finished speaking, the king's sons came in weeping loudly. The king, too, and all his servants wept very bitterly.

³⁷Absalom fled and went to Talmai son of Amihud, the king of Geshur. But King David mourned for his son every day.

³⁸After Absalom fled and went to Geshur, he stayed there three years. ³⁹And the spirit of the king^d longed to go to Absalom, for he was consoled concerning Amnon's death.

^a28 The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain.

^b34 Septuagint. Hebrew does not have this sentence.

^cthe spirit of David the king

^d39 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

^e39 Dead Sea Scrolls and some Septuagint manuscripts. Masoretic Text But

The first part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the theory of the structure of the atom. It is shown that the structure of the atom is determined by the laws of quantum mechanics, and that the laws of quantum mechanics are determined by the laws of the special theory of relativity. The second part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the structure of the atom, and the third part is devoted to a discussion of the structure of the atom.

The first part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the theory of the structure of the atom. It is shown that the structure of the atom is determined by the laws of quantum mechanics, and that the laws of quantum mechanics are determined by the laws of the special theory of relativity.

The second part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the structure of the atom, and the third part is devoted to a discussion of the structure of the atom. It is shown that the structure of the atom is determined by the laws of quantum mechanics, and that the laws of quantum mechanics are determined by the laws of the special theory of relativity. The fourth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the structure of the atom, and the fifth part is devoted to a discussion of the structure of the atom.

The first part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the theory of the structure of the atom. It is shown that the structure of the atom is determined by the laws of quantum mechanics, and that the laws of quantum mechanics are determined by the laws of the special theory of relativity.

Sin As a Cancer

First David, then his family, then a nation

"O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you - O Absalom, my son, my son!" 18:33

Sins—many people think of them as minor wrong activities. If you commit too many, you may get caught and punished. However, one or two here and there won't make a big difference. The Bible views sins more as cancer cells. One or two here and there do make a difference—often the difference between life and death. Because cancer cells grow, multiply, and take over, major surgery may be needed to save your life.

Second Samuel 11-20 reads like a history of a spreading cancer. In the beginning, David was on top of the world—and so was Israel. The civil war was over, the land was at peace, and Israel was entering unprecedented prosperity. God had promised to ensure David's descendants a continuous reign forever. What more could David hope for? The rest of life appeared as one long celebration.

The Cancer Grows

That celebration never began. One night David caught a glimpse of Bathsheba's beautiful, naked body, and impulsively sent for her. The coverup required a murder. Nobody could deny it was an ugly business: even David admitted it when Nathan confronted him. However, it was soon over. He repented. He married Bathsheba. He did not intend to fall to that temptation again. But the consequences of the sin were far from over. Unknown to David, cancer was growing in his own household. David's oldest son Amnon had an eye for women too. He tricked his half-sister Tamar into his bedroom, then raped her. Afterwards, filled with disgust, he threw her out.

David was furious. But, maybe because he felt his own sin had robbed him of moral authority, he did nothing to punish his son. According to the law (Leviticus 18:9,29), Amnon deserved exile, but he got off free. David apparently wanted the matter forgotten.

A Cold-Blooded Character

It merely disappeared from view. Absalom waited two full years to avenge his sister's rape. Then he murdered Amnon in cold blood. Again David was long on regret, short on punishment. He wept over Amnon's death but perhaps recognized his own responsibility for it. After three years David let Absalom return to Jerusalem unpunished; two years later, when Absalom angrily demanded either a murder trial or full acceptance back in the palace (14:32), David kissed and made up completely.

Again the cancer disappeared from view. But it was not gone; it grew. Now an arrogant Absalom started a program of public relations designed to make him look better than his aging father. At the end of four years, having become quite popular, he set his coup in motion. Taken completely by surprise, David was driven out of Jerusalem, into the desert.

The shock seemed to awaken David. Though dazed and weeping as he left the city, he had enough sense to make some clever plans. When the battle came at last, David's army won, and Absalom was captured and killed.

Weeping for His Son

For David the king, Absalom's defeat was a great triumph. For David the father, it was a horrible tragedy. The worst thing that can happen to a father had happened to him. His own son had tried to kill him, and in trying, had been killed. David could not stop weeping over his son's death until Joab, his general, warned him that he was insulting the troops who had fought for him.

David pulled himself together. Piece by piece, he put his kingdom back in order. He sent conciliatory words to the rebellious leaders of his own tribe. He rewarded his supporters. He took no revenge on any rebel faction, but showed remarkable fairness. A second rebellion broke out but was soon put down. The cancer seemed finally to have run its course.

Yet it had not. David had no more trouble with rebellion in his lifetime, but after his death Solomon killed a brother who he thought was scheming for the throne (1 Kings 2:25). After Solomon's reign, the old tribal tensions rose again, and the North and the South, which David had so carefully knit together, split for good (1 Kings 12). Such may be the consequences when a leader sins. His cancer not only poisons him, it grows to affect all those he leads—and it undermines his work.

Life Questions Many people will, at some point, see their well-run lives disintegrate. What enables someone to pick up the pieces, as David did?

his head. ³⁰David said to him, "If you go with me, you will be a burden to me. ³¹But if you return to the city and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king, I was your father's servant in the past, but now I will be your servant,' then you can help me by frustrating Ahithophel's advice. ³²Won't the priests Zadok and Abiathar be there with you? Tell them anything you hear in the king's palace. ³³Their two sons, Ahimaaz son of Zadok and Jonathan son of Abiathar, are there with them. Send them to me with anything you hear."

³⁴So David's friend Hushai arrived at Jerusalem as Absalom was entering the city.

David and Ziba

16 When David had gone a short distance beyond the summit, there was Ziba, the steward of Mephibosheth, waiting to meet him. He had a string of donkeys saddled and loaded with two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred cakes of raisins, a hundred cakes of figs and a skin of wine.

²The king asked Ziba, "Why have you brought these?"

Ziba answered, "The donkeys are for the king's household to ride on, the bread and fruit are for the men to eat, and the wine is to refresh those who become exhausted in the desert."

³The king then asked, "Where is your master's grandson?"

Ziba said to him, "He is staying in Jerusalem, because he thinks, 'Today the house of Israel will give me back my grandfather's kingdom.'"

⁴Then the king said to Ziba, "All that belonged to Mephibosheth is now yours."

I humbly bow," Ziba said. "May I find favor in your eyes, my lord the king."

Shimei Curses David

⁵As King David approached Bahurim, a man from the same clan as Saul's family came out from there. His name was Shimei son of Gera, and he cursed as he came out. ⁶He pelted David and all the king's officials with stones, though all the troops and the special guard were on David's right and left. ⁷As he cursed, Shimei said, "Get out, get out, you man of blood, you scoundrel!" ⁸The Lord has repaid you for all the blood you shed in the household of Saul, in whose place you have reigned. The Lord has handed the kingdom over to your son Absalom. You have come to ruin because you are a man of blood!"

⁹Then Abishai son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and cut off his head."

¹⁰But the king said, "What do you and I have in common, you sons of Zeruiah? If he is cursing because the Lord said to him, 'Curse David,' who can ask, 'Why do you do this?'"

¹¹David then said to Abishai and all his officials, "My son, who is of my own flesh, is trying to take my life. How much more, then, this Benjamite! Leave him alone; let him curse, for the Lord has told him to. ¹²It may be that the Lord will see my

distress and repay me with good for the cursing I am receiving today."

¹³So David and his men continued along the road while Shimei was going along the hillside opposite him, cursing as he went and throwing stones at him and showering him with dirt. ¹⁴The king and all the people with him arrived at their destination exhausted. And there he refreshed himself.

The Advice of Hushai and Ahithophel

¹⁵Meanwhile, Absalom and all the men of Israel came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel was with him.

¹⁶Then Hushai the Arkite, David's friend, went to Absalom and said to him, "Long live the king! Long live the king!"

¹⁷Absalom asked Hushai, "Is this the love you show your friend? Why didn't you go with your friend?"

¹⁸Hushai said to Absalom, "No, the one chosen by the Lord, by these people, and by all the men of Israel—his I will be, and I will remain with him.

¹⁹Furthermore, whom should I serve? Should I not serve the son? Just as I served your father, so I will serve you."

²⁰Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give us your advice. What should we do?"

²¹Ahithophel answered, "Lie with your father's concubines whom he left to take care of the palace. Then all Israel will hear that you have made yourself a stench in your father's nostrils, and the hands of everyone with you will be strengthened." ²²So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and he lay with his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

²³Now in those days the advice Ahithophel gave was like that of one who inquires of God. That was how both David and Absalom regarded all of Ahithophel's advice.

17 Ahithophel said to Absalom, "I would^a choose twelve thousand men and set out tonight in pursuit of David. ²I would^b attack him while he is weary and weak. I would^b strike him with terror, and then all the people with him will flee. I would^b strike down only the king ³and bring all the people back to you. The death of the man you seek will mean the return of all; all the people will be unharmed." ⁴This plan seemed good to Absalom and to all the elders of Israel.

⁵But Absalom said, "Summon also Hushai the Arkite, so we can hear what he has to say." ⁶When Hushai came to him, Absalom said, "Ahithophel

16:22 No Way Back

Absalom publicly slept with his father's concubines for political reasons. It made clear his claim to the throne (see 3:6 for a similar case) and was extremely offensive to David. Israelites who had held back their allegiance, thinking that father and son would reconcile their differences, knew now that the breach was permanent. They had to take sides.

^{a1} Or Let me ^{b2} Or will

has given this advice. Should we do what he says? If not, give us your opinion."

⁷Hushai replied to Absalom, "The advice Ahithophel has given is not good this time. ⁸You know your father and his men; they are fighters, and as fierce as a wild bear robbed of her cub. Besides, your father is an experienced fighter; he will not spend the night with the troops. ⁹Even now he is hidden in a cave or some other place. If he should attack your troops first,^a whoever hears about it will say, 'There has been a slaughter among the troops who follow Absalom.' ¹⁰Then even the bravest soldier, whose heart is like the heart of a lion, will melt with fear, for all Israel knows that your father is a fighter and that those with him are brave.

¹¹"So I advise you: Let all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba—as numerous as the sand on the seashore—be gathered to you, with you yourself leading them into battle. ¹²Then we will attack him wherever he may be found, and we will fall on him as dew settles on the ground. Neither he nor any of his men will be left alive. ¹³If he withdraws into a city, then all Israel will bring ropes to that city, and we will drag it down to the valley until not even a piece of it can be found."

¹⁴Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "The advice of Hushai the Arkite is better than that of Ahithophel." For the LORD had determined to frustrate the good advice of Ahithophel in order to bring disaster on Absalom.

¹⁵Hushai told Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, "Ahithophel has advised Absalom and the elders of Israel to do such and such, but I have advised them to do so and so. ¹⁶Now send a message immediately and tell David, 'Do not spend the night at the fords in the desert; cross over without fail, or the king and all the people with him will be swallowed up.'"

¹⁷Jonathan and Ahimaaz were staying at En Rogel. A servant girl was to go and inform them, and they were to go and tell King David, for they could not risk being seen entering the city. ¹⁸But a young man saw them and told Absalom. So the two of them left quickly and went to the house of a man in Bahurim. He had a well in his courtyard, and they climbed down into it. ¹⁹His wife took a covering and spread it out over the opening of the well and

scattered grain over it. No one knew anything about it.

²⁰When Absalom's men came to the woman at the house, they asked, "Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?"

The woman answered them, "They crossed over the brook."^b The men searched but found no one, so they returned to Jerusalem.

²¹After the men had gone, the two climbed out of the well and went to inform King David. They said to him, "Set out and cross the river at once; Ahithophel has advised such and such against you." ²²So David and all the people with him set out and crossed the Jordan. By daybreak, no one was left who had not crossed the Jordan.

²³When Ahithophel saw that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey and set out for his house in his hometown. He put his house in order and then hanged himself. So he died and was buried in his father's tomb.

²⁴David went to Mahanaim, and Absalom crossed the Jordan with all the men of Israel. ²⁵Absalom had appointed Amasa over the army in place of Joab. Amasa was the son of a man named Jether,^c an Israelite who had married Abigail,^d the daughter of Nahash and sister of Zeruiah the mother of Joab. ²⁶The Israelites and Absalom camped in the land of Gilead.

²⁷When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and Makir son of Ammiel from Lo Debar and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim ²⁸brought bedding and bowls and articles of pottery. They also brought wheat and barley, flour and roasted grain, beans and lentils,^e ²⁹honey and curds, sheep, and cheese from cows' milk for David and his people to eat. For they said, "The people have become hungry and tired and thirsty in the desert."

Absalom's Death

18 David mustered the men who were with him and appointed over them commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds. ²David sent the troops out—a third under the command of Joab, a third under Joab's brother Abishai son of Zeruiah, and a third under Ittai the Gittite. The king told the troops, "I myself will surely march out with you."

³But the men said, "You must not go out; if we are forced to flee, they won't care about us. Even if half of us die, they won't care; but you are worth ten thousand of us.^f It would be better now for you to give us support from the city."

⁴The king answered, "I will do whatever seems best to you."

So the king stood beside the gate while all the men marched out in units of hundreds and of thousands. ⁵The king commanded Joab, Abishai and Ittai, "Be gentle with the young man Absalom for my sake." And all the troops heard the king

17:11 Flattering Advice

Hushai, one of David's top advisors, slipped into Absalom's camp pretending to have deserted David. He deliberately gave bad advice, cleverly phrasing it to flatter Absalom. Hushai suggested that if Absalom delayed his pursuit of David, Absalom (who had never fought in battle) could gather a gigantic army to lead. Absalom fell for it, and the delay gave David enough time to consolidate his support.

^a9 Or When some of the men fall at the first attack
variant of Jether

^b25 Hebrew and some Septuagint manuscripts, other Septuagint manuscripts (see also 1 Chron. 2:17) Ishmaelite or Jezreelite

^c25 Hebrew Abigail, a variant of Abigail

^d28 Most Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac Hebrew lentils, and roasted grain

^e3 Iwo Hebrew manuscripts some Septuagint manuscripts and Vulgate, most Hebrew manuscripts say for now there are ten thousand

like us

10 That soldier said, "I am a Hebrew man, and I am a man of war. I am a man of war."

11 And the king said, "I am a man of war. I am a man of war. I am a man of war."

12 And the king said, "I am a man of war. I am a man of war. I am a man of war."

13 And the king said, "I am a man of war. I am a man of war. I am a man of war."

14 And the king said, "I am a man of war. I am a man of war. I am a man of war."

15 And the king said, "I am a man of war. I am a man of war. I am a man of war."

16 And the king said, "I am a man of war. I am a man of war. I am a man of war."

17 And the king said, "I am a man of war. I am a man of war. I am a man of war."

18 And the king said, "I am a man of war. I am a man of war. I am a man of war."

19 And the king said, "I am a man of war. I am a man of war. I am a man of war."

20 And the king said, "I am a man of war. I am a man of war. I am a man of war."

21 And the king said, "I am a man of war. I am a man of war. I am a man of war."

22 And the king said, "I am a man of war. I am a man of war. I am a man of war."

23 And the king said, "I am a man of war. I am a man of war. I am a man of war."

24 And the king said, "I am a man of war. I am a man of war. I am a man of war."

19 Joab was told, "The king is weeping and mourning for Absalom." 2 And for the whole army the victory that day was turned into mourning, because on that day the troops heard it said, "The king is grieving for his son." 3 The men stole into the city that day as men steal in who are ashamed when they flee from battle. 4 The king covered his face and cried aloud, "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!"

5 Then Joab went into the house to the king and said, "Today you have humiliated all your men, who have just saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters and the lives of your wives and concubines. 6 You love those who hate you and hate those who love you. You have made it

David's Mourning

19 Joab was told, "The king is weeping and mourning for Absalom." 2 And for the whole army the victory that day was turned into mourning, because on that day the troops heard it said, "The king is grieving for his son."

3 The men stole into the city that day as men steal in who are ashamed when they flee from battle. 4 The king covered his face and cried aloud, "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!"

5 Then Joab went into the house to the king and said, "Today you have humiliated all your men, who have just saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters and the lives of your wives and concubines. 6 You love those who hate you and hate those who love you. You have made it

7 Then Joab went into the house to the king and said, "Today you have humiliated all your men, who have just saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters and the lives of your wives and concubines. 8 You love those who hate you and hate those who love you. You have made it

9 Then Joab went into the house to the king and said, "Today you have humiliated all your men, who have just saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters and the lives of your wives and concubines. 10 You love those who hate you and hate those who love you. You have made it

12 That is about 25 pounds (about 11 kilograms).

13 That is the pain of the Jordan.

12 A few Hebrew

13 Or

clear today that the commanders and their men mean nothing to you. I see that you would be pleased if Absalom were alive today and all of us were dead. Now go out and encourage your men. I swear by the Lord that if you don't go out, not a man will be left with you by nightfall. This will be worse for you than all the calamities that have come upon you from your youth till now."

So the king got up and took his seat in the gateway. When the men were told, "The king is sitting in the gateway," they all came before him.

David Returns to Jerusalem

Meanwhile the Israelites had fled to their homes. Throughout the tribe of Israel, the people were all arguing with each other, saying,

"The king delivered us from the hand of our enemies; he is the one who rescued us from the hand of the Philistines. But now he has fled the country because of Absalom. And Absalom, whom we anointed to rule over us, has died in battle. So why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?"

King David sent this message to Zadok and Abiathar, the priests: "Ask the elders of Judah, 'Why should you be the last to bring the king back to his palace, since what is being said throughout Israel has reached the king at his quarters? 12 You are my brothers, my own flesh and blood. So why should you be the last to bring back the king?' 13 And say to Amasa, 'Are you not my own flesh and blood? May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if from now on you are not the commander of my army in place of Joab.'"

He won over the hearts of all the men of Judah as though they were one man. They sent word to the king, "Return, you and all your men." 15 Then the king returned and went as far as the Jordan.

Now the men of Judah had come to Gilgal to go out and meet the king and bring him across the Jordan. 16 Shimei son of Gera, the Benjamite from Bahurim, hurried down with the men of Judah to meet King David. 17 With him were a thousand Benjamites, along with Ziba, the steward of Saul's household, and his fifteen sons and twenty servants. They rushed to the Jordan, where the king was. 18 They crossed at the ford to take the king's household over and to do whatever he wished.

When Shimei son of Gera crossed the Jordan, he fell prostrate before the king. 19 And said to him, "May my lord not hold me guilty. Do not remember how your servant did wrong on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem. May the king put it out of his mind. 20 For I your servant know that I have sinned, but today I have come here as the first of the whole house of Joseph to come down and meet my lord the king."

21 Then Abishai son of Zeruiah said, "Shouldn't Shimei be put to death for this? He cursed the Lord's anointed."

22 David replied, "What do you and I have in common, you sons of Zeruiah? This day you have become my adversaries! Should anyone be put to death in Israel today? Do I not know that today I am king over Israel?" 23 So the king said to Shimei, "You shall not die." And the king promised him on oath.

24 Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, also went down to meet the king. He had not taken care of his feet or trimmed his mustache or washed his clothes from the day the king left until the day he returned safely. 25 When he came from Jerusalem to meet the king, the king asked him, "Why didn't you go with me, Mephibosheth?"

26 He said, "My lord the king, since I your servant am lame, I said, 'I will have my donkey saddled and will ride on it, so I can go with the king.' But Ziba my servant betrayed me." 27 And he has slandered your servant to my lord the king. My lord the king is like an angel of God, so do whatever pleases you. 28 All my grandfather's descendants deserved nothing but death from my lord the king, but you gave your servant a place among those who sat at your table. So what right do I have to make any more appeals to the king?"

29 The king said to him, "Why say more? I order you and Ziba to divide the fields."

30 Mephibosheth said to the king, "Let him take everything, now that my lord the king has arrived home safely."

31 Barzillai the Gileadite also came down from Rogelim to cross the Jordan with the king and to send him on his way from there. 32 Now Barzillai was a very old man, eighty years of age. He had provided for the king during his stay in Mahanaim, for he was a very wealthy man. 33 The king said to Barzillai, "Cross over with me and stay with me in Jerusalem, and I will provide for you."

34 But Barzillai answered the king, "How many more years will I live, that I should go up to Jerusalem with the king? 35 I am now eighty years old. Can I tell the difference between what is good and what is not? Can your servant taste what he eats and drinks? Can I still hear the voices of men and women singers? Why should your servant be an added burden to my lord the king? 36 Your servant will cross over the Jordan with the king for a short distance, but why should the king reward me in this way? 37 Let your servant return, that I may die in my own town near the tomb of my father and mother. But here is your servant Kimham. Let him

19:24 Was Mephibosheth a Traitor?

Mephibosheth's servant Ziba had told David that Mephibosheth was a traitor with dreams that he, as Saul's grandson, would be made king (16:1-4). Hearing this, David had given Ziba all Mephibosheth's property.

Now we hear Mephibosheth's side of the story. He claimed that Ziba had betrayed him, presumably by taking his donkey so he, a cripple, could not follow David. More convincing than his words was his appearance. He had not washed or trimmed his mustache. He looked as though he had been mourning, not grooming himself for the throne.

Did David believe him? Perhaps not completely. He ordered Ziba to give back half, but not all, the property.

cross over with my lord the king. Do for him whatever pleases you."

"The king said, "Kimham shall cross over with me, and I will do for him whatever pleases you. And anything you desire from me I will do for you."

"So all the people crossed the Jordan, and then the king crossed over. The king kissed Barzillai and gave him his blessing, and Barzillai returned to his home.

"When the king crossed over to Gilgal, Kimham crossed with him. All the troops of Judah and half the troops of Israel had taken the king over.

"Soon all the men of Israel were coming to the king and saying to him, "Why did our brothers, the men of Judah, steal the king away and bring him and his household across the Jordan, together with all his men?"

"All the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, "We did this because the king is closely related to us. Why are you angry about it? Have we eaten any of the king's provisions? Have we taken anything for ourselves?"

"Then the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, "We have ten shares in the king; and besides, we have a greater claim on David than you have. So why do you treat us with contempt? Were we not the first to speak of bringing back our king?"

But the men of Judah responded even more harshly than the men of Israel.

Sheba Rebels Against David

20 Now a troublemaker named Sheba son of Bicri, a Benjamite, happened to be there. He sounded the trumpet and shouted,

We have no share in David,
no part in Jesse's son!
Every man to his tent, O Israel!"

So all the men of Israel deserted David to follow Sheba son of Bicri. But the men of Judah stayed by their king all the way from the Jordan to Jerusalem.

When David returned to his palace in Jerusalem, he took the ten concubines he had left to take care of the palace and put them in a house under guard. He provided for them, but did not lie with them. They were kept in confinement till the day of their death, living as widows.

"Then the king said to Amasa, "Summon the men of Judah to come to me within three days, and be here yourself." But when Amasa went to summon Judah, he took longer than the time the king had set for him.

"David said to Abishai, "Now Sheba son of Bicri will do us more harm than Absalom did. Take your master's men and pursue him, or he will find fortified cities and escape from us." So Joab's men and the Kerethites and Pelethites and all the mighty warriors went out under the command of Abishai. They marched out from Jerusalem to pursue Sheba son of Bicri.

While they were at the great rock in Gibeon, Amasa came to meet them. Joab was wearing his

military tunic, and strapped over it at his waist was a belt with a dagger in its sheath. As he stepped forward, it dropped out of its sheath.

Joab said to Amasa, "How are you, my brother?" Then Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. Amasa was not on his guard against the dagger in Joab's hand, and Joab plunged it into his belly, and his intestines spilled out on the ground. Without being stabbed again, Amasa died. Then Joab and his brother Abishai pursued Sheba son of Bicri.

"One of Joab's men stood beside Amasa and said, "Whoever favors Joab, and whoever is for David, let him follow Joab!" Amasa lay wallowing in his blood in the middle of the road, and the man saw that all the troops came to a halt there. When he realized that everyone who came up to Amasa stopped, he dragged him from the road into a field and threw a garment over him. After Amasa had been removed from the road, all the men went on with Joab to pursue Sheba son of Bicri.

Sheba passed through all the tribes of Israel to Abel Beth Maacah and through the entire region of the Berites, who gathered together and followed him. All the troops with Joab came and besieged Sheba in Abel Beth Maacah. They built a siege ramp up to the city, and it stood against the outer fortifications. While they were battering the wall to bring it down, a wise woman called from the city, "Listen! Listen! Tell Joab to come here so I can speak to him." He went toward her, and she asked, "Are you Joab?"

"I am," he answered.

She said, "Listen to what your servant has to say."

"I'm listening," he said.

She continued, "Long ago they used to say, 'Get your answer at Abel,' and that settled it. We are the peaceful and faithful in Israel. You are trying to destroy a city that is a mother in Israel. Why do you want to swallow up the Lord's inheritance?"

"Far be it from me!" Joab replied, "Far be it from me to swallow up or destroy! That is not the case. A man named Sheba son of Bicri, from the hill country of Ephraim, has lifted up his hand against the king, against David. Hand over this one man, and I'll withdraw from the city."

The woman said to Joab, "His head will be thrown to you from the wall."

Then the woman went to all the people with her wise advice, and they cut off the head of Sheba son of Bicri and threw it to Joab. So he sounded the trumpet, and his men dispersed from the city, each returning to his home. And Joab went back to the king in Jerusalem.

Joab was over Israel's entire army; Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over the Kerethites and Pelethites; Adoniram was in charge of forced labor; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was recorder; Sheva was secretary; Zadok and Abiathar were priests; and Ira the Jairite was David's priest.

*14. Or Abn. over Beth Maacah; also in verse 15.

*14. Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 1 Kings 4:6 and 5:14); Hebrew Adoram.

The Gibeonites Avenged

21 During the reign of David, there was a famine for three successive years; so David sought the face of the LORD. The LORD said, "It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to death."

²The king summoned the Gibeonites and spoke to them. (Now the Gibeonites were not a part of Israel but were survivors of the Amorites; the Israelites had sworn to spare them, but Saul in his zeal for Israel and Judah had tried to annihilate them.)
³David asked the Gibeonites, "What shall I do for you? How shall I make amends so that you will bless the LORD's inheritance?"

⁴The Gibeonites answered him, "We have no right to demand silver or gold from Saul or his family, nor do we have the right to put anyone in Israel to death."

"What do you want me to do for you?" David asked

⁵They answered the king, "As for the man who destroyed us and plotted against us so that we have been decimated and have no place anywhere in Israel, let seven of his male descendants be given to us to be killed and exposed before the LORD at Gibeah of Saul—the LORD's chosen one."

So the king said, "I will give them to you."

⁷The king spared Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the oath before the LORD between David and Jonathan son of Saul.
⁸But the king took Armoni and Mephibosheth, the two sons of Aiah's daughter Rizpah, whom she had borne to Saul, together with the five sons of Saul's daughter Merab,^a whom she had borne to Adriel son of Barzillai the Meholahite. ⁹He handed them over to the Gibeonites, who killed and exposed them on a hill before the LORD. All seven of them fell together; they were put to death during the first days of the harvest, just as the barley harvest was beginning.

¹⁰Rizpah daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it out for herself on a rock. From the beginning of the harvest till the rain poured down from the heavens on the bodies, she did not let the birds of the air touch them by day or the wild animals by night. ¹¹When David was told what Aiah's daugh-

ter Rizpah, Saul's concubine, had done, ¹²he went and took the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from the citizens of Jabesh Gilead (they had taken them secretly from the public square at Beth Shan, where the Philistines had hung them after they struck Saul down on Gilboa.) ¹³David brought the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from there, and the bones of those who had been killed and exposed were gathered up.

¹⁴They buried the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan in the tomb of Saul's father Kish, at Zela in Benjamin, and did everything the king commanded. After that, God answered prayer in behalf of the land.

Wars Against the Philistines

¹⁵Once again there was a battle between the Philistines and Israel. David went down with his men to fight against the Philistines, and he became exhausted. ¹⁶And Ishbi-Benob, one of the descendants of Rapha, whose bronze spearhead weighed three hundred shekels^b and who was armed with a new sword, said he would kill David. ¹⁷But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to David's rescue; he struck the Philistine down and killed him. Then David's men swore to him, saying, "Never again will you go out with us to battle, so that the lamp of Israel will not be extinguished."

¹⁸In the course of time, there was another battle with the Philistines, at Gob. At that time Sibbecai the Hushathite killed Saph, one of the descendants of Rapha.

¹⁹In another battle with the Philistines at Gob, Elhanan son of Jaare-Oregim^c the Bethlehemite killed Goliath^d the Gittite, who had a spear with a shaft like a weaver's rod.

²⁰In still another battle, which took place at Gath, there was a huge man with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot—twenty-four in all. He also was descended from Rapha. ²¹When he taunted Israel, Jonathan son of Shimeah, David's brother, killed him.

²²These four were descendants of Rapha in Gath, and they fell at the hands of David and his men.

David's Song of Praise

22 David sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul.

²He said:

"The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;

³ my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn^e of my salvation.

He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior—

from violent men you save me.

⁴ I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies.

⁵ "The waves of death swirled about me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.

21:6 David's Responsibility

David had certain legal responsibilities as king of Israel. Having offered compensation to the Gibeonites for their mistreatment under Saul, he was under legal obligation to cooperate with their demand for blood. In the Old Testament times, a family was considered responsible for the crimes of any individual in his family.

^a8 Two Hebrew manuscripts, some Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac (see also 1 Samuel 18:19); most Hebrew and Septuagint manuscripts Michal ^b16 That is, about 7 1/2 pounds (about 3.5 kilograms) ^c19 Or son of Jaire the weaver ^d21 Hebrew and

Septuagint, 1 Chron. 20:5 son of Jair killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath ^e3 Horn here symbolizes strength.

⁶The cords of the grave^a coiled around me;
the snares of death confronted me
⁷In my distress I called to the LORD;
I called out to my God.
From his temple he heard my voice;
my cry came to his ears

⁸"The earth trembled and quaked,
the foundations of the heavens^b shook;
they trembled because he was angry.

⁹Smoke rose from his nostrils;
consuming fire came from his mouth,
burning coals blazed out of it.

¹⁰He parted the heavens and came down;
dark clouds were under his feet.

¹¹He mounted the cherubim and flew;
he soared^c on the wings of the wind.

¹²He made darkness his canopy around him—
the dark^d rain clouds of the sky.

¹³Out of the brightness of his presence
bolts of lightning blazed forth.

¹⁴The LORD thundered from heaven;
the voice of the Most High resounded.

¹⁵He shot arrows and scattered the enemies,
bolts of lightning and routed them.

¹⁶The valleys of the sea were exposed
and the foundations of the earth laid bare
at the rebuke of the LORD,
at the blast of breath from his nostrils.

¹⁷"He reached down from on high and took hold
of me;
he drew me out of deep waters.

¹⁸He rescued me from my powerful enemy,
from my foes, who were too strong for me.
¹⁹They confronted me in the day of my disaster,
but the LORD was my support.
²⁰He brought me out into a spacious place;
he rescued me because he delighted in me.

²¹"The LORD has dealt with me according to my
righteousness;
according to the cleanness of my hands he
has rewarded me.

²²For I have kept the ways of the LORD;
I have not done evil by turning from my
God.

²³All his laws are before me;
I have not turned away from his decrees.

²⁴I have been blameless before him
and have kept myself from sin.

²⁵The LORD has rewarded me according to my
righteousness,
according to my cleanness^e in his sight.

²⁶"To the faithful you show yourself faithful,
to the blameless you show yourself
blameless,

²⁷to the pure you show yourself pure,
but to the crooked you show yourself
shrewd.

²⁸You save the humble,
but your eyes are on the haughty to bring
them low.

²⁹You are my lamp, O LORD;
the LORD turns my darkness into light.

³⁰With your help I can advance against a troop;
with my God I can scale a wall.

³¹"As for God, his way is perfect;
the word of the LORD is flawless.
He is a shield

for all who take refuge in him.
³²For who is God besides the LORD?
And who is the Rock except our God?

³³It is God who arms me with strength
and makes my way perfect.

³⁴He makes my feet like the feet of a deer;
he enables me to stand on the heights.

³⁵He trains my hands for battle;
my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

³⁶You give me your shield of victory;
you stoop down to make me great.

³⁷You broaden the path beneath me,
so that my ankles do not turn.

³⁸"I pursued my enemies and crushed them;
I did not turn back till they were destroyed.

³⁹I crushed them completely, and they could not
rise;
they fell beneath my feet.

⁴⁰You armed me with strength for battle;
you made my adversaries bow at my feet.

⁴¹You made my enemies turn their backs in
flight,
and I destroyed my foes

22:1 David's Psalms

This song of praise was included in the book of Psalms as Psalm 18. Many psalms are credited to David, and some have titles suggesting the events that inspired them. You can read these as a spiritual and emotional commentary on key events in David's life:

Psalm 3. When he fled from his son Absalom
(2 Samuel 15:13)

Psalm 18. When the Lord delivered him from his
enemies and Saul (1 Samuel 19:31)

Psalm 51. After Nathan confronted David over
Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12)

Psalm 52. When Doeg turned in the high priest for
helping David (1 Samuel 22:9-10)

Psalm 54. When the Ziphites told Saul that David
was hiding in their territory (1 Samuel 23:19-20;
26:1-25)

Psalm 56. When the Philistines seized David in
Gath (1 Samuel 21:10-15)

Psalm 57. When David fled from Saul into the cave
(1 Samuel 22:1-2)

Psalm 59. When Saul sent men to watch David's
house in order to kill him (1 Samuel 19:11)

Psalm 60. After an important battle

Psalm 63. When he was in the desert of Judah

Psalm 142. When he was in the cave, hiding from
Saul

^a6 Hebrew *Sheol* ^b8 Hebrew, Vulgate and Syriac (see also Psalm 18 7) *mountains* ^c11 Many Hebrew manuscripts (see also Psalm 18 10), most Hebrew manuscripts *appeared* ^d12 Septuagint and Vulgate (see also Psalm 18 11), Hebrew *massed*

^e25 Hebrew, Septuagint and Vulgate (see also Psalm 18 24) *to the cleanness of my hands*

^f30 Or *can run through a barricade* ^g33 Dead Sea Scrolls, some Septuagint manuscripts, Vulgate and Syriac (see also Psalm 18 32), Masoretic Text *who is my strong refuge*

2 SAMUEL 22:42

⁴²They cried for help, but there was no one to save them—

to the LORD, but he did not answer.

⁴³I beat them as fine as the dust of the earth;
I pounded and trampled them like mud in the streets.

⁴⁴"You have delivered me from the attacks of my people;

you have preserved me as the head of nations.

People I did not know are subject to me,

⁴⁵ and foreigners come cringing to me;
as soon as they hear me, they obey me.

⁴⁶They all lose heart;
they come trembling^a from their strongholds.

⁴⁷"The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock!
Exalted be God, the Rock, my Savior!

⁴⁸He is the God who avenges me,
who puts the nations under me,

⁴⁹ who sets me free from my enemies.

You exalted me above my foes;
from violent men you rescued me.

⁵⁰Therefore I will praise you, O LORD, among the nations;

I will sing praises to your name.

⁵¹He gives his king great victories;
he shows unfailing kindness to his anointed,
to David and his descendants forever."

The Last Words of David

23 These are the last words of David:

"The oracle of David son of Jesse,
the oracle of the man exalted by the Most High,

the man anointed by the God of Jacob,
Israel's singer of songs^b:

²"The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me;
his word was on my tongue

³The God of Israel spoke,
the Rock of Israel said to me:

"When one rules over men in righteousness,
when he rules in the fear of God,

⁴he is like the light of morning at sunrise
on a cloudless morning,

like the brightness after rain

that brings the grass from the earth."

⁵"Is not my house right with God?

Has he not made with me an everlasting covenant,

arranged and secured in every part?

Will he not bring to fruition my salvation
and grant me my every desire?

⁶But evil men are all to be cast aside like thorns,
which are not gathered with the hand.

⁷Whoever touches thorns

uses a tool of iron or the shaft of a spear;
they are burned up where they lie."

David's Mighty Men

These are the names of David's mighty men:
¹These are the names of David's mighty men:
Joshabab^a Bashhebeth,^c a Tahkemonite,^d was
chief of the Three; he raised his spear against eight
hundred men, whom he killed^e in one encounter.

²Next to him was Eleazar son of Dodai the Ahohite. As one of the three mighty men, he was with David when they taunted the Philistines gathered for battle. Then the men of Israel retreated, but he stood his ground and struck down the Philistines till his hand grew tired and froze to the sword. The LORD brought about a great victory that day. The troops returned to Eleazar, but only to strip the dead.

³Next to him was Shammah son of Agee the Hararite. When the Philistines banded together at a place where there was a field full of lentils, Israel's troops fled from them. But Shammah took his stand in the middle of the field. He defended it and struck the Philistines down, and the LORD brought about a great victory.

⁴During harvest time, three of the thirty chief men came down to David at the cave of Adullam, while a band of Philistines was encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. At that time David was in the stronghold, and the Philistine garrison was at Bethlehem. David longed for water and said, "Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem!" So the three mighty men broke through the Philistine lines, drew water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem and carried it back to David. But he refused to drink it; instead, he poured it out before the LORD. "Far be it from me, O LORD, to do this!" he said. "Is it not the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives?" And David would not drink it.

Such were the exploits of the three mighty men.

⁵Abishai the brother of Joab son of Zeruiah was chief of the Three.^f He raised his spear against three hundred men, whom he killed, and so he became as famous as the Three. Was he not held in greater honor than the Three? He became their commander, even though he was not included among them.

⁶Benaiah son of Jehoiada was a valiant fighter from Kabzeel, who performed great exploits. He struck down two of Moab's best men. He also went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion. And he struck down a huge Egyptian. Although the Egyptian had a spear in his hand, Benaiah went against him with a club. He snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear. Such were the exploits of Benaiah son of Jehoiada; he too was as famous as the three mighty men. He was held in greater honor than any of the Thirty, but he was not included among the Three. And David put him in charge of his bodyguard.

⁷Among the Thirty were:

^a46 Some Septuagint manuscripts and Vulgate (see also Psalm 18:45), Masoretic Text they arm themselves

^b8 Hebrew, some Septuagint manuscripts suggest Ish Bosheth; that is, Esh Baal (see also 1 Chron. 11:11 Jashobeam)

^c1 Or Israel's beloved singer

variant of Hacmonite (see 1 Chron. 11:11) ^d8 Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 1 Chron. 11:11), Hebrew and other Septuagint manuscripts Three; it was Adino the Ezrite who killed eight hundred men

^e9 See 1 Chron. 11:13; Hebrew gathered there.

^f18 Most

Hebrew manuscripts (see also 1 Chron. 11:20); two Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac Thirty

vid went up, as the LORD had commanded through Gad. ²⁰When Araunah looked and saw the king and his men coming toward him, he went out and bowed down before the king with his face to the ground.

²¹Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?"

"To buy your threshing floor," David answered, "so I can build an altar to the LORD, that the plague on the people may be stopped."

²²Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take whatever pleases him and offer it up. Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and here are threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood. ²³O king, Araunah gives all this to the king." Araunah also said to him, "May the LORD your God accept you."

²⁴But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD

my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."

So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels^a of silver for them. ²⁵David built an altar to the LORD there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings.^b Then the LORD answered prayer in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped.

24:24 The Cost of True Worship

David's response is timeless: he sees that worship which costs you nothing is not true worship at all. It is typical of David that even after falling into sin, he was not blinded to spiritual concerns. Feeling guilty already, he might have thought "one more compromise" would make no difference. Instead he stuck to his principle.

^a24 That is, about 1 1/4 pounds (about 0.6 kilogram)

^b25 Traditionally peace offerings

1 KINGS

INTRODUCTION

The Man Who Had Everything

The richest, wisest, most successful person of his time

"You or your sons turn away from me and do not observe the commands and decrees I have given you and go off to serve other gods and worship them; then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name." (9:6)

The first half of 1 Kings describes a man who got life handed to him on a silver platter. The son of King David and Queen Bathsheba, young Solomon grew up in the royal palace. Early on, he astounded others with his talent for songwriting and natural history. He composed 1,000 songs and spun off 1,000 proverbs (a sampling of which were collected in the biblical book of Proverbs).

Solomon became king of Israel and received from God the special gift of wisdom. He was called the wisest man in the world, and kings and queens traveled hundreds of miles to meet him. They went away dazzled by the genius of Israel's king and by the prosperity of his nation.

The Best Years Ever

Israel reached its Golden Age under King Solomon, a time forever remembered with nostalgia by Jews. Almost all the promised land lay in Israel's hands, and the nation was at peace. Literature and culture flourished. Of the people, the Bible records simply that "they ate, they drank and they were happy" (4:20). The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones" (10:27).

Of all Solomon's accomplishments, one stands out above the others. He built the temple of God, the finest building in the world of that day. Almost 200,000 men labored for seven years to complete it.

Despite the successes of Solomon's reign, however, later in his life the king had a dramatic downturn. His fall eventually brought the kingdom crashing down around him, and the second half of 1 Kings describes the grim process of dismemberment.

What Went Wrong?

How did it happen? How could the liveliest, wealthiest, most contented nation of its day slide so disastrously in one generation?

As 1 Kings tells it, Solomon seemed unable to control his excesses. Reared in a palace, he loved luxury. When Israel launched its first maritime expeditions, he used them to gather such exotica as gold, ivory, apes, peacocks, and silver. He plated the floor of the temple with gold, wastefully gilded over time cedar and precious ivory, and fashioned militarily useless shields out of gold. First Kings describes the seven-year construction of the temple in elaborate detail. But then it pointedly notes that the construction of Solomon's palace—twice the temple's size—took 13 years (7:1).

Solomon showed similar extravagance in his love life. First, he married the daughter of the Egyptian pharaoh (perhaps indicating he was relying on military alliances, not God, for the defense of his country). Then, disobeying God's specific orders, he married the princesses of Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon, and other nations. Seven hundred wives in all, and 300 concubines! The entire complexion of the court changed. It became un-Jewish, foreign. To please his wives, Solomon took a final, terrible step: he built altars to all their gods. The one who had built the Israelites' greatest monument to God had fallen to worshiping idols.

Rumblings of Discontent in the Land

To pay for the building projects, Solomon instituted Israel's first national taxation system. He drafted workers for employment and kept them as virtual slaves. When bills mounted, he went so far as to cede certain northern towns in the promised land to another king (9:10-14). Resentment opened up between Israel's North and South.

But the gulf separating Israel from God was even more dangerous. Previously, the people of Israel had looked to God as their leader. Now, however, the focus shifted from God in heaven to

the king of Israel. Solomon had even more than all the unofficial religious leaders of the country, and when he did teach, the nation soon followed. Nevertheless, he did not follow the Lord completely, as David his father had done. (1 Kings 11:1-8) Solomon seemed obsessed with a desire to make anyone who had ever lived. Along the way, he tried to make God the center of his life. He also tried to make God in history, but as a negative example. A king's lust for himself rendered the first order of wisdom and his striving for glory. When he was dead, he was a king in the field. Not even Solomon in all his splendor, he said, "was dressed like one of these" (Matthew 6:29).

How to Read 1 Kings

First and Second Kings were originally one book. The same Hebrew scroll contained both. Hebrew, having no vowels, is a very compact language, and when the book of Kings was translated into the wordier Greek and Latin, more space was needed. Translators arbitrarily split Kings. The two books, however, should be read as one.

First divides neatly almost in half, with mostly good news in the first half. It tells of Israel's golden age when King Solomon brought peace and prosperity to the nation. But he also sowed the seed for the calamities to follow. Chapter 12 marks the beginning of a civil war that ruptured the two nations. Israel in the North and Judah in the South. The rest of Kings describes, one by one, the reigns of 19 kings in the North and 19 kings and one queen in the South.

Another book, 2 Chronicles, covers the exact same historical period as the book of Kings. In some cases, 2 Chronicles adds more detail, so if a story interests you, read the parallel account there. These books of history form the background for 17 other books of the Bible: the Prophets. Famous prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, and Amos preached during the time of Kings.

Keeping 19 rulers straight can seem hopeless, especially since the book jumps back and forth between two countries. Remember:

Israel was the Northern Kingdom, with its capital in Samaria. Its kings were all unfaithful to God.

Judah was the Southern Kingdom, with its capital in Jerusalem. Almost half of its rulers remained somewhat faithful to God, the others proved disobedient.

On page 338, you will find a lineup of all the rulers, tracing the rise and fall of both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. Use this handy reference as you read the history. You may find it helpful to underline the various rulers' names using different colored marking pens (for example, red for Judah and blue for Israel). Add a star by those kings cited as "doing what was right in the Lord's eyes." First Kings mentions two such kings: Asa and Jehoshaphat. By marking the kings and queen with some visual scheme, you can quickly refer back to them when you read references to them in the books of prophets.

PLANS FOR READING 1 KINGS

PLAN 1: An Overview of 1 Kings in 4 Days

- Day 1. Read the Introduction to 1 Kings and then chapter 3, where Solomon asks for wisdom.
- Day 2. Israel reaches a high point at this ceremony. Read chapter 8 through 9:9.
- Day 3. Elijah is one of the Bible's most dramatic and colorful characters. The third day, read about him in chapter 17.
- Day 4. Read chapter 18, in which Elijah takes on the prophets of Baal.

PLAN 2: All of 1 Kings in 21 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4-5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17
- ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22

Adonijah Sets Himself Up as King

I When King David was old and well advanced in years, he could not keep warm even when he was covered with furs. So his servants said to him, "Let us look for a young virgin to attend the king so that she can be beside him so that the king may keep warm." They searched throughout Israel for a girl and found Abishag, a Shunammite, and brought her to the king. The girl was very beautiful, and she took care of the king and waited on him, but the king had no intimate relations with her.

Now Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith, set himself forward and said, "I will be king." So he got chariots and horses ready, with fifty men to go ahead of him. His father had never interfered with him by asking, "Why do you behave as you do?" He was also very handsome and was born next after Absalom.

Adonijah conferred with Joab son of Zeruiah and with Abiathar the priest, and they gave him their support. But Zadok the priest, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei and Rei and David's special guard did not join Adonijah.

Adonijah then sacrificed sheep, cattle and fattened calves at the Stone of Zoheleth near En Rogel. He invited all his brothers, the king's sons, and all the men of Judah who were royal officials, but he did not invite Nathan the prophet or Benaiah or the special guard or his brother Solomon.

Then Nathan asked Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, "Have you not heard that Adonijah, the son of Haggith, has become king without our lord David's knowing it? Now then, let me advise you how you can save your own life and the life of your son Solomon. Go in to King David and say to him, 'My lord the king, did you not swear to me your servant: "Surely Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne"? Why then has Adonijah become king?' While you are still there talking to the king, I will come in and confirm what you have said."

So Bathsheba went to see the aged king in his room, where Abishag the Shunammite was attending him. Bathsheba bowed low and knelt before the king.

"What is it you want?" the king asked.

"She said to him, 'My lord, you yourself swore to me your servant by the LORD your God: "Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne." But now Adonijah has become king, and you, my lord the king, do not know about it. He has sacrificed great numbers of cattle—fattened calves and sheep, and has invited all the king's sons, Abiathar the priest and Joab the commander of the army, but he has not invited Solomon your servant. My lord the king, the eyes of all Israel are on you, to learn from you who will sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. Otherwise, as soon as my lord the king is laid to rest with his fathers, I and my son Solomon will be treated as criminals.'

"While she was still speaking with the king, Nathan the prophet arrived. And they told the king, "Nathan the prophet is here." So he went before the king and bowed with his face to the ground.

Nathan said, "Have you, my lord the king, declared that Adonijah shall be king after you, and that he will sit on your throne? Today he has gone down and sacrificed great numbers of cattle, fattened calves, and sheep. He has invited all the king's sons, the commanders of the army and Abiathar the priest. Right now they are eating and drinking with him and saying, 'Long live King Adonijah!' But me your servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and your servant Solomon he did not invite. Is this something my lord the king has done without letting his servants know who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?"

David Makes Solomon King

Then King David said, "Call in Bathsheba." So she came into the king's presence and stood before him.

The king then took an oath: "As surely as the LORD lives, who has delivered me out of every trouble, I will surely carry out today what I swore to you by the LORD, the God of Israel: Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne in my place."

Then Bathsheba bowed low with her face to the ground and, kneeling before the king, said, "May my lord King David live forever!"

King David said, "Call in Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah son of Jehoiada." When they came before the king, he said to them: "Take your lord's servants with you and set Solomon my son on my own mule and take him down to Gihon. There have Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel. Blow the trumpet and shout, 'Long live King Solomon!' Then you are to go up with him, and he is to come and sit on my throne and reign in my place. I have appointed him ruler over Israel and Judah."

Benaiah son of Jehoiada answered the king, "Amen! May the LORD, the God of my lord the king, so declare it. As the LORD was with my lord the king, so may he be with Solomon to make his throne even greater than the throne of my lord King David!"

So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the Kerethites and the Pelethites went down and put Solomon on King David's mule and escorted him to Gihon. Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the sacred tent and anointed Solomon. Then they sounded the trumpet and all the people shouted, "Long live King Solomon!" And all the people went up after him, playing flutes and rejoicing greatly, so that the ground shook with the sound.

Adonijah and all the guests who were with him heard it as they were finishing their feast. On hearing the sound of the trumpet, Joab asked,

¹³ Or themselves

¹⁴ Or and his friends

"What's the meaning of all the noise in the city?"

42Even as he was speaking, Jonathan son of Abiathar the priest arrived. Adonijah said, "Come in. A worthy man like you must be bringing good news."

43"Not at all!" Jonathan answered. "Our lord King David has made Solomon king. 44The king has sent with him Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the Kerethites and the Pelethites, and they have put him on the king's mule. 45and Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king at Gihon. From there they have gone up cheering, and the city resounds with it. That's the noise you hear. 46Moreover, Solomon has taken his seat on the royal throne. 47Also, the royal officials have come to congratulate our lord King David, saying, 'May your God make Solomon's name more famous than yours and his throne greater than yours!' And the king bowed in worship on his bed 48and said, 'Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has allowed my eyes to see a successor on my throne today.'"

49At this, all Adonijah's guests rose in alarm and dispersed. 50But Adonijah, in fear of Solomon, went and took hold of the horns of the altar. 51Then Solomon was told, "Adonijah is afraid of King Solomon and is clinging to the horns of the altar. He says, 'Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.'"

52Solomon replied, "If he shows himself to be a worthy man, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground; but if evil is found in him, he will die." 53Then King Solomon sent men, and they brought him down from the altar. And Adonijah came and bowed down to King Solomon, and Solomon said, "Go to your home."

David's Charge to Solomon

2 When the time drew near for David to die, he gave a charge to Solomon his son.

2"I am about to go the way of all the earth," he said. "So be strong, show yourself a man, 3and observe what the LORD your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go, 4and that the LORD may keep his promise to me: 'If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.'"

5"Now you yourself know what Joab son of Zeruiah did to me—what he did to the two commanders of Israel's armies, Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of Jether. He killed them, shedding their blood in peacetime as if in battle, and with that blood stained the belt around his waist and the sandals on his feet. 6Deal with him according to your wis-

dom. For I did let to pray head go down to the ground before the LORD."

7But I have been a to the sons of Barzillai of Gilead and not a to the sons of those who eat at your table. They shall be with me when I fled from your brother Achish."

8"and remember you have with you Shimei son of Gera, the Benjamite from Bahurim, who called down bitter curses on me the day I went to Mahanaim. When he came down to meet me at the Jordan, I swore to him by the LORD: 'I will not put you to death by the sword.' But now, do not consider him innocent. You are a man of wisdom; you will know what to do to him. Bring his gray head down to the grave in blood."

10Then David rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David. 11He had reigned forty years over Israel—seven years in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem. 12So Solomon sat on the throne of his father David, and his rule was firmly established.

Solomon's Throne Established

13Now Adonijah, the son of Haggith, went to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother. Bathsheba asked him, "Do you come peacefully?"

He answered, "Yes, peacefully." 14Then he added, "I have something to say to you."

"You may say it," she replied.

15"As you know," he said, "the kingdom was mine. All Israel looked to me as their king. But things changed, and the kingdom has gone to my brother; for it has come to him from the LORD. 16Now I have one request to make of you. Do not refuse me."

"You may make it," she said.

17So he continued, "Please ask King Solomon—he will not refuse you—to give me Abishag the Shunammite as my wife."

18"Very well," Bathsheba replied, "I will speak to the king for you."

2:5 An Army Commander Who Went Too Far

For the background to David's comments about Joab, see 2 Samuel 3:17-30; 20:4-11.

2:17 After More than a Wife?

Solomon had a rather harsh response (2:23) to Adonijah's request to marry King David's companion. But asking for her may have been Adonijah's veiled attempt to regain the throne lost to Solomon. In the ancient Middle East, a person who married any of the late king's wives or concubines publicly claimed the rights of the former king (see 2 Samuel 12:8 and 16:21-22 for examples). Adonijah might have been cunningly hatching another conspiracy; Solomon, at least, seemed to think so.

*6 Hebrew *Sheol*, also in verse 9

When Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak to him for Adonijah, the king stood up to meet her, bowed down to her and sat down on his throne. He had a throne brought for the king's mother, and she sat down at his right hand.

30 "I have one small request to make of you," she said. "Do not refuse me."

The king replied, "Make it, my mother; I will not refuse you."

31 So she said, "Let Abishag the Shunammite be given in marriage to your brother Adonijah."

32 King Solomon answered his mother, "Why do you request Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? You might as well request the kingdom for him—after all, he is my older brother—yes, for him and for Abiathar the priest and Joab son of Zeruiah!"

23 Then King Solomon swore by the LORD: "May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if Adonijah does not pay with his life for this request! 24 And now, as surely as the LORD lives—he who has established me securely on the throne of my father David and has founded a dynasty for me as he promised—Adonijah shall be put to death today!" 25 So King Solomon gave orders to Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and he struck down Adonijah and he died.

26 To Abiathar the priest the king said, "Go back to your fields in Anathoth. You deserve to die, but I will not put you to death now, because you carried the ark of the Sovereign LORD before my father David and shared all my father's hardships." 27 So Solomon removed Abiathar from the priesthood of the LORD, fulfilling the word the LORD had spoken at Shiloh about the house of Eli.

28 When the news reached Joab, who had conspired with Adonijah though not with Absalom, he fled to the tent of the LORD and took hold of the horns of the altar. 29 King Solomon was told that Joab had fled to the tent of the LORD and was beside the altar. Then Solomon ordered Benaiah son of Jehoiada, "Go, strike him down!"

30 So Benaiah entered the tent of the LORD and said to Joab, "The king says, 'Come out!'"

But he answered, "No, I will die here."

Benaiah reported to the king, "This is how Joab answered me."

31 Then the king commanded Benaiah, "Do as he says. Strike him down and bury him, and so clear me and my father's house of the guilt of the innocent blood that Joab shed. 32 The LORD will repay him for the blood he shed, because without the knowledge of my father David he attacked two men and killed them with the sword. Both of them—Abner son of Ner, commander of Israel's army, and Amasa son of Jether, commander of Judah's army—were better men and more upright than he. 33 May the guilt of their blood rest on the head of Joab and his descendants forever. But on David and his descendants, his house and his throne, may there be the LORD's peace forever."

34 So Benaiah son of Jehoiada went up and struck down Joab and killed him, and he was buried on his own land^a in the desert. 35 The king put Be-

naiah son of Jehoiada over the army in place of Joab, and replaced Abiathar with Zadok the priest.

36 Then the king sent for Shimei and said to him, "Build yourself a house in Jerusalem and live there, but do not go anywhere else." 37 The day you leave and cross the Kidron Valley, you are as good as dead; your blood will be on your own head."

38 Shimei answered the king, "What you say is good. Your servant will do as my lord the king has said." And Shimei stayed in Jerusalem for a long time.

39 But three years later, two of Shimei's slaves ran off to Achish son of Maacah, king of Gath, and Shimei was told, "Your slaves are in Gath." 40 As this, he saddled his donkey and went to Achish at Gath in search of his slaves. So Shimei went away and brought the slaves back from Gath.

41 When Solomon was told that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and had returned, 42 the king summoned Shimei and said to him, "Did I not make you swear by the LORD and warn you, 'On the day you leave to go anywhere else, you can be sure you will die'? At that time you said to me, 'What you say is good. I will obey.' 43 Why then did you not keep your oath to the LORD and obey the command I gave you?"

44 The king also said to Shimei, "You know in your heart all the wrong you did to my father David. Now the LORD will repay you for your wrongdoing. 45 But King Solomon will be blessed, and David's throne will remain secure before the LORD forever."

46 Then the king gave the order to Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and he went out and struck Shimei down and killed him.

The kingdom was now firmly established in Solomon's hands.

Solomon Asks for Wisdom

3 Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt and married his daughter. He brought her to the City of David until he finished building his palace and the temple of the LORD, and the wall around Jerusalem. 2 The people, however, were still sacrificing at the high places, because a temple had not yet been built for the Name of the LORD. 3 Solomon showed his love for the LORD by walking according to the statutes of his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places.

2:46 Wise Yet Ruthless

Chapters 2 and 3 show conflicting personality traits in Solomon. In the power struggles of chapter 2 he proved more ruthless than his father David had ever been. This tendency stirred up resentment among the Northern tribes of Israel and eventually led to civil war. But chapter 3 shows Solomon could also be faithful, wise, and even humble. Tragically, he gave in to his darker side more and more as his reign wore on.

^a34 Or buried in his tomb

...and while that one says, 'No! The dead one is mine' and the other says, 'No! The living one is mine'—then the king will give his verdict for the living child in two and give half to the other.

The first woman said, "You have chosen your son; he was dead!" But the other woman said, "No! The living one is mine; the dead one is yours." And so they argued before the king.

The king said, "This one says, 'My son is alive' and the other says, 'My son is dead'—but I am not sure. Let us take a decision. Let the living child be cut in two and give half to each woman." But the first woman said, "No! Do not cut my son in two. Let the living child be given to me and I will give the dead child to the other woman." But the other woman said, "No! Do not give my son to the first woman. Let the living child be given to her and I will give the dead child to the first woman."

The king was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. He said to him, "Since you have asked for the death of your son, I will give you what you have asked for. But the living child will be given to the first woman and the dead child to the second woman." Then Solomon arose—and he had been a dream.

He returned to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the Lord, and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then he gave a feast to all his court.

A Wise Ruling

Now two prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. One of them said, "My lord, this woman and I live in the same house. I had a baby while she was there with me. The third day after my child was born, this woman also had a baby. We were alone, there was no one in the house but the two of us."

During the night this woman's son died because she lay on him. So she got up in the middle of the night and took my son from my side while I, your servant, was asleep. She put him by her breast and put her dead son by my breast. The next morning, I got up to nurse my son—and he was dead! But when I looked at him closely in the morning light, I saw that it wasn't the son I had borne."

The other woman said, "No! The living one is my son; the dead one is yours."

But the first one insisted, "No! The dead one is yours; the living one is mine." And so they argued before the king.

The king said, "This one says, 'My son is alive' and the other says, 'My son is dead'—but I am not sure. Let us take a decision. Let the living child be cut in two and give half to each woman." But the first woman said, "No! Do not cut my son in two. Let the living child be given to me and I will give the dead child to the other woman." But the other woman said, "No! Do not give my son to the first woman. Let the living child be given to her and I will give the dead child to the first woman."

...and while that one says, 'No! The dead one is mine' and the other says, 'No! The living one is mine'—then the king will give his verdict for the living child in two and give half to the other.

The first woman said, "You have chosen your son; he was dead!" But the other woman said, "No! The living one is mine; the dead one is yours." And so they argued before the king.

The king said, "This one says, 'My son is alive' and the other says, 'My son is dead'—but I am not sure. Let us take a decision. Let the living child be cut in two and give half to each woman." But the first woman said, "No! Do not cut my son in two. Let the living child be given to me and I will give the dead child to the other woman." But the other woman said, "No! Do not give my son to the first woman. Let the living child be given to her and I will give the dead child to the first woman."

Solomon's Officials and Governors

4 So King Solomon ruled over all Israel. And these were his chief officials:

Azariah son of Zadok—the priest,
4 Jothaph and Ahiah, sons of Shisha—secretaries;

Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud—recorder;
4 Benaiah son of Jehoiada—commander in chief.

Zadok and Abiathar—priests,
4 Azariah son of Nathan—in charge of the district officers;

Zabud son of Nathan—a priest and personal adviser to the king;

4 Ahishar—in charge of the palace;
Adoniram son of Abda—in charge of forced labor.

Solomon also had twelve district governors over all Israel, who supplied provisions for the king and the royal household. Each one had to provide supplies for one month in the year. 6 These are their names:

Ben-Hur—in the hill country of Ephraim;

9 Ben-Deker—in Makaz, Shalbim, Beth Shemesh and Elon Bethhanan;

10 Ben-Hesed—in Arubboth (Socoh and all the land of Hephher were his);

11 Ben-Abinadab—in Naphoth Dor (he was married to Taphath daughter of Solomon);

12 Baana son of Ahilud—in Taanach and Megiddo, and in all of Beth Shan next to Zarethan below Jezreel, from Beth Shan to Abel Meholah across to Jokneam;

13 Ben-Geber—in Ramoth Gilead (the settlements of Jair son of Manasseh in Gilead were his, as well as the district of Argob in Bashan and its sixty large walled cities with bronze gate bars);

14 Ahinadab son of Iddo—in Mahanaim;

15 Ahimaaz—in Naphtali (he had married Basemath daughter of Solomon);

16 Baana son of Hushai—in Asher and in Aloth;

¹⁵ Traditionally peace offerings

¹¹ Or in the heights of Dor

¹⁷Jehoshaphat son of Paruah—in Issachar;
¹⁸Shimei son of Elai—in Benjamin;
¹⁹Gadai son of Uri—in Gilead (the country of
 Sihon king of the Amorites and the coun-
 try of Og king of Bashan). He was the only
 governor over the district.

Solomon's Daily Provisions

²⁰The people of Judah and Israel were as numer-
 ous as the sand on the seashore; they ate, they
 drank and they were happy. ²¹And Solomon ruled
 over all the kingdoms from the River^a to the land
 of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt.
 These countries brought tribute and were Solo-
 mon's subjects all his life.

²²Solomon's daily provisions were thirty cors^b
 of fine flour and sixty cors^c of meal, ²³ten head of
 stall-fed cattle, twenty of pasture-fed cattle and a
 hundred sheep and goats, as well as deer, ga-
 zelles, roebucks and choice fowl. ²⁴For he ruled
 over all the kingdoms west of the River, from Tiph-
 sah to Gaza, and had peace on all sides. ²⁵During
 Solomon's lifetime Judah and Israel, from Dan to
 Beersheba, lived in safety, each man under his
 own vine and fig tree.

²⁶Solomon had four^d thousand stalls for chariot
 horses, and twelve thousand horses.^e

²⁷The district officers, each in his month, sup-
 plied provisions for King Solomon and all who
 came to the king's table. They saw to it that noth-
 ing was lacking. ²⁸They also brought to the proper
 place their quotas of barley and straw for the char-
 iot horses and the other horses.

Solomon's Wisdom

²⁹God gave Solomon wisdom and very great in-
 sight, and a breadth of understanding as mea-
 sureless as the sand on the seashore. ³⁰Solomon's
 wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the
 men of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of
 Egypt. ³¹He was wiser than any other man, includ-
 ing Ethan the Ezrahite—wiser than Heman, Calcol
 and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame
 spread to all the surrounding nations. ³²He spoke
 three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered
 a thousand and five. ³³He described plant life,
 from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that
 grows out of walls. He also taught about animals
 and birds, reptiles and fish. ³⁴Men of all nations
 came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the
 kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.

4:21 How Large Was Israel?

Under the reign of David and Solomon, Israel
 stretched from the border of Egypt to the border of
 Babylonia. It was approximately three times the
 size of the modern nation of Israel, encompassing
 land that now belongs to Jordan, Syria, and
 Lebanon.

Preparations for Building the Temple

5 When Hiram king of Tyre heard that Solomon
 had been anointed king to succeed his father
 David, he sent his envoys to Solomon, because he
 had always been on friendly terms with David.
²Solomon sent back this message to Hiram.

³"You know that because of the wars
 waged against my father David from all sides,
 he could not build a temple for the Name of
 the LORD his God until the LORD put his ene-
 mies under his feet. ⁴But now the LORD my
 God has given me rest on every side, and
 there is no adversary or disaster. ⁵I intend,
 therefore, to build a temple for the Name of
 the LORD my God, as the LORD told my father
 David, when he said, 'Your son whom I will
 put on the throne in your place will build the
 temple for my Name.'

⁶"So give orders that cedars of Lebanon be
 cut for me. My men will work with yours, and
 I will pay you for your men whatever wages
 you set. You know that we have no one so
 skilled in felling timber as the Sidonians."

⁷When Hiram heard Solomon's message, he
 was greatly pleased and said, "Praise be to the
 LORD today, for he has given David a wise son to
 rule over this great nation."

⁸So Hiram sent word to Solomon:

"I have received the message you sent me
 and will do all you want in providing the cedar
 and pine logs. ⁹My men will haul them down
 from Lebanon to the sea, and I will float them
 in rafts by sea to the place you specify. There I
 will separate them and you can take them
 away. And you are to grant my wish by pro-
 viding food for my royal household."

¹⁰In this way Hiram kept Solomon supplied with
 all the cedar and pine logs he wanted, ¹¹and Solo-
 mon gave Hiram twenty thousand cors^f of wheat
 as food for his household, in addition to twenty
 thousand baths^g of pressed olive oil. Solomon
 continued to do this for Hiram year after year.
¹²The LORD gave Solomon wisdom, just as he had
 promised him. There were peaceful relations be-
 tween Hiram and Solomon, and the two of them
 made a treaty.

¹³King Solomon conscripted laborers from all
 Israel—thirty thousand men. ¹⁴He sent them off to
 Lebanon in shifts of ten thousand a month, so that
 they spent one month in Lebanon and two months
 at home. Adoniram was in charge of the forced
 labor. ¹⁵Solomon had seventy thousand carriers
 and eighty thousand stonemasons in the hills, ¹⁶as
 well as thirty-three hundredⁱ foremen who super-
 vised the project and directed the workmen. ¹⁷At
 the king's command they removed from the quar-
 ry large blocks of quality stone to provide a foun-
 dation of dressed stone for the temple. ¹⁸The
 craftsmen of Solomon and Hiram and the men of

^a21 That is, the Euphrates, also in verse 24
 about 375 bushels (about 13.2 kiloliters)

charioteers
 twenty cors

^b22 That is, probably about 125,000 bushels (about 4,400 kiloliters)

^c23 That is, about 115,000 gallons (about 440 kiloliters)
 2 Chron. 2:2, 18) thirty-six hundred

^d26 Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 2 Chron. 9:25), Hebrew forty

^e26 Or

^f21 Septuagint (see also 2 Chron. 2:10), Hebrew

^g16 Hebrew, some Septuagint manuscripts (see also

Gebal^a cut and prepared the timber and stone for the building of the temple.

Solomon Builds the Temple

6 In the four hundred and eightieth^b year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the temple of the LORD.

²The temple that King Solomon built for the LORD was sixty cubits long, twenty wide and thirty high.^c ³The portico at the front of the main hall of the temple extended the width of the temple, that is twenty cubits,^d and projected ten cubits^e from the front of the temple. ⁴He made narrow clerestory windows in the temple. ⁵Against the walls of the main hall and inner sanctuary he built a structure around the building, in which there were side rooms. ⁶The lowest floor was five cubits^f wide, the middle floor six cubits^g and the third floor seven.^h He made offset ledges around the outside of the temple so that nothing would be inserted into the temple walls.

⁷In building the temple, only blocks dressed at the quarry were used, and no hammer, chisel or any other iron tool was heard at the temple site while it was being built.

⁸The entrance to the lowestⁱ floor was on the south side of the temple; a stairway led up to the middle level and from there to the third. ⁹So he built the temple and completed it, roofing it with beams and cedar planks. ¹⁰And he built the side rooms all along the temple. The height of each was five cubits, and they were attached to the temple by beams of cedar.

¹¹The word of the LORD came to Solomon: ¹²"As for this temple you are building, if you follow my decrees, carry out my regulations and keep all my commands and obey them, I will fulfill through you the promise I gave to David your father. ¹³And I will live among the Israelites and will not abandon my people Israel."

¹⁴So Solomon built the temple and completed it

6:3 History of the Temple

The Bible describes the temple architecture in some detail though, notably, it does not record detailed instructions from God—in contrast to the very specific commands given for the tabernacle. Solomon's temple lasted about 380 years, occasionally falling into disrepair. Destroyed by Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar, it was partially rebuilt under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, and then reconstructed by King Herod in Jesus' day. Jesus walked in the temple on "Solomon's Porch." The early church met on the temple grounds: Peter preached there, and Ananias and Saphira probably died there (Acts 5). Currently the temple site is occupied by a Muslim mosque.

¹He laid its interior walls with cedar boards, paneling them from the floor of the temple to the ceiling, and covered the floor of the temple with planks of pine. ¹⁶He partitioned off twenty cubits^d at the rear of the temple with cedar boards from floor to ceiling to form within the temple an inner sanctuary, the Most Holy Place. ¹⁷The main hall in front of this room was forty cubits^j long. ¹⁸The inside of the temple was cedar, carved with gourds and open flowers. Everything was cedar; no stone was to be seen.

¹⁹He prepared the inner sanctuary within the temple to set the ark of the covenant of the LORD there. ²⁰The inner sanctuary was twenty cubits long, twenty wide and twenty high.^k He overlaid the inside with pure gold, and he also overlaid the altar of cedar. ²¹Solomon covered the inside of the temple with pure gold, and he extended gold chains across the front of the inner sanctuary, which was overlaid with gold. ²²So he overlaid the whole interior with gold. He also overlaid with gold the altar that belonged to the inner sanctuary.

²³In the inner sanctuary he made a pair of cherubim of olive wood, each ten cubits^l high. ²⁴One wing of the first cherub was five cubits long, and the other wing five cubits—ten cubits from wing tip to wing tip. ²⁵The second cherub also measured ten cubits, for the two cherubim were identical in size and shape. ²⁶The height of each cherub was ten cubits. ²⁷He placed the cherubim inside the innermost room of the temple, with their wings spread out. The wing of one cherub touched one wall, while the wing of the other touched the other wall, and their wings touched each other in the middle of the room. ²⁸He overlaid the cherubim with gold.

²⁹On the walls all around the temple, in both the inner and outer rooms, he carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers. ³⁰He also covered the floors of both the inner and outer rooms of the temple with gold.

³¹For the entrance of the inner sanctuary he made doors of olive wood with five-sided jambs. ³²And on the two olive wood doors he carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid the cherubim and palm trees with beaten gold. ³³In the same way he made four-sided jambs of olive wood for the entrance to the main hall. ³⁴He also made two pine doors, each having two leaves that turned in sockets. ³⁵He carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers on them and overlaid them with gold hammered evenly over the carvings.

³⁶And he built the inner courtyard of three courses of dressed stone and one course of trimmed cedar beams.

³⁷The foundation of the temple of the LORD was laid in the fourth year, in the month of Ziv. ³⁸In the eleventh year in the month of Bul, the eighth month, the temple was finished in all its details according to its specifications. He had spent seven years building it.

^a18 That is, Byblos. ^b1 Hebrew, Septuagint four hundred and fortieth (about 4 meters) wide and 45 feet (about 13.5 meters) high. ^c2 That is, about 90 feet (about 27 meters) long and 30 feet (about 9 meters) wide. ^d3 That is, about 40 feet (about 12 meters). ^e4 That is, about 10 feet (about 3 meters). ^f6 That is, about 10 feet (about 3 meters). ^g6 That is, about 10 feet (about 3 meters). ^h6 That is, about 10 feet (about 3 meters). ⁱ20 That is, about 8 feet (about 2.5 meters).

^e2 That is, about 90 feet (about 27 meters) long and 30 feet (about 9 meters) wide. ^f3 24 That is, about 40 feet (about 12 meters). ^g3 24 That is, about 40 feet (about 12 meters). ^h3 24 That is, about 40 feet (about 12 meters). ⁱ3 24 That is, about 40 feet (about 12 meters). ^j3 24 That is, about 40 feet (about 12 meters). ^k3 24 That is, about 40 feet (about 12 meters). ^l3 24 That is, about 40 feet (about 12 meters).

Solomon Builds His Palace

7 It took Solomon thirteen years, however, to complete the construction of his palace. **2**He built the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon a hundred cubits long, fifty wide and thirty high,^a with four rows of cedar columns supporting trimmed cedar beams. **3**It was roofed with cedar above the beams that rested on the columns—forty-five beams, fifteen to a row. **4**Its windows were placed high in sets of three, facing each other. **5**All the doorways had rectangular frames, they were in the front part in sets of three, facing each other.^b

6He made a colonnade fifty cubits long and thirty wide.^c In front of it was a portico, and in front of that were pillars and an overhanging roof.

He built the throne hall, the Hall of Justice, where he was to judge, and he covered it with cedar from floor to ceiling.^d **8**And the palace in which he was to live, set farther back, was similar in design. Solomon also made a palace like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had married.

9All these structures, from the outside to the great courtyard and from foundation to eaves, were made of blocks of high-grade stone cut to size and trimmed with a saw on their inner and outer faces. **10**The foundations were laid with large stones of good quality, some measuring ten cubits^e and some eight.^f **11**Above were high-grade stones, cut to size, and cedar beams. **12**The great courtyard was surrounded by a wall of three courses of dressed stone and one course of trimmed cedar beams, as was the inner courtyard of the temple of the Lord with its portico.

The Temple's Furnishings

13King Solomon sent to Tyre and brought Hiram,^g **14**whose mother was a widow from the tribe of Naphtali and whose father was a man of Tyre and a craftsman in bronze. Hiram was highly skilled^h and experienced in all kinds of bronze work. He came to King Solomon and did all the work assigned to him.

7:1 Prosperity under Solomon

The magnificent temple and palace built by Solomon came to symbolize Israel's Golden Age. Solomon built many leading cities, assuming control of vital trade routes. He fortified Jerusalem, the capital, with a wall so thick that parts of it still stand. He modernized the Israelite army with 12,000 horses and the first chariot brigades, and made shrewd alliances with neighboring countries.

15He cast two bronze pillars, each eighteen cubits high and twelve cubits around,ⁱ by line. **16**He also made two capitals of cast bronze to set on the tops of the pillars; each capital was five cubits^j high. **17**A network of interwoven chains festooned the capitals on top of the pillars, seven for each capital. **18**He made pomegranates in two rows^k encircling each network to decorate the capitals on top of the pillars.^l He did the same for each capital. **19**The capitals on top of the pillars in the portico were in the shape of lilies, four cubits^m high. **20**On the capitals of both pillars, above the bowl-shaped part next to the network, were the two hundred pomegranates in rows all around. **21**He erected the pillars at the portico of the temple. The pillar to the south he named Jakinⁿ and the one to the north Boaz.^o **22**The capitals on top were in the shape of lilies. And so the work on the pillars was completed.

23He made the Sea of cast metal, circular in shape, measuring ten cubits^p from rim to rim and five cubits high. It took a line of thirty cubits^q to measure around it. **24**Below the rim, gourds encircled it—ten to a cubit. The gourds were cast in two rows in one piece with the Sea.

25The Sea stood on twelve bulls, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south and three facing east. The Sea rested on top of them, and their hindquarters were toward the center. **26**It was a handbreadth^r in thickness, and its rim was like the rim of a cup, like a lily blossom. It held two thousand baths.^s

27He also made ten movable stands of bronze; each was four cubits long, four wide and three high.^t **28**This is how the stands were made: They had side panels attached to uprights. **29**On the panels between the uprights were lions, bulls and cherubim—and on the uprights as well. Above and below the lions and bulls were wreaths of hammered work. **30**Each stand had four bronze wheels with bronze axles, and each had a basin resting on four supports, cast with wreaths on each side. **31**On the inside of the stand there was an opening that had a circular frame one cubit^u deep. This opening was round, and with its basework it measured a cubit and a half.^v Around its opening there was engraving. The panels of the stands were square, not round. **32**The four wheels were under the panels, and the axles of the wheels were attached to the stand. The diameter of each wheel was a cubit and a half. **33**The wheels were made like chariot wheels; the axles, rims, spokes and hubs were all of cast metal.

34Each stand had four handles, one on each corner, projecting from the stand. **35**At the top of the stand there was a circular band half a cubit^w deep.

^a That is, about 150 feet (about 46 meters) long, 75 feet (about 23 meters) wide and 45 feet (about 13.5 meters) high. ^b The meaning of the Hebrew for this verse is uncertain. ^c That is, about 75 feet (about 23 meters) long and 45 feet (about 13.5 meters) high. ^d Vulgate and Syriac, Hebrew floor. ^e That is, about 15 feet (about 4.5 meters). ^f That is, about 12 feet (about 3.6 meters). ^g Hebrew Hiram, a variant of Hiram, also in verses 40 and 45. ^h That is, about 27 feet (about 8.1 meters) high and 18 feet (about 5.4 meters) around. ⁱ That is, about 7 1/2 feet (about 2.3 meters) also in verse 23. ^j Two Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint. ^k Most Hebrew manuscripts made the pillars, and there were two rows. ^l Many Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac, most Hebrew manuscripts pomegranates. ^m That is, about 6 feet (about 1.8 meters) also in verse 38. ⁿ Jakin probably means he establishes. ^o Boaz probably means in him is strength. ^p That is, about 45 feet (about 13.5 meters). ^q That is, about 3 inches (about 8 centimeters). ^r That is, probably about 11,500 gallons (about 44 kiloliters) the Septuagint does not have this sentence. ^s That is, about 6 feet (about 1.8 meters) long and wide and about 4 1/2 feet (about 1.3 meters) high. ^t That is, about 1 1/2 feet (about 0.5 meter). ^u That is, about 3/4 foot (about 0.2 meter). ^v That is, about 2 1/4 feet (about 0.7 meter), also in verse 32.

...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...

...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...

...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...

...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...

...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...

...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...

...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...

...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...

...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...

...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...

...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...

...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...
...the ark of the covenant of the Lord ...

The Ark Brought to the Temple

8 Then King Solomon summoned into his presence all the elders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes and the chiefs of the Israelite community to bring up the ark of the Lord's covenant

⁸ 1 Kings 8:1-2, 15, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

from Zion, the City of David. All the men of Israel gathered together to King Solomon at the time of the feast in the month of Ethanim, the seventh month.

When all the elders of Israel had arrived, the king stood up before the ark and they brought up the ark and the Tent of Meeting and all the furnishings in it. The priests and Levites carried it up, said King Solomon and the entire assembly of Israel that had gathered about him, and they placed the ark on its feet, sacrificing so many sheep and oxen that they could not be recorded or counted.

Then the priests brought the ark of the Lord's covenant to its place in the inner sanctuary of the temple, the Most Holy Place, and put it beneath the wings of the cherubim. The cherubim spread their wings over the place of the ark and overshadowed the ark and its carrying poles. These poles were so long that their ends could be seen from the Holy Place in front of the inner sanctuary, but not from outside the Holy Place, and they are still there today. There was nothing in the ark except the two stone tablets that Moses had placed in it at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the Israelites after they came out of Egypt.

When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, the cloud filled the temple of the Lord. And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled his temple.

Then Solomon said, "The Lord has said that he would dwell in a dark cloud. I have indeed built a magnificent temple for you, a place for you to dwell forever."

While the whole assembly of Israel was standing there, the king turned around and blessed them. Then he said:

Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who with his own hand has fulfilled what he promised with his own mouth to my father David. For he said, "Since the day I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I have not chosen a city in any tribe of Israel to have a temple built for my Name to be there, but I have chosen David to rule my people Israel."

"My father David had it in his heart to build a temple for the Name of the Lord, the God of Israel. But the Lord said to my father David, 'Because it was in your heart to build a temple for my Name, you did well to have this in your heart. Nevertheless, you are not the one to build the temple, but your son, who is

8:11 Off-Limits for People

Much of the temple stayed off-limits to the general public; only priests went in. Not even priests ventured into the Most Holy Place, except on very special occasions. Solomon had not intended the building for humans—he wanted a place suitable for God to dwell. And on the memorable day described here, the awesome glory of the Lord did indeed fill the temple.

your own flesh and blood—he is the one who will build the temple for my Name.

20 The LORD has kept the promise he made. I have succeeded David my father and now I sit on the throne of Israel, just as the LORD promised, and I have built the temple for the Name of the LORD, the God of Israel. 21 I have provided a place there for the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD that he made with our fathers when he brought them out of Egypt.

Solomon's Prayer of Dedication

22 Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands toward heaven 23 and said

'O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below—you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way. 24 You have kept your promise to your servant David my father; with your mouth you have promised and with your hand you have fulfilled it—as it is today.

25 'Now LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father the promises you made to him when you said, 'You shall never fail to have a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons are careful in all they do to walk before me as you have done.' 26 And now, O God of Israel, let your word that you promised your servant David my father come true.

27 'But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built! 28 Yet give attention to your servant's prayer and his plea for mercy, O LORD my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence this day. 29 May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day, this place of which you said, 'My Name shall be there,' so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place. 30 Hear the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.

31 'When a man wrongs his neighbor and is required to take an oath and he comes and swears the oath before your altar in this temple, 32 then hear from heaven and act. Judge between your servants, condemning the

guilty and bringing down on his own head what he has done. Declare the innocent not guilty, and so establish his innocence.

33 'When your people Israel have been defeated by an enemy because they have sinned against you, and when they turn back to you and confess your name, praying and making supplication to you in this temple, 34 then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and bring them back to the land you gave to their fathers.

35 'When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because your people have sinned against you, and when they pray toward this place and confess your name and turn from their sin because you have afflicted them, 36 then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel. Teach them the right way to live, and send rain on the land you gave your people for an inheritance.

37 'When famine or plague comes to the land, or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers, or when an enemy besieges them in any of their cities, whatever disaster or disease may come, 38 and when a prayer or plea is made by any of your people Israel—each one aware of the afflictions of his own heart, and spreading out his hands toward this temple— 39 then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive and act; deal with each man according to all he does, since you know his heart (for you alone know the hearts of all men), 40 so that they will fear you all the time they live in the land you gave our fathers.

41 'As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your name— 42 for men will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm—when he comes and prays toward this temple, 43 then hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears your Name.

44 'When your people go to war against their enemies, wherever you send them, and when they pray to the LORD toward the city you have chosen and the temple I have built for your Name, 45 then hear from heaven their prayer and their plea, and uphold their cause.

46 'When they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you become angry with them and give them over to the enemy, who takes them captive to his own land, far away or near; 47 and if they have a change of heart in the land where they are held captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their conquerors and say, 'We have sinned, we have done wrong, we have acted wickedly'; 48 and if they turn back to you with all their heart and soul in the land of their enemies who took them captive, and pray to you toward the land you gave their fathers, toward the city you have chosen and the tem-

8:27 Where God Dwells

King Solomon was at his most eloquent in the great speech and prayer of chapter 8. He made it clear that the Lord of the universe could not fully dwell in a building. Nevertheless, God's presence, or his "Name" would indeed live there. For that reason, Solomon began the practice of praying toward Jerusalem, a practice still followed by many Jews today (8:29).

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are listed below them.

2. The second part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are listed below them.

3. The third part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are listed below them.

4. The fourth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are listed below them.

5. The fifth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are listed below them.

6. The sixth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are listed below them.

7. The seventh part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are listed below them.

8. The eighth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are listed below them.

9. The ninth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are listed below them.

10. The tenth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are listed below them.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and their corresponding addresses. The names are listed in the first column, and the addresses are listed in the second column. The names are: John Doe, Jane Smith, and Bob Johnson. The addresses are: 123 Main St, 456 Elm St, and 789 Oak St.

2. The second part of the document is a table with two columns: Name and Address. The names are listed in the first column, and the addresses are listed in the second column. The names are: John Doe, Jane Smith, and Bob Johnson. The addresses are: 123 Main St, 456 Elm St, and 789 Oak St.

3. The third part of the document is a list of names and their corresponding addresses. The names are listed in the first column, and the addresses are listed in the second column. The names are: John Doe, Jane Smith, and Bob Johnson. The addresses are: 123 Main St, 456 Elm St, and 789 Oak St.

4. The fourth part of the document is a table with two columns: Name and Address. The names are listed in the first column, and the addresses are listed in the second column. The names are: John Doe, Jane Smith, and Bob Johnson. The addresses are: 123 Main St, 456 Elm St, and 789 Oak St.

5. The fifth part of the document is a list of names and their corresponding addresses. The names are listed in the first column, and the addresses are listed in the second column. The names are: John Doe, Jane Smith, and Bob Johnson. The addresses are: 123 Main St, 456 Elm St, and 789 Oak St.

The first of these is the fact that the
 second of these is the fact that the
 third of these is the fact that the
 fourth of these is the fact that the
 fifth of these is the fact that the
 sixth of these is the fact that the
 seventh of these is the fact that the
 eighth of these is the fact that the
 ninth of these is the fact that the
 tenth of these is the fact that the

[illegible]

The Dedication of the Temple

[illegible]

On that same day the king consecrated the middle part of the court and in front of the temple of the LORD, and there he offered burnt offerings, grain offerings and the fat of the fellowship offerings, because the bronze altar for the LORD was not yet made to burn the burnt offerings, the grain offerings and the fat of the fellowship offerings.

The Sabbath observed the festival at that time, and all Israel with them—a vast assembly of people from Lebo^s Hamath to the Wadi of Egypt. They celebrated it before the Lord our God for seven days and seven days more, fourteen days in all.

So, although we have not yet seen the complete picture, we can see that the situation is not as simple as it seems. The fact that the situation is not as simple as it seems is a fact that we must take into account.

10. 1. 1950

9. The [redacted] was not that unusual building the first [redacted] and the [redacted] and had [redacted] and [redacted] to the [redacted] and [redacted] as the first [redacted] [redacted] and to [redacted]

I have heard the pastor and priest say how
much better we - Christians - must treat this town
which you have built by putting my
- three Anglos - Mr. Owen and my heart
- in - in this

And I will establish your
kingdom over Israel forever as I promised
David your father when I said You shall never
want to have a man on the throne of Israel

But if you or your sons turn away from me and do not observe the commands and decrees I have given you and go off to serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. Israel will then become a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples. And though this temple is now imposing, all who pass by will be appalled and will scoff and say, "Why has the Lord done such a thing to this land and to this temple?" People will answer, "Because they have forsaken the Lord their God, who brought their fathers out of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, worshipping and serving them—that is why the Lord brought all this disaster on them."

Solomon's Other Activities

¹⁰At the end of twenty years, during which Solomon built these two buildings—the temple of the Lord and the royal palace—¹¹King Solomon gave twenty towns in Galilee to Hiram king of Tyre, because Hiram had supplied him with all the cedar and pine and gold he wanted. ¹²But when Hiram went from Tyre to see the towns that Solomon had given him, he was not pleased with them. ¹³"What kind of towns are these you have given me, my brother?" he asked. And he called them the Land

9:13 Good-for-Nothing Towns

Solomon gave away part of God's promised land to a foreigner, an act that may have stirred up the resentment of Northern tribes against the South. King Hiram, unimpressed with the 20 Galilean towns Solomon gave him as payment for services, called them "the Land of Cabul" (good for nothing). Interestingly, Jesus chose this very area as the early focal point of his ministry on earth.

*33 Indistinguishably same offering also on verse 44

*65 Or from the entrance to

⁶ The Hebrew is plural.

of Cabul,^a a name they have to this day. ¹⁴Now Hiram had sent to the king 120 talents^b of gold.

¹⁵Here is the account of the forced labor King Solomon conscripted to build the LORD's temple, his own palace, the supporting terraces,^c the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer. ¹⁶(Pharaoh king of Egypt had attacked and captured Gezer. He had set it on fire. He killed its Canaanite inhabitants and then gave it as a wedding gift to his daughter, Solomon's wife. ¹⁷And Solomon rebuilt Gezer.) He built up Lower Beth Horon, ¹⁸Baalath, and Tadmor^d in the desert, within his land, ¹⁹as well as all his store cities and the towns for his chariots and for his horses^e—whatever he desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon and throughout all the territory he ruled.

²⁰All the people left from the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites (these peoples were not Israelites), ²¹that is, their descendants remaining in the land, whom the Israelites could not exterminate^f—these Solomon conscripted for his slave labor force, as it is to this day. ²²But Solomon did not make slaves of any of the Israelites; they were his fighting men, his government officials, his officers, his captains, and the commanders of his chariots and charioteers. ²³They were also the chief officials in charge of Solomon's projects—550 officials supervising the men who did the work.

²⁴After Pharaoh's daughter had come up from the City of David to the palace Solomon had built for her, he constructed the supporting terraces.

²⁵Three times a year Solomon sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings^g on the altar he had built for the LORD, burning incense before the LORD along with them, and so fulfilled the temple obligations.

²⁶King Solomon also built ships at Ezion Geber, which is near Elath in Edom, on the shore of the Red Sea.^h ²⁷And Hiram sent his men—sailors who knew the sea—to serve in the fleet with Solomon's men. ²⁸They sailed to Ophir and brought back 420 talentsⁱ of gold, which they delivered to King Solomon.

The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon

10 When the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon and his relation to the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions. ²Arriving at Jerusalem with a very great caravan—with camels carrying spices, large quantities of gold, and precious stones—she came to Solomon and talked with him about all that she had on her mind. ³Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was too hard for the king to explain to her. ⁴When the queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon and the palace he had built, ⁵the food on his table, the seating of his officials, the attending servants in their robes, his cupbearers,

and the burnt offerings he made at the temple of the LORD, she was overwhelmed.

⁶She said to the king, "The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true." ⁷But I did not believe these things until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half was told me; in wisdom and wealth you have far exceeded the report I heard. ⁸How happy your men must be! How happy your officials, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! ⁹Praise be to the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on the throne of Israel. Because of the LORD's eternal love for Israel, he has made you king, to maintain justice and righteousness.^j

¹⁰And she gave the king 120 talents^k of gold, large quantities of spices, and precious stones. Never again were so many spices brought in as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

¹¹(Hiram's ships brought gold from Ophir; and from there they brought great cargoes of almugwood^l and precious stones. ¹²The king used the almugwood to make supports for the temple of the LORD and for the royal palace, and to make harps and lyres for the musicians. So much almugwood has never been imported or seen since that day.)

¹³King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired and asked for, besides what he had given her out of his royal bounty. Then she left and returned with her retinue to her own country.

Solomon's Splendor

¹⁴The weight of the gold that Solomon received yearly was 666 talents,^m ¹⁵not including the revenues from merchants and traders and from all the Arabian kings and the governors of the land.

¹⁶King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; six hundred bekasⁿ of gold went into each shield. ¹⁷He also made three hundred small shields of hammered gold, with three minas^o of gold in each shield. The king put them in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon.

¹⁸Then the king made a great throne inlaid with ivory and overlaid with fine gold. ¹⁹The throne had six steps, and its back had a rounded top. On both sides of the seat were armrests, with a lion standing beside each of them. ²⁰Twelve lions stood on the six steps, one at either end of each step.

10:14 A King of Excess

This passage (10:14-29) graphically illustrates how far Solomon had strayed from God's ideal. The book of Deuteronomy cites Moses' forthright warnings about what kind of king should rule over Israel (Deuteronomy 17:14-20). Solomon defied those warnings by acquiring huge numbers of horses, getting involved in foreign trade, taking many wives, and accumulating silver and gold.

^a13 Cabul sounds like the Hebrew for good-for-nothing in verse 24.

^b18 The Hebrew may also be read Tamar giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them.

^c28 That is, about 16 tons (about 14.5 metric tons).

^d10 That is, about 4 1/2 tons (about 4 metric tons).

^e11 Probably a variant of algumwood, also in verse 12.

^f16 That is, about 7 1/2 pounds (about 3.5 kilograms).

^g17 That is, about 3 3/4 pounds (about 1.7 kilograms).

^h18 Or the Millo, also in verse 24.

ⁱ19 Or charioteers.

^j21 The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable.

^k25 Traditionally peace offerings.

^l26 Hebrew.

^m13 Or the desert by which he went up to.

ⁿ14 That is, about 25.

^o17 That is, about 3 3/4 pounds (about 1.7 kilograms).

Nothing like it had ever been made for any other kingdom. ²¹All King Solomon's goblets were gold, and all the household articles in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. Nothing was made of silver, because silver was considered of little value in Solomon's days. ²²The king had a fleet of trading ships^a at sea along with the ships of Hiram. Once every three years it returned, carrying gold, silver and ivory, and apes and baboons.

²³King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth. ²⁴The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart. ²⁵Year after year, everyone who came brought a gift—articles of silver and gold, robes, weapons and spices, and horses and mules.

²⁶Solomon accumulated chariots and horses; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses,^b which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem. ²⁷The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycamore-fig trees in the foothills. ²⁸Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt^c and from Kue^d—the royal merchants purchased them from Kue. ²⁹They imported a chariot from Egypt for six hundred shekels^e of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty.^f They also exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and of the Arameans.

Solomon's Wives

11 King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. ²They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. ³He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. ⁴As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. ⁵He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech^g the detestable god of the Ammonites. ⁶So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done.

⁷On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. ⁸He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.

⁹The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. ¹⁰Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the LORD's command. ¹¹So the LORD said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and

my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your servants.^h ¹²Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. ¹³Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen.

Solomon's Adversaries

¹⁴Then the LORD raised up against Solomon an adversary. Hadad the Edomite, from the royal line of Edom. ¹⁵Earlier when David was fighting with Edom, Joab the commander of the army, who had gone up to bury the dead, had struck down all the men in Edom. ¹⁶Joab and all the Israelites stayed there for six months, until they had destroyed all the men in Edom. ¹⁷But Hadad, still only a boy, fled to Egypt with some Edomite officials who had served his father. ¹⁸They set out from Midian and went to Paran. Then taking men from Paran with them, they went to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who gave Hadad a house and land and provided him with food.

¹⁹Pharaoh was so pleased with Hadad that he gave him a sister of his own wife, Queen Tahpenes, in marriage. ²⁰The sister of Tahpenes bore him a son named Genubath, whom Tahpenes brought up in the royal palace. There Genubath lived with Pharaoh's own children.

²¹While he was in Egypt, Hadad heard that David rested with his fathers and that Joab the commander of the army was also dead. Then Hadad said to Pharaoh, "Let me go, that I may return to my own country."

²²What have you lacked here that you want to go back to your own country?" Pharaoh asked. "Nothing," Hadad replied, "but do let me go!"

²³And God raised up against Solomon another adversary, Rezon son of Eliada, who had fled from his master, Hadadezer king of Zobah. ²⁴He gathered men around him and became the leader of a band of rebels when David destroyed the forcesⁱ of Zobah, the rebels went to Damascus, where they settled and took control. ²⁵Rezon was Israel's adversary as long as Solomon lived, adding to the trouble caused by Hadad. So Rezon ruled in Aram and was hostile toward Israel.

Jeroboam Rebels Against Solomon

²⁶Also, Jeroboam son of Nebat rebelled against the king. He was one of Solomon's officials, an Ephraimite from Zeredah, and his mother was a widow named Zeruah.

²⁷Here is the account of how he rebelled against the king. Solomon had built the supporting terraces^j and had filled in the gap in the wall of the city of David his father. ²⁸Now Jeroboam was a man of standing, and when Solomon saw how well the young man did his work, he put him in charge of the whole labor force of the house of Joseph.

^a22 Hebrew of ships of Tarshish

^b26 Or chariotters

^c28 Or possibly Muzur

^d28 Probably Cilicia

^e29 That is, about 15 pounds (about 6.8 kilograms)

^f29 That is, about 3 1/4 pounds (about 1.7 kilograms)

^g25 Hebrew Molek, also in verse 33

^h26 Hebrew destroyed them

ⁱ27 Or the Mills

²⁹About that time Jeroboam was going out of Jerusalem, and Ahijah the prophet of Shiloh met him on the way, wearing a new cloak. The two of them were alone out in the country. ³⁰and Ahijah took hold of the new cloak he was wearing and tore it into twelve pieces. ³¹Then he said to Jeroboam, "Take ten pieces for yourself, for this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'See, I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hand and give you ten tribes. ³²But for the sake of my servant David and the city of Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, he will have one tribe. ³³I will do this because they have forsaken me and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Molech the god of the Ammonites, and have not walked in my ways, nor done what is right in my eyes, nor kept my statutes and laws as David, Solomon's father, did.

³⁴"But I will not take the whole kingdom out of Solomon's hand; I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of David my servant, whom I chose and who observed my commands and statutes. ³⁵I will take the kingdom from his son's hands and give you ten tribes. ³⁶I will give one tribe to his son so that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I chose to put my Name. ³⁷However, as for you, I will take you, and you will rule over all that your heart desires; you will be king over Israel. ³⁸If you do whatever I command you and walk in my ways and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and commands, as David my servant did, I will be with you. I will build you a dynasty as enduring as the one I built for David and will give Israel to you. ³⁹I will humble David's descendants because of this, but not forever."

⁴⁰Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam fled to Egypt, to Shishak the king, and stayed there until Solomon's death.

Solomon's Death

⁴¹As for the other events of Solomon's reign—all he did and the wisdom he displayed—are they not written in the book of the annals of Solomon? ⁴²Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. ⁴³Then he rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of David his father. And Rehoboam his son succeeded him as king.

Israel Rebels Against Rehoboam

12 Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all the Israelites had gone there to make him king.

11:41 Using Other Sources

The author makes liberal use of other historical records, most of which have not survived. This verse refers to "the book of the annals of Solomon." Elsewhere, 1 Kings relies on chronicles of the kings of Judah (22:45) or of Israel (15:31). In all, the two books of Kings make 34 references to other sources.

²When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard this (he was still in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon), he returned from^b Egypt. ³So they sent for Jeroboam, and he and the whole assembly of Israel went to Rehoboam and said to him: ⁴"Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you."

⁵Rehoboam answered, "Go away for three days and then come back to me." So the people went away.

⁶Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. "How would you advise me to answer these people?" he asked.

⁷They replied, "If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants."

⁸But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him. ⁹He asked them, "What is your advice? How should we answer these people who say to me, 'Lighten the yoke your father put on us'?"

¹⁰The young men who had grown up with him replied, "Tell these people who have said to you, 'Your father put a heavy yoke on us,' but make our yoke lighter—tell them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist. ¹¹My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.'"

¹²Three days later Jeroboam and all the people returned to Rehoboam, as the king had said, "Come back to me in three days." ¹³The king answered the people harshly. Rejecting the advice given him by the elders, ¹⁴he followed the advice of the young men and said, "My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions." ¹⁵So the king did not listen to the people, for this turn of events was from the LORD, to fulfill the word the LORD had spoken to Jeroboam son of Nebat through Ahijah the Shilonite.

¹⁶When all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, they answered the king:

"What share do we have in David, what part in Jesse's son?

To your tents, O Israel!

Look after your own house, O David!"

So the Israelites went home. ¹⁷But as for the Israelites who were living in the towns of Judah, Rehoboam still ruled over them.

¹⁸King Rehoboam sent out Adoniram,^c who was in charge of forced labor, but all Israel stoned him to death. King Rehoboam, however, managed to get into his chariot and escape to Jerusalem. ¹⁹So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

²⁰When all the Israelites heard that Jeroboam had returned, they sent and called him to the as-

^a33 Hebrew, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac because he has (see also 1 Kings 4:6 and 5:14). Hebrew Adoram

^b2 Or he remained in

^c18 Some Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac

seems and made him king over all Israel. Only the tribe of Judah remained loyal to the house of David.

When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he gathered the whole house of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin—a hundred and eighty thousand fighting men—to make war against the house of Israel and to regain the kingdom for Rehoboam son of Solomon.

Then the word of God came to Shemaiah the prophet: "Say to Rehoboam son of Solomon king of Judah, to the whole house of Judah and to all the rest of the people, 'This is what the LORD says: Do not go up to fight against your brethren, the Israelites. Go home, every one of you, for this is my doing.'" So they obeyed the word of the LORD and went home again, as the LORD had ordered.

Golden Calves at Bethel and Dan

Then Jeroboam fortified Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. From there he went out and built up Peniel.¹

Jeroboam thought to himself, "The kingdom will never fully revert to the house of David. If these people go up to offer sacrifices at the temple on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, they will again give their allegiance to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah. They will kill me and return to King Rehoboam."

After seeking advice, the king made two golden calves. He said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt." One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan. And this thing became a sin: the people went even as far as Dan to worship the one there.

Jeroboam built shrines on high places and appointed priests from all sorts of people, even though they were not Levites. He instituted a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the festival held in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. Thus he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves he had made. And at Bethel he also installed priests at the high places he had made. On the fifteenth day of the eighth month, a month of his own choosing, he offered sacrifices on the altar he had built at Bethel. So he instituted the festival for the Israelites and went up to the altar to make offerings.

The Man of God From Judah

13 By the word of the LORD a man of God came from Judah to Bethel, as Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make an offering. He cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD: "O altar, altar! This is what the LORD says: 'A son named Josiah will be born to the house of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests of the high places who now make offerings here, and human bones will be burned on you.'" That same day the man of God gave a sign: "This is the sign the LORD has declared: The altar will be split apart and the ashes on it will be poured out."

When King Jeroboam heard what the man of

God cried out against the altar at Bethel, he stretched out his hand from the altar and said, "Seize him!" But the hand he stretched out toward the man shriveled up, so that he could not pull it back. Also, the altar was split apart and its ashes poured out according to the sign given by the man of God by the word of the LORD.

Then the king said to the man of God, "Intercede with the LORD your God and pray for me that my hand may be restored." So the man of God interceded with the LORD, and the king's hand was restored and became as it was before.

The king said to the man of God, "Come home with me and have something to eat, and I will give you a gift."

But the man of God answered the king, "Even if you were to give me half your possessions, I would not go with you, nor would I eat bread or drink water here. For I was commanded by the word of the LORD: 'You must not eat bread or drink water or return by the way you came.'" So he took another road and did not return by the way he had come to Bethel.

Now there was a certain old prophet living in Bethel, whose sons came and told him all that the man of God had done there that day. They also told their father what he had said to the king. Their father asked them, "Which way did he go?" And his sons showed him which road the man of God from Judah had taken. So he said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for him, he mounted it and rode after the man of God. He found him sitting under an oak tree and asked, 'Are you the man of God who came from Judah?'"

"I am," he replied.

So the prophet said to him, "Come home with me and eat."

The man of God said, "I cannot turn back and go with you, nor can I eat bread or drink water with you in this place. I have been told by the word of the LORD: 'You must not eat bread or drink water there or return by the way you came.'"

The old prophet answered, "I too am a prophet, as you are. And an angel said to me by the word of the LORD: 'Bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water.'" (But he was lying to him.) So the man of God returned with him and ate and drank in his house.

While they were sitting at the table, the word of the LORD came to the old prophet who had brought him back. He cried out to the man of God who had come from Judah, "This is what the

13:7 Standing Up to the King

This story shows the kings' tendencies to keep "court prophets." Such prophets were hired to tell the kings only what they wanted to hear. The anonymous man of God had too much integrity to accept any such kindnesses from wicked King Jeroboam.

¹25 Hebrew Penuel, a variant of Peniel

LORD SAID: "You have defied the word of the LORD and have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you. ²²You came back and ate bread and drank water in the place where he told you not to eat or drink. Therefore your body will not be buried in the tomb of your fathers."

²³When the man of God had finished eating and drinking, the prophet who had brought him back saddled his donkey for him. ²⁴As he went on his way, a lion met him on the road and killed him, and his body was thrown down on the road, with both the donkey and the lion standing beside it. ²⁵Some people who passed by saw the body thrown down there, with the lion standing beside the body, and they went and reported it in the city where the old prophet lived.

²⁶When the prophet who had brought him back from his journey heard of it, he said, "It is the man of God who defied the word of the LORD. The LORD has given him over to the lion, which has mauled him and killed him, as the word of the LORD had warned him."

²⁷The prophet said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me," and they did so. ²⁸Then he went out and found the body thrown down on the road, with the donkey and the lion standing beside it. The lion had neither eaten the body nor mauled the donkey. ²⁹So the prophet picked up the body of the man of God, laid it on the donkey, and brought it back to his own city to mourn for him and bury him. ³⁰Then he laid the body in his own tomb, and they mourned over him and said, "Oh, my brother!"

³¹After burying him, he said to his sons, "When I die, bury me in the grave where the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones. ³²For the message he declared by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel and against all the shrines on the high places in the towns of Samaria will certainly come true."

³³Even after this, Jeroboam did not change his evil ways, but once more appointed priests for the high places from all sorts of people. Anyone who wanted to become a priest he consecrated for the high places. ³⁴This was the sin of the house of Jeroboam that led to its downfall and to its destruction from the face of the earth.

Ahijah's Prophecy Against Jeroboam

14 At that time Abijah son of Jeroboam became ill, ²and Jeroboam said to his wife, "Go, disguise yourself, so you won't be recognized as the wife of Jeroboam. Then go to Shiloh. Ahijah the prophet is there—the one who told me I would be king over this people. ³Take ten loaves of bread with you, some cakes and a jar of honey, and go to him. He will tell you what will happen to the boy." ⁴So Jeroboam's wife did what he said and went to Ahijah's house in Shiloh.

Now Ahijah could not see; his sight was gone because of his age. ⁵But the LORD had told Ahijah, "Jeroboam's wife is coming to ask you about her son, for he is ill, and you are to give her such and

such an answer. When she arrives, she will pretend to be someone else."

⁶When Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps at the door, he said, "Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why this pretense? I have been sent to you by the LORD. ⁷Go, tell Jeroboam that this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I raised you up from among the people and made you a leader over my people Israel. ⁸I tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you, but you have not been like my servant David, who kept my commands and followed me with all his heart, doing only what was right in my eyes. ⁹You have done more evil than all who lived before you. You have made for yourself other gods, idols made of metal, you have provoked me to anger and thrust me behind your back.'

¹⁰Because of this, I am going to bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam. I will cut off from Jeroboam every last male in Israel—slave or free. I will burn up the house of Jeroboam as one burns dung, until it is all gone. ¹¹Dogs will eat those belonging to Jeroboam who die in the city, and the birds of the air will feed on those who die in the country. The LORD has spoken!

¹²As for you, go back home. When you set foot in your city, the boy will die. ¹³All Israel will mourn for him and bury him. He is the only one belonging to Jeroboam who will be buried, because he is the only one in the house of Jeroboam in whom the LORD, the God of Israel, has found anything good.

¹⁴The LORD will raise up for himself a king over Israel who will cut off the family of Jeroboam. This is the day! What? Yes, even now." ¹⁵And the LORD will strike Israel, so that it will be like a reed swaying in the water. He will uproot Israel from this good land that he gave to their forefathers and scatter them beyond the River,^a because they provoked the LORD to anger by making Asherah poles. ¹⁶And he will give Israel up because of the sins Jeroboam has committed and has caused Israel to commit."

¹⁷Then Jeroboam's wife got up and left and went to Tirzah. As soon as she stepped over the thresh-old of the house, the boy died. ¹⁸They buried him, and all Israel mourned for him, as the LORD had said through his servant the prophet Ahijah.

¹⁹The other events of Jeroboam's reign, his wars and how he ruled, are written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel. ²⁰He reigned for twenty-two years and then rested with his fathers. And Nadab his son succeeded him as king.

Rehoboam King of Judah

²¹Rehoboam son of Solomon was king in Judah. He was forty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel in which to put his Name. His mother's name was Naamah; she was an Ammonite.

²²Judah did evil in the eyes of the LORD. By the sins they committed they stirred up his jealous anger more than their fathers had done. ²³They

^a14 The meaning of the Hebrew for this sentence is uncertain. Asherah; here and elsewhere in 1 Kings

^b15 That is, the Euphrates

^c15 That is, symbols of the goddess

also set up for themselves high places, sacred stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree. ²⁴There were even male shrine prostitutes in the land; the people engaged in all the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites.

²⁵In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem. ²⁶He carried off the treasures of the temple of the LORD and the treasures of the royal palace. He took everything, including all the gold shields Solomon had made. ²⁷So King Rehoboam made bronze shields to replace them and assigned these to the commanders of the guard on duty at the entrance to the royal palace. ²⁸Whenever the king went to the LORD's temple, the guards bore the shields, and afterward they returned them to the guardroom.

²⁹As for the other events of Rehoboam's reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? ³⁰There was continual warfare between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. ³¹And Rehoboam rested with his fathers and was buried with them in the City of David. His mother's name was Naamah; she was an Ammonite. And Abijah^a his son succeeded him as king.

Abijah King of Judah

15 In the eighteenth year of the reign of Jeroboam son of Nebat, Abijah^b became king of Judah, and he reigned in Jerusalem three years. His mother's name was Maacah daughter of Abishalom.^c

³He committed all the sins his father had done before him; his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his forefather had been. ⁴Nevertheless, for David's sake the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem by raising up a son to succeed him and by making Jerusalem strong. ⁵For David had done what was right in the eyes of the LORD and had not failed to keep any of the LORD's commands all the days of his life—except in the case of Uriah the Hittite.

⁶There was war between Rehoboam^d and Jeroboam throughout Abijah's lifetime. ⁷As for the other events of Abijah's reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? There was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. ⁸And Abijah rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David. And Asa his son succeeded him as king.

14:23 Notorious Asherah Poles

Introduced in the reign of Rehoboam, Asherah poles became a regular feature of Judah's landscape for hundreds of years. They were dedicated to a mother-goddess and often erected alongside altars on the high places devoted to God. They came to represent Judah's slide into idolatry. When judging the failures of various kings, the authors often comment, "but he did not remove the Asherah poles."

Asa King of Judah

⁹In the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Asa became king of Judah, and he reigned in Jerusalem forty-one years. His grandmother's name was Maacah daughter of Abishalom.

¹¹Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as his father David had done. ¹²He expelled the male shrine prostitutes from the land and got rid of all the idols his fathers had made. ¹³He even deposed his grandmother Maacah from her position as queen mother, because she had made a repulsive Asherah pole. Asa cut the pole down and burned it in the Kidron Valley. ¹⁴Although he did not remove the high places, Asa's heart was fully committed to the LORD all his life. ¹⁵He brought into the temple of the LORD the silver and gold and the articles that he and his father had dedicated.

¹⁶There was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel throughout their reigns. ¹⁷Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah and fortified Ramah to prevent anyone from leaving or entering the territory of Asa king of Judah.

¹⁸Asa then took all the silver and gold that was left in the treasures of the LORD's temple and of his own palace. He entrusted it to his officials and sent them to Ben-Hadad son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion, the king of Aram, who was ruling in Damascus. ¹⁹"Let there be a treaty between me and you," he said, "as there was between my father and your father. See, I am sending you a gift of silver and gold. Now break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel so he will withdraw from me."

²⁰Ben-Hadad agreed with King Asa and sent the commanders of his forces against the towns of Israel. He conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel Beth Maacah and all Kinnereth in addition to Naphtali. ²¹When Baasha heard this, he stopped building Ramah and withdrew to Tirzah. ²²Then King Asa issued an order to all Judah—no one was exempt—and they carried away from Ramah the stones and timber Baasha had been using there. With them King Asa built up Geba in Benjamin, and also Mizpah.

²³As for all the other events of Asa's reign, all his achievements, all he did and the cities he built, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? In his old age, however, his feet became diseased. ²⁴Then Asa rested with his fathers and was buried with them in the city of his father David. And Jehoshaphat his son succeeded him as king.

Nadab King of Israel

²⁵Nadab son of Jeroboam became king of Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years. ²⁶He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, walking in the ways of his father and in his sin, which he had caused Israel to commit.

²⁷Baasha son of Ahijah of the house of Issachar plotted against him and he struck him down at

^a31 Some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint (see also 2 Chron. 12:16) most Hebrew manuscripts Abiham
manuscripts and Septuagint (see also 2 Chron. 12:16) most Hebrew manuscripts Abiham also in verses 7 and 8
Abiham also in verse 10

^b6 Most Hebrew manuscripts some Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac Abiham (that is, Abijah)

^c1 Some Hebrew
12 A variant of

1 KINGS 15:28

Gibbethon, a Philistine town, while Nadab and all Israel were besieging it. ²⁸Baasha killed Nadab in the third year of Asa king of Judah and succeeded him as king.

²⁹As soon as he began to reign, he killed Jeroboam's whole family. He did not leave Jeroboam anyone that breathed, but destroyed them all, according to the word of the LORD given through his servant Ahijah the Shilonite—³⁰because of the sins Jeroboam had committed and had caused Israel to commit, and because he provoked the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger.

³¹As for the other events of Nadab's reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel? ³²There was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel throughout their reigns.

Baasha King of Israel

³³In the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha son of Ahijah became king of all Israel in Tirzah, and he reigned twenty-four years. ³⁴He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, walking in the ways of Jeroboam and in his sin, which he had caused Israel to commit.

16 Then the word of the LORD came to Jehu son of Hanani against Baasha. ²⁷"I lifted you up from the dust and made you leader of my people Israel, but you walked in the ways of Jeroboam and caused my people Israel to sin and to provoke me to anger by their sins. ³⁵So I am about to consume Baasha and his house, and I will make your house like that of Jeroboam son of Nebat. ⁴Dogs will eat those belonging to Baasha who die in the city, and the birds of the air will feed on those who die in the country."

⁵As for the other events of Baasha's reign, what he did and his achievements, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel? ⁶Baasha rested with his fathers and was buried in Tirzah. And Elah his son succeeded him as king.

⁷Moreover, the word of the LORD came through the prophet Jehu son of Hanani to Baasha and his house, because of all the evil he had done in the eyes of the LORD, provoking him to anger by the things he did, and becoming like the house of Jeroboam—and also because he destroyed it.

Elah King of Israel

⁸In the twenty-sixth year of Asa king of Judah, Elah son of Baasha became king of Israel, and he reigned in Tirzah two years.

⁹Zimri, one of his officials, who had command of half his chariots, plotted against him. Elah was in Tirzah at the time, getting drunk in the home of Arza the man in charge of the palace at Tirzah. ¹⁰Zimri came in, struck him down and killed him in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah. Then he succeeded him as king.

¹¹As soon as he began to reign and was seated on the throne, he killed off Baasha's whole family. He did not spare a single male, whether relative or friend. ¹²So Zimri destroyed the whole family of Baasha, in accordance with the word of the LORD

²⁴ That is, about 150 pounds (about 70 kilograms)

spoken against Baasha through the prophet Jehu —¹³because of all the sins Baasha and his son Elah had committed and had caused Israel to commit, so that they provoked the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger by their worthless idols.

¹⁴As for the other events of Elah's reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel?

Zimri King of Israel

¹⁵In the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, Zimri reigned in Tirzah seven days. The army was encamped near Gibbethon, a Philistine town. ¹⁶When the Israelites in the camp heard that Zimri had plotted against the king and murdered him, they proclaimed Omri, the commander of the army, king over Israel that very day there in the camp. ¹⁷Then Omri and all the Israelites with him withdrew from Gibbethon and laid siege to Tirzah. ¹⁸When Zimri saw that the city was taken, he went into the citadel of the royal palace and set the palace on fire around him. So he died, ¹⁹because of the sins he had committed, doing evil in the eyes of the LORD and walking in the ways of Jeroboam and in the sin he had committed and had caused Israel to commit.

²⁰As for the other events of Zimri's reign, and the rebellion he carried out, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel?

Omri King of Israel

²¹Then the people of Israel were split into two factions; half supported Tibni son of Ginath for king, and the other half supported Omri. ²²But Omri's followers proved stronger than those of Tibni son of Ginath. So Tibni died and Omri became king.

²³In the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, Omri became king of Israel, and he reigned twelve years, six of them in Tirzah. ²⁴He bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents²⁴ of silver and built a city on the hill, calling it Samaria, after Shemer, the name of the former owner of the hill.

²⁵But Omri did evil in the eyes of the LORD and sinned more than all those before him. ²⁶He walked in all the ways of Jeroboam son of Nebat and in his sin, which he had caused Israel to com-

16:21 Strong Politically but Weak Spiritually

King Omri gets a grand total of eight verses in 1 Kings, even though secular historians regard him as one of Israel's most powerful kings. After his firm rule, Israel was called Omri-land in Assyrian records. He built the capital city of Samaria in a location that guarded all routes north and south. Yet he also started the religious heresies that led to his nation's extinction. Politically shrewd, he married off his son to a neighboring king's daughter (Jezebel). The book of Kings, however, is concerned with the rulers' spiritual health, and Omri scored very poorly.

mit, so that they provoked the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger by their worthless idols.

¹⁷As for the other events of Omri's reign, what he did and the things he achieved, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel? ¹⁸Omri rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. And Ahab his son succeeded him as king.

Ahab Becomes King of Israel

¹⁹In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab son of Omri became king of Israel, and he reigned in Samaria over Israel twenty-two years. ²⁰Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him. ³¹He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, but he also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him. ³²He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. ³³Ahab also made an Asherah pole and did more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger than did all the kings of Israel before him.

⁴In Ahab's time, Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho. He laid its foundations at the cost of his firstborn son Abiram, and he set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, in accordance with the word of the Lord spoken by Joshua son of Nun.

Elijah Fed by Ravens

17 Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe^a in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word."

²Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah: ³"Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. ⁴You will drink from the brook, and I have ordered the ravens to feed you there."

⁵So he did what the Lord had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. ⁶The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.

The Widow at Zarephath

⁷Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. ⁸Then the word of the Lord came to him: ⁹"Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food." ¹⁰So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, "Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?" ¹¹As she

was going to get it, he called, "And bring me, please, a piece of bread."

¹²"As surely as the Lord your God lives," she replied, "I don't have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die."

¹³Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. ¹⁴For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land.'"

¹⁵She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. ¹⁶For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah.

¹⁷Some time later the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. ¹⁸She said to Elijah, "What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?"

¹⁹"Give me your son," Elijah replied. He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. ²⁰Then he cried out to the Lord, "O Lord my God, have you brought tragedy also upon this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?" ²¹Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried to the Lord, "O Lord my God, let this boy's life return to him!"

²²The Lord heard Elijah's cry, and the boy's life returned to him, and he lived. ²³Elijah picked up the child and carried him down from the room into the house. He gave him to his mother and said, "Look, your son is alive!"

²⁴Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth."

Elijah and Obadiah

18 After a long time, in the third year, the word of the Lord came to Elijah: "Go and present

17:12 Down to the Last Meal

Elijah's unusual sources of food demanded the utmost faith in God. First, he was fed by ravens. Then, when his water supply gave out, God ordered Elijah to a very unlikely place: the home of a famished, poverty-stricken widow. The widow, not even an Israelite, lived in Jezebel's home territory, a dangerous place for a hunted prophet. Yet the widow at Zarephath showed enough faith in the prophet and his God to use up her last meager resources. The result proved her faith was well-founded. Jesus referred to this story as an example of God's reaching out to Gentiles (Luke 4:25-26).

16:34 A Curse from Joshua

Joshua 6:26 records the solemn pronouncement of what would happen to anyone who attempted to rebuild Jericho. The curse had tragic consequences for Hiel.

^a1 Or Tishbite, of the settlers

The Contest

One lone prophet against a thousand priests

Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him." 18:21

Few scenes in the Bible are more dramatic than this one. The forces of evil and the forces of good collided head-on. A bedraggled desert prophet singlehandedly took on a king and nearly a thousand powerful priests.

Elijah had made a grand entrance three years before. Like a wild, startling apparition, he came out of nowhere to stalk the terraced streets of affluent Samaria. Clothed in black camel's hair, he made a striking contrast to the priests of Baal in their white linen robes and high-pointed bonnets. He had a simple, unpopular message of doom. "There will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word" (17:1). It was a direct affront to followers of Baal, who believed their god could control the weather.

Having delivered his message, Elijah disappeared. For three years he was the most wanted fugitive in Israel, for he alone had the power to bring rain. And then, in the scene reported in chapter 18, the prophet Elijah returned to Samaria.

Elijah's Contest

Israel was at a crossroads. Other kings had introduced idolatry into the Jewish religion, but King Ahab and the notorious Queen Jezebel were going much further. They wanted to wipe out all worship of the true God.

The prophet Elijah proved a worthy adversary. His very name meant "The LORD is my God." He proposed a showdown, the ultimate contest to prove who was the true God. First Kings presents the scene in full color, complete with the priests' desperate contortions and Elijah's mocking, taunting commentary. In the final analysis, it was no contest at all. God unleashed a spectacular display of raw power.

Elijah was one of the most colorful of all Israel's prophets. He suffered from bouts of depression and self-doubt, but during times of crisis he showed amazing courage. The Mount Carmel showdown was merely one sign of the high drama going on. Elijah lived during one of the greatest outbreaks of miracles in biblical history. God was sounding a final warning to the North.

Israel's Real Heroes

The author of the book of Kings started out to record the history of God's anointed leaders. But as the rulers and then priests grew more and more corrupt, this book trains the spotlight on prophets like Elijah. They emerge as Israel's real heroes.

The prophets were not, to Israel, merely preachers or poets. They were channels of God's power, through word and deed. They served on the front line of the struggle between good and evil. Over time, the prophets' significance overtook and even surpassed that of kings. Kings came and went, but the message of the prophets endured.

Voices in the Desert

Whether they served in the government or wandered in occasionally from the desert, the true prophets remained accountable only to God. They decried other, "false" prophets, employed by the king, who generally told the king whatever he wished to hear.

Not all prophets left written messages (Elijah and Elisha, for example, did not). But those prophetic writings that did survive form 17 books of the Old Testament, most of them stemming from the time period described in 1 and 2 Kings.

The prophets told of a God who worked in history to accomplish his will in the world. Sometimes he seemed silent. Sometimes he worked slowly and mysteriously. But occasionally God did step in directly, spectacularly, with a display of power. And when he did, a prophet was usually right in the midst of things—like Elijah on Mount Carmel.

Life Questions: Who serves the role of "prophet" today?

yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the land."

²So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab

Now the famine was severe in Samaria, and Ahab had summoned Obadiah, who was in charge of his palace (Obadiah was a devout believer in the LORD. ⁴While Jezebel was killing off the LORD's prophets, Obadiah had taken a hundred prophets and hidden them in two caves, fifty in each, and had supplied them with food and water.) ⁵Ahab had said to Obadiah, "Go through the land to all the springs and valleys. Maybe we can find some grass to keep the horses and mules alive so we will not have to kill any of our animals." ⁶So they divided the land they were to cover, Ahab going in one direction and Obadiah in another.

⁷As Obadiah was walking along, Elijah met him. Obadiah recognized him, bowed down to the ground, and said, "Is it really you, my lord Elijah?"

⁸"Yes," he replied. "Go tell your master, 'Elijah is here.'"

⁹"What have I done wrong," asked Obadiah, "that you are handing your servant over to Ahab to be put to death? ¹⁰As surely as the LORD your God lives, there is not a nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to look for you. And whenever a nation or kingdom claimed you were not there, he made them swear they could not find you. ¹¹But now you tell me to go to my master and say, 'Elijah is here.' ¹²I don't know where the Spirit of the LORD may carry you when I leave you. If I go and tell Ahab and he doesn't find you, he will kill me. Yet I your servant have worshiped the LORD since my youth. ¹³Haven't you heard, my lord, what I did while Jezebel was killing the prophets of the LORD? I hid a hundred of the LORD's prophets in two caves, fifty in each, and supplied them with food and water. ¹⁴And now you tell me to go to my master and say, 'Elijah is here.' He will kill me!"

¹⁵Elijah said, "As the LORD Almighty lives, whom I serve, I will surely present myself to Ahab today."

Elijah on Mount Carmel

¹⁶So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him, and Ahab went to meet Elijah. ¹⁷When he saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?"

¹⁸"I have not made trouble for Israel," Elijah replied. "But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the LORD's commands and have followed the Baals. ¹⁹Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."

²⁰So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. ²¹Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him."

But the people said nothing.

²²Then Elijah said to them, "I am the only one of

the LORD's prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. ²³Get two bulls for us. Let them choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. ²⁴Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. The god who answers by fire—he is God."

Then all the people said, "What you say is good."

²⁵Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire." ²⁶So they took the bull given them and prepared it.

Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. "O Baal, answer us!" they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made.

²⁷At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." ²⁸So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. ²⁹Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention.

³⁰Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come here to me." They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the LORD, which was in ruins. ³¹Elijah took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Your name shall be Israel." ³²With the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and he dug a trench around it large enough to hold two seahs^a of seed. ³³He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood. Then he said to them, "Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood."

³⁴"Do it again," he said, and they did it again.

"Do it a third time," he ordered, and they did it the third time. ³⁵The water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench.

³⁶At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your

18:33 Elijah Rubs It In

Elijah designed the contest to expose Baal, the alleged god of weather, who was often depicted carrying a thunderbolt. Elijah doused his own altar with 12 large jars of water—a precious commodity after three years of drought—before calling on God. Fire from heaven burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, the soil, and even licked up water in the trench.

^a32 That is, probably about 13 quarts (about 15 liters)

command. ³⁷Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again."

³⁸Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

³⁹When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The LORD—he is God! The LORD—he is God!"

⁴⁰Then Elijah commanded them, "Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away!" They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there.

⁴¹And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain." ⁴²So Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees.

⁴³"Go and look toward the sea," he told his servant. And he went up and looked.

"There is nothing there," he said.

Seven times Elijah said, "Go back."

⁴⁴The seventh time the servant reported, "A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea."

So Elijah said, "Go and tell Ahab, 'Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.'"

⁴⁵Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain came on and Ahab rode off to Jezreel. ⁴⁶The power of the LORD came upon Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

Elijah Flees to Horeb

19 Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ²So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them."

Elijah was afraid^a and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, ⁴while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." ⁵Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep.

All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." ⁶He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." ⁸So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. ⁹There he went into a cave and spent the night.

The LORD Appears to Elijah

And the word of the LORD came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

¹⁰He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

¹¹The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by."

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹²After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. ¹³When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

¹⁴He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

¹⁵The LORD said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. ¹⁶Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. ¹⁷Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. ¹⁸Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him."

19:3 A Queen Who Brought Down a Kingdom

Queen Jezebel's reputation was such that Elijah ran from her in fear even after God had triumphantly displayed his power on Mount Carmel. The Roman historian Josephus records her family history. Her father, who had served as high priest in a pagan temple in Tyre, murdered the king and ruled there for 32 years. His reign was characterized by murderous idolatries and a reckless contempt for human rights.

Jezebel followed in her father's footsteps. Married to Ahab as part of a political alliance, she installed 950 prophets of Baal and ordered the wholesale slaughter of any prophets of God who opposed her. Ahab fell under her sway. Alone, he could be brave, chivalrous, and even conscientious. But his weakness and Jezebel's influence led him to become the most wicked king of Israel.

^a On Elijah said

The Call of Elisha

¹⁹So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him. ²⁰Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. "Let me kiss my father and mother good-by," he said, "and then I will come with you."

"Go back," Elijah replied. "What have I done to you?"

²¹So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his attendant.

Ben-Hadad Attacks Samaria

20 Now Ben-Hadad king of Aram mustered his entire army. Accompanied by thirty-two kings with their horses and chariots, he went up and besieged Samaria and attacked it. ²He sent messengers into the city to Ahab king of Israel, saying, "This is what Ben-Hadad says: ³Your silver and gold are mine, and the best of your wives and children are mine."

⁴The king of Israel answered, "Just as you say, my lord the king. I and all I have are yours."

⁵The messengers came again and said, "This is what Ben-Hadad says: 'I sent to demand your silver and gold, your wives and your children. ⁶But about this time tomorrow I am going to send my officials to search your palace and the houses of your officials. They will seize everything you value and carry it away.'"

⁷The king of Israel summoned all the elders of the land and said to them, "See how this man is looking for trouble! When he sent for my wives and my children, my silver and my gold, I did not refuse him."

⁸The elders and the people all answered, "Don't listen to him or agree to his demands."

⁹So he replied to Ben-Hadad's messengers, "Tell my lord the king, 'Your servant will do all you demanded the first time, but this demand I cannot meet.'"

They left and took the answer back to Ben-Hadad.

¹⁰Then Ben-Hadad sent another message to Ahab: "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if enough dust remains in Samaria to give each of my men a handful."

¹¹The king of Israel answered, "Tell him: 'One who puts on his armor should not boast like one who takes it off.'"

¹²Ben-Hadad heard this message while he and the kings were drinking in their tents,^a and he ordered his men: "Prepare to attack." So they prepared to attack the city.

Ahab Defeats Ben-Hadad

¹³Meanwhile a prophet came to Ahab king of Israel and announced, "This is what the LORD says: 'Do you see this vast army? I will give it into

your hand today, and then you will know that I am the LORD.'"

¹⁴"But who will do this?" asked Ahab.

The prophet replied, "This is what the LORD says: 'The young officers of the provincial commanders will do it.'"

"And who will start the battle?" he asked.

The prophet answered, "You will."

¹⁵So Ahab summoned the young officers of the provincial commanders, 232 men. Then he assembled the rest of the Israelites, 7,000 in all. ¹⁶They set out at noon while Ben-Hadad and the 32 kings allied with him were in their tents getting drunk. ¹⁷The young officers of the provincial commanders went out first.

Now Ben-Hadad had dispatched scouts, who reported, "Men are advancing from Samaria."

¹⁸He said, "If they have come out for peace, take them alive; if they have come out for war, take them alive."

¹⁹The young officers of the provincial commanders marched out of the city with the army behind them ²⁰and each one struck down his opponent. At that, the Arameans fled, with the Israelites in pursuit. But Ben-Hadad king of Aram escaped on horseback with some of his horsemen. ²¹The king of Israel advanced and overpowered the horses and chariots and inflicted heavy losses on the Arameans.

²²Afterward, the prophet came to the king of Israel and said, "Strengthen your position and see what must be done, because next spring the king of Aram will attack you again."

²³Meanwhile, the officials of the king of Aram advised him, "Their gods are gods of the hills. That is why they were too strong for us. But if we fight them on the plains, surely we will be stronger than they. ²⁴Do this: Remove all the kings from their commands and replace them with other officers. ²⁵You must also raise an army like the one you lost—horse for horse and chariot for chariot—so we can fight Israel on the plains. Then surely we will be stronger than they." He agreed with them and acted accordingly.

²⁶The next spring Ben-Hadad mustered the Arameans and went up to Aphek to fight against Israel. ²⁷When the Israelites were also mustered and given provisions, they marched out to meet them. The Israelites camped opposite them like two small flocks of goats, while the Arameans covered the countryside.

²⁸The man of God came up and told the king of Israel, "This is what the LORD says: 'Because the Arameans think the LORD is a god of the hills and not a god of the valleys, I will deliver this vast army into your hands, and you will know that I am the LORD.'"

²⁹For seven days they camped opposite each other, and on the seventh day the battle was joined. The Israelites inflicted a hundred thousand casualties on the Aramean foot soldiers in one day. ³⁰The rest of them escaped to the city of Aphek, where the wall collapsed on twenty-seven thou-

^a12 Or in Succoth, also in verse 16

1 KINGS 20:31

sand of them. And Ben-Hadad fled to the city and hid in an inner room.

³¹His officials said to him, "Look, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful. Let us go to the king of Israel with sackcloth around our waists and ropes around our heads. Perhaps he will spare your life."

³²Wearing sackcloth around their waists and ropes around their heads, they went to the king of Israel and said, "Your servant Ben-Hadad says: 'Please let me live.'"

The king answered, "Is he still alive? He is my brother."

³³The men took this as a good sign and were quick to pick up his word. "Yes, your brother Ben-Hadad!" they said.

"Go and get him," the king said. When Ben-Hadad came out, Ahab had him come up into his chamber.

³⁴"I will return the cities my father took from your father," Ben-Hadad offered. "You may set up your own market areas in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria."

Ahab said, "On the basis of a treaty I will set you free." So he made a treaty with him, and let him go.

A Prophet Condemns Ahab

³⁵By the word of the LORD one of the sons of the prophets said to his companion, "Strike me with your weapon," but the man refused.

³⁶So the prophet said, "Because you have not obeyed the LORD, as soon as you leave me a lion will kill you." And after the man went away, a lion found him and killed him.

³⁷The prophet found another man and said, "Strike me, please." So the man struck him and wounded him. ³⁸Then the prophet went and stood by the road waiting for the king. He disguised himself with his headband down over his eyes. ³⁹As the king passed by, the prophet called out to him, "Your servant went into the thick of the battle, and someone came to me with a captive and said, 'Guard this man. If he is missing, it will be your life for his life, or you must pay a talent^a of silver.'"⁴⁰While your servant was busy here and there, the man disappeared."

"That is your sentence," the king of Israel said. "You have pronounced it yourself."

⁴¹Then the prophet quickly removed the headband from his eyes, and the king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets. ⁴²He said to the king, "This is what the LORD says: 'You have set free a man I had determined should die.^b Therefore it is your life for his life, your people for his people.'"⁴³Sullen and angry, the king of Israel went to his palace in Samaria.

Naboth's Vineyard

21 Some time later there was an incident involving a vineyard belonging to Naboth the Jezreelite. The vineyard was in Jezreel, close to the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. ²Ahab said to Naboth, "Let me have your vineyard to use for a

vegetable garden, since it is close to my palace. In exchange I will give you a better vineyard or, if you prefer, I will pay you whatever it is worth."

³But Naboth replied, "The LORD forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers."

⁴So Ahab went home, sullen and angry because Naboth the Jezreelite had said, "I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers." He lay on his bed sulking and refused to eat.

⁵His wife Jezebel came in and asked him, "Why are you so sullen? Why won't you eat?"

⁶He answered her, "Because I said to Naboth the Jezreelite, 'Sell me your vineyard; or if you prefer, I will give you another vineyard in its place.' But he said, 'I will not give you my vineyard.'"

⁷Jezebel his wife said, "Is this how you act as king over Israel? Get up and eat! Cheer up. I'll get you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."

⁸So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, placed his seal on them, and sent them to the elders and nobles who lived in Naboth's city with him. ⁹In those letters she wrote:

"Proclaim a day of fasting and seat Naboth in a prominent place among the people. ¹⁰But seat two scoundrels opposite him and have them testify that he has cursed both God and the king. Then take him out and stone him to death."

¹¹So the elders and nobles who lived in Naboth's city did as Jezebel directed in the letters she had written to them. ¹²They proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth in a prominent place among the people. ¹³Then two scoundrels came and sat opposite him and brought charges against Naboth before the people, saying, "Naboth has cursed both God and the king." So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death. ¹⁴Then they sent word to Jezebel: "Naboth has been stoned and is dead."

¹⁵As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned to death, she said to Ahab, "Get up and take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite that he refused to sell you. He is no longer alive, but dead." ¹⁶When Ahab heard that Naboth

21:1 The Case of the Stolen Vineyard

The incident of Naboth's vineyard shows the selective way in which Old Testament authors wove history together. In one sense, the theft was a minor incident in King Ahab's reign. Yet 1 Kings devotes more space to it than to the entire reigns of some kings. It showed the kings' abuse of power and disrespect for God's covenant. Every Israelite had the right to possess a piece of the promised land—not even a king could legally usurp that right. In fact, selling the land would break a law God gave Moses (Leviticus 25:23-31). Ahab's greed and Jezebel's intrigue led to murder and ultimately spelled doom for the kingdom.

^a39 That is, about 75 pounds (about 34 kilograms) to the LORD, often by totally destroying them

^b42 The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons

was dead, he got up and went down to take possession of Naboth's vineyard.

¹⁷Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite: ¹⁸"Go down to meet Ahab king of Israel who rules in Samaria. He is now in Naboth's vineyard, where he has gone to take possession of it." ¹⁹Say to him, 'This is what the LORD says: Have you not murdered a man and seized his property?' Then say to him, 'This is what the LORD says: In the place where dogs licked up Naboth's blood, dogs will lick up your blood—yes, yours!'

²⁰Ahab said to Elijah, "So you have found me, my enemy!"

I have found you," he answered, "because you have sold yourself to do evil in the eyes of the LORD." ²¹I am going to bring disaster on you. I will consume your descendants and cut off from Ahab every last male in Israel—slave or free. ²²I will make your house like that of Jeroboam son of Nebat and that of Baasha son of Ahijah, because you have provoked me to anger and have caused Israel to sin.

²³And also concerning Jezebel the LORD says: Dogs will devour Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.

²⁴"Dogs will eat those belonging to Ahab who die in the city, and the birds of the air will feed on those who die in the country."

²⁵(There was never a man like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the LORD, urged on by Jezebel his wife. ²⁶He behaved in the vilest manner by going after idols, like the Amorites the LORD drove out before Israel.)

²⁷When Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and fasted. He lay in sackcloth and went around meekly.

²⁸Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite: ²⁹"Have you noticed how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself, I will not bring this disaster in his day, but I will bring it on his house in the days of his son."

Micaiah Prophesies Against Ahab

22 For three years there was no war between Aram and Israel. ²But in the third year Jehoshaphat king of Judah went down to see the king of Israel. ³The king of Israel had said to his officials, "Don't you know that Ramoth Gilead belongs to us and yet we are doing nothing to retake it from the king of Aram?"

⁴So he asked Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to fight against Ramoth Gilead?"

Jehoshaphat replied to the king of Israel, "I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses." ⁵But Jehoshaphat also said to the king of Israel, "First seek the counsel of the LORD."

⁶So the king of Israel brought together the prophets—about four hundred men—and asked them, "Shall I go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?"

"Go," they answered, "for the LORD will give it into the king's hand."

⁷But Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there not a prophet of the LORD here whom we can inquire of?"

⁸The king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat,

"There is still one man through whom we can inquire of the LORD, but I hate him because he never prophesies anything good about me, but always bad. He is Micaiah son of Imlah."

"The king should not say that," Jehoshaphat replied.

⁹So the king of Israel called one of his officials and said, "Bring Micaiah son of Imlah at once."

¹⁰Dressed in their royal robes, the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah were sitting on their thrones at the threshing floor by the entrance of the gate of Samaria, with all the prophets prophesying before them. ¹¹Now Zedekiah son of Kenaanah had made iron horns and he declared, "This is what the LORD says: 'With these you will gore the Arameans until they are destroyed.'"

¹²All the other prophets were prophesying the same thing. "Attack Ramoth Gilead and be victorious," they said, "for the LORD will give it into the king's hand."

¹³The messenger who had gone to summon Micaiah said to him, "Look, as one man the other prophets are predicting success for the king. Let your word agree with theirs, and speak favorably."

¹⁴But Micaiah said, "As surely as the LORD lives, I can tell him only what the LORD tells me."

¹⁵When he arrived, the king asked him, "Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?"

"Attack and be victorious," he answered, "for the LORD will give it into the king's hand."

¹⁶The king said to him, "How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"

¹⁷Then Micaiah answered, "I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd, and the LORD said, 'These people have no master. Let each one go home in peace.'"

¹⁸The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Didn't I tell you that he never prophesies anything good about me, but only bad?"

¹⁹Micaiah continued, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left. ²⁰And the LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?'"

"One suggested this, and another that." ²¹Fi-

22:4 Unholy Alliance

After years of warfare, peace was finally arranged between Israel and Judah. Ironically, it joined Israel's worst king, Ahab, with one of Judah's best, King Jehoshaphat. The unholy alliance with Ahab led to a fateful battle against Syria that almost cost Jehoshaphat his life (22:29-33). Judah's king spurned later offers of cooperation (22:49), but his son married King Ahab's daughter. This unwise marriage exposed Judah to the heresies of the North and ultimately led to a royal bloodbath.

²³ Most Hebrew manuscripts, a few Hebrew manuscripts, Vulgate and Syriac (see also 2 Kings 9:26) the plot of ground at

1 KINGS 22:21

And a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord and said, "I will entice him."

"By what means?" the Lord asked.

"I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all the prophets," he said.

"The Lord allowed in enticing him," said the Lord to the Lord.

And now the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The Lord has deceived them," he said.

"Then Jehoshaphat son of Asa came up and stepped forward in the face of Ahab. "Why did the spirit come the Lord go when he went from me to speak to you?" he asked.

"Jehoshaphat replied, "You will find out on the day you go out to do an other deed."

"The king then turned around. Take Micaiah and send him back to Ahab, the ruler of the city and to the king's court and say, 'This is what the Lord says: I will put you in prison and give you nothing but bread and water until I return home.'"

"The Lord declared, "You ever return safely, the Lord has not allowed through me." Then he added, "May the words of all you people."

Ahab Killed at Ramoth Gilead

"Jehoshaphat king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah went to Ramoth Gilead. "The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Will enter the battle in the morning? But Jehoshaphat said to him, "So the king of Israel charged himself and went into battle."

"The king of Aram had ordered his thirty-two thousand chariots. "Do not fight with anyone," he said, "except the king of Israel."

"When the Aram commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they said, "This is the king of Judah. "They turned to attack him, but when Jehoshaphat saw this, the chariot commanders turned back to the king of Israel and stopped attacking him."

"Jehoshaphat then ran away at random and hit the king of Aram between the sections of his armor. The king was the chariot driver. "Wheel around and get the out of the fighting. I've been wounded," he said. "Long the battle raged, and the king was wounded as in his chariot facing the Aramites. "The king then his wound ran onto the floor of the chariot and that evening he died. "As the king was dying, a cry spread through the army. "Every man to his town, everyone to his home."

"The king died and was brought to Samaria and they buried him there. "They washed the bones at a pool in Samaria, where the prostitutes burned. "And the dogs licked up his blood, as the word of the Lord had declared."

"As for the other events of Ahab's reign, including all he did, the palace he built and inland with ivory, and the cities he fortified, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel? "Ahab rested with his fathers. And Ahaziah his son succeeded him as king."

Jehoshaphat King of Judah

"Jehoshaphat son of Asa became king of Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. "Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-five years. His mother's name was Azubah daughter of Shilhi. "In everything he walked in the ways of his father Asa and did not stray from them, he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. The high places, however, were not removed, and the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there. "Jehoshaphat was also at peace with the king of Israel."

"As for the other events of Jehoshaphat's reign, the things he achieved and his military exploits, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? "He did the land of the rest of the male shrine prostitutes who remained there even after the reign of his father Asa. "There was then no king in Edom, a deputy ruled."

"Now Jehoshaphat built a fleet of trading ships to go to Ophir for gold, but they never set sail—they were wrecked at Ezion Geber. "At that time Ahaziah son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Let my men sail with your men," but Jehoshaphat refused."

"Then Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers and was buried with them in the city of David his father. And Jehoram his son succeeded him."

Ahaziah King of Israel

"Ahaziah son of Ahab became king of Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years. "He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, because he walked in the ways of his father and mother and in the ways of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin. "He served and worshiped Baal and provoked the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger, just as his father had done."

2 KINGS

INTRODUCTION

The Great Wars of Israel

The promised land turns into a battlefield of blood

So the Lord said: "I will remove Judah also from my presence as I removed Israel, and I will reject Jerusalem, the city I chose, and this temple, about which I said, 'There shall my Name be.'" 23.27

The book of 2 Kings tells of dark days in the promised land. First, the Northern Kingdom, Israel, fell to outside invaders. Then Judah, the Southern Kingdom, was conquered. To appreciate what those two events meant in Jewish history, consider our century's two great wars.

In 1918 the bloodiest war of all time came to an end. The entire planet had chosen sides. In all, nine million soldiers died. Survivors thought nothing could ever again match The Great War's ferocity and destruction. "The war to end all wars," they called it.

Yet, in a mere 20 years, a man named Adolf Hitler brought war again. In World War II, global violence stretched from London in the West to Japan in the East. The war finally closed with a blinding mushroom cloud, an ominous portent for the future.

Two Large Blots in History

No matter what else happens, the 20th century has been permanently stained by those two large blots—World War I and World War II. Everything else—art, literature, advances in science and medicine—fades into the background.

As 2 Kings tells it, something very similar occurred in the biblical nation of Israel. Two large blots spread across the land: successive invasions by foreign giants. In the long, turbulent history of the Jews, these two invasions stand out as the Great Wars, overshadowing nearly everything else.

Israel Falls First

The kingdom had already split into two—1 Kings tells that story. Its sequel, 2 Kings, describes ever-increasing tragedy.

From the very first chapters you can sense the pending crisis in the North. Not one Northern king followed the ways of God. National politics slipped into an endless cycle of intrigue and revolt. Meanwhile, Elijah and Elisha intensified their attacks on the kings, and miracles broke out with unusual frequency.

Assyria's campaigns—the "World War I" in Israel's history—are reported in 2 Kings 15-18. Other records of the period tell of vicious fighting. Samaria, Israel's capital, made one final heroic stand against a two-year siege. Finally, the starving survivors surrendered, and the people of Israel were carried away into captivity.

Only two Israelite tribes remained in the promised land, holding out in the tiny Southern Kingdom of Judah. Ultimately, King Sennacherib of Assyria turned against Judah also, penetrating all the way to the gates of Jerusalem. He leveled 46 walled cities and carried away 200,150 people, young and old, along with all their horses, mules, cattle, and possessions. He scornfully dismissed King Hezekiah as "a bird in a cage."

A Brief Comeback

Could the tiny nation of Judah survive such an onslaught? Somehow the "caged bird" (Hezekiah) made a remarkable comeback, and Judah did survive for another 135 years. Still, Judah did not learn from the dramatic object lesson of Israel's destruction in the North. Most of the kings who followed Hezekiah failed dismally to obey God. Another foreign invader, Babylon, finally leveled Jerusalem in the "World War II" of that era.

The book of Kings ends with a bleak picture: refugees picking through the rubble of Jerusalem, and the Israelites enslaved by foreign powers. The temple itself, God's house, lay in ruins, its

treasures carted off to Babylon. When the dust settled around 600 B.C., the Israelites were scattered across the earth, not to be reunited as an independent nation for 25 centuries.

All along, prophets had given eloquent warnings of what would happen to a nation that turned its back on God. But nothing makes a bigger impact than the object lesson of history itself. Ever since, Jews have looked back upon their history and seen two indelible stains. Those were the dark days of Assyria and Babylon, when everything came apart.

How to Read 2 Kings

The first eight chapters of 2 Kings, full of excitement and adventure, read easily. They focus on the last days of the prophet Elijah and on the long life of his successor Elisha. But beginning with chapter 9, the book can become very confusing. It switches back and forth between two histories: that of Israel in the North and Judah in the South.

Israel was strong initially, with 10 of the 12 tribes united there. But it proved less faithful to God and was ultimately destroyed by Assyria. Chapters 18-25 cover the period after the Assyrian invasion, when only Judah existed.

Use the boldface sectional headings in this Bible for orientation: they clearly mark whether a king or queen ruled over Judah or Israel. Also, a "lineup" of all the rulers appears on page 338, giving an overview of the history of each country.

One important reason for studying the books of Kings and Chronicles is that they give historical background on the prophets. Elijah and Elisha appeared at a crucial turning point in the history of the Northern Kingdom, just as Ahab was changing the official religion from worship of God to worship of Baal. Other prophets, who wrote books of the Bible, were also active during this time.

Amos and Hosea concentrated their work in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The following prophets lived and preached in the Southern Kingdom of Judah: Obadiah, Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, and Habakkuk. More prophets came later, when the Israelites were still captive in Babylon or after they returned to their homeland. The How to Read section of each book of the prophets gives a brief summary of when and where each author worked (see Overview of the Bible, pages 36-39, for a list of the books of the prophets).

Second Kings, like its companion books, makes brief and sweeping judgments of each king or queen. As you read, look for what pleased God and what displeased him. The 39 rulers comprise a fine study of leadership of all kinds, from the inspiring to the degenerate.

PLANS FOR READING 2 KINGS

PLAN 1: An Overview of 2 Kings in 3 Days

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to 2 Kings and then chapter 5 on Elisha's miracle of healing an enemy from Aram.
- ☐ Day 2. Read chapter 17, which gives a final summary of the decline and utter devastation of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
- ☐ Day 3. One of the high points in 2 Kings occurred during the reign of the boy-king Josiah. Read about the beginning of his reforms in chapter 22 and the first three verses of chapter 23.

PLAN 2: All of 2 Kings in 25 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16
☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25

The Lord's Judgment on Ahasiah

I After Ahab's death, Ahasiah rebelled against Israel. Now Ahasiah had fallen through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria and injured himself. So he sent messengers, saying to them, "Go and consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, to see if will recover from this injury."

But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Go up and meet the messengers of the king of Samaria and ask them, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going off to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?' 'Therefore this is what the Lord says: 'You will not leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!'" So Elijah

When the messengers returned to the king, he asked them, "Why have you come back?"

"A man came to meet us," they replied. "And he said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you and tell him, 'This is what the Lord says: Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending men to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!'"

The king asked them, "What kind of man was it who came to meet you and told you this?"

"They replied, 'He was a man with a garment of hair and with a leather belt around his waist.'"

The king said, "That was Elijah the Tishbite."

Then he sent to Elijah a captain with his company of fifty men. The captain went up to Elijah, who was sitting on the top of a hill, and said to him, "Man of God, the king says, 'Come down!'"

Elijah answered the captain, "If I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men!" Then fire fell from heaven and consumed the captain and his men.

At this the king sent to Elijah another captain with his fifty men. The captain said to him, "Man of God, this is what the king says, 'Come down at once!'"

"If I am a man of God," Elijah replied, "may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men!" Then the fire of God fell from heaven and consumed him and his fifty men.

So the king sent a third captain with his fifty men. This third captain went up and fell on his knees before Elijah. "Man of God," he begged, please have respect for my life and the lives of these fifty men, your servants! See, fire has fallen from heaven and consumed the first two captains and all their men. But now have respect for my life!"

The angel of the Lord said to Elijah, "Go down with him: do not be afraid of him." So Elijah got up and went down with him to the king.

He told the king, "This is what the Lord says: Is it because there is no God in Israel for you to consult that you have sent messengers to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Because you have done this, you will never leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!" So he died, according to the word of the Lord that Elijah had spoken.

Because Ahasiah had no son, Joram succeeded him as king in the second year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah. As for all the other events of Ahasiah's reign, and what he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel?

Elijah Taken Up to Heaven

2 When the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, the Lord has sent me to Bethel."

But Elisha said, "As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel.

The company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, "Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today?"

"Yes, I know," Elisha replied, "but do not speak of it."

Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, Elisha; the Lord has sent me to Jericho."

And he replied, "As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So they went to Jericho.

The company of the prophets at Jericho went up to Elisha and asked him, "Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today?"

"Yes, I know," he replied, "but do not speak of it."

Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here; the Lord has sent me to the Jordan."

And he replied, "As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So the two of them walked on.

Fifty men of the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?"

"Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit," Elisha replied.

"You have asked a difficult thing," Elijah said, "yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours—otherwise not."

2:12 An Obscure Compliment

Elisha's last words to Elijah were obviously a compliment, but what did they mean? Most likely they referred to Elijah's power, indicating he was worth more to the nation of Israel than a company of chariots and horsemen. Interestingly, a king of Israel said these exact words to Elisha himself as he lay dying (13:14).

¹⁷ Hebrew *Jeoram*: a variant of *Joram*

¹¹As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. ¹²Elisha saw this and cried out, "My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them apart.

¹³He picked up the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. ¹⁴Then he took the cloak that had fallen from him and struck the water with it. "Where now is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" he asked. When he struck the water, it divided to the right and to the left, and he crossed over.

¹⁵The company of the prophets from Jericho, who were watching, said, "The spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha." And they went to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. ¹⁶"Look," they said, "we your servants have fifty able men. Let them go and look for your master. Perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has picked him up and set him down on some mountain or in some valley."

"No," Elisha replied, "do not send them."

¹⁷But they persisted until he was too ashamed to refuse. So he said, "Send them." And they sent fifty men, who searched for three days but did not find him. ¹⁸When they returned to Elisha, who was staying in Jericho, he said to them, "Didn't I tell you not to go?"

Healing of the Water

¹⁹The men of the city said to Elisha, "Look, our lord, this town is well situated, as you can see, but the water is bad and the land is unproductive."

²⁰"Bring me a new bowl," he said, "and put salt in it." So they brought it to him.

²¹Then he went out to the spring and threw the salt into it, saying, "This is what the LORD says: 'I have healed this water. Never again will it cause death or make the land unproductive.'"²²And the water has remained wholesome to this day, according to the word Elisha had spoken.

Elisha Is Jeered

²³From there Elisha went up to Bethel. As he was walking along the road, some youths came out of the town and jeered at him. "Go on up, you baldhead!" they said. "Go on up, you baldhead!" ²⁴He turned around, looked at them and called down a curse on them in the name of the LORD. Then two bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the youths. ²⁵And he went on to Mount Carmel and from there returned to Samaria.

Moab Revolts

3 Joram^a son of Ahab became king of Israel in Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned twelve years. ²He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, but not as his father and mother had done. He got rid of the sacred stone of Baal that his father had made. ³Nevertheless he clung to the sins of Jeroboam son

of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit; he did not turn away from them.

⁴Now Mesha king of Moab raised sheep, and he had to supply the king of Israel with a hundred thousand lambs and with the wool of a hundred thousand rams. ⁵But after Ahab died, the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. ⁶So at that time King Joram set out from Samaria and mobilized all Israel. ⁷He also sent this message to Jehoshaphat king of Judah: "The king of Moab has rebelled against me. Will you go with me to fight against Moab?"

"I will go with you," he replied. "I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses."

⁸"By what route shall we attack?" he asked.

"Through the Desert of Edom," he answered.

⁹So the king of Israel set out with the king of Judah and the king of Edom. After a roundabout march of seven days, the army had no more water for themselves or for the animals with them.

¹⁰"What!" exclaimed the king of Israel. "Has the LORD called us three kings together only to hand us over to Moab?"

¹¹But Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there no prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of the LORD through him?"

An officer of the king of Israel answered, "Elisha son of Shaphat is here. He used to pour water on the hands of Elijah."^b

¹²Jehoshaphat said, "The word of the LORD is with him." So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him.

¹³Elisha said to the king of Israel, "What do we have to do with each other? Go to the prophets of your father and the prophets of your mother."

"No," the king of Israel answered, "because it was the LORD who called us three kings together to hand us over to Moab."

¹⁴Elisha said, "As surely as the LORD Almighty lives, whom I serve, if I did not have respect for the presence of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, I would not look at you or even notice you. ¹⁵But now bring me a harpist."

2:23 Background on the Bears

At first reading, the brief account in these three verses is very troubling. A prophet calling on bears to maul children? But, in this instance, historical background and a precise translation help cast the event in a different light. Bethel was a hotbed of Baal worship, and its residents were engaged in a life-and-death struggle with the true prophets of God. When the youths called out, "Go on up, you baldhead!" they were likely referring to what had just happened to the prophet Elijah—they were calling for Elisha to vanish into the sky, or in other words, to die. Furthermore, the word translated *youths* usually refers to young people in their late teens. In actuality, a large gang of teenagers was threatening a prophet's life. Elisha cursed them, but there is no indication he actually called for a bear attack.

^aHebrew *Jehoram*, a variant of *Joram*, also in verse 6

^b11 That is, he was Elijah's personal servant

While the harpist was playing, the hand of the Lord came upon Elisha and he said, "This is what the Lord says: Make this valley full of ditches. For this is what the Lord says: I will send neither wind nor rain, yet this valley will be filled with water, and you, your cattle and your other animals will drink. [10] This is an easy thing in the eyes of the Lord; he will also hand Moab over to you. [11] You will overthrow every fortified city and you will cut down every good tree and fill every good field with stones."

[12] The next morning, about the time for offering the sacrifice, there it was—water flowing from the direction of Edom! And the land was filled with water.

Now all the Moabites had heard that the kings had come to fight against them, so every man, young and old, who could bear arms was called up and stationed on the border. [22] When they got up early in the morning, the sun was shining on the water. To the Moabites across the way, the water looked red—like blood. [23] "That's blood!" they said. "Those kings must have fought and slaughtered each other. Now to the plunder, Moab!"

[24] But when the Moabites came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and fought them until they fled. And the Israelites invaded the land and slaughtered the Moabites. [25] They destroyed the towns, and each man threw a stone on every good field until it was covered. They stopped up all the springs and cut down every good tree. Only Kir Hareseth was left with its stones in place, but men armed with slings surrounded it and attacked it as well.

[26] When the king of Moab saw that the battle had gone against him, he took with him seven hundred swordsmen to break through to the king of Edom, but they failed. [27] Then he took his firstborn son, who was to succeed him as king, and offered him as a sacrifice on the city wall. The fury against Israel was great; they withdrew and returned to their own land.

The Widow's Oil

4 The wife of a man from the company of the prophets cried out to Elisha, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that he revered the Lord. But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves."

[2] Elisha replied to her, "How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?"

"Your servant has nothing there at all," she said, "except a little oil."

Elisha said, "Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few. [4] Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side."

[5] She left him and afterward shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring. [6] When all the jars were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another one."

But he replied, "There is not a jar left." Then the oil stopped flowing.

[7] She went and told the man of God, and he said,

"Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left."

The Shunammite's Son Restored to Life

One day Elisha went to Anurim. And a widow who was there, who stopped him to stay for a meal, so whenever he came by, he stopped there to eat. She said to her husband, "I know that this man who often comes our way is a holy man of God. Let's make a small room on the roof and put in it a bed and a table, a chair and a lamp for him. Then he can stay there whenever he comes to us."

[11] One day when Elisha came, he went up to his room and lay down there. [12] He said to his servant Gehazi, "Call the Shunammite." So he called her, and she stood before him. Elisha said to him, "Tell her: You have gone to all this trouble for us. Now what can be done for you? Can we speak on your behalf to the king or the commander of the army?"

She replied, "I have a home among my own people."

[14] "What can be done for her?" Elisha asked.

Gehazi said, "Well, she has no son and her husband is old."

[15] Then Elisha said, "Call her." So he called her, and she stood in the doorway. [16] "About this time next year," Elisha said, "you will hold a son in your arms."

"No, my lord," she objected. "Don't mislead your servant, O man of God!"

[17] But the woman became pregnant, and the next year about that same time she gave birth to a son, just as Elisha had told her.

[18] The child grew, and one day he went out to his father, who was with the reapers. [19] "My head! My head!" he said to his father.

His father told a servant, "Carry him to his mother." [20] After the servant had lifted him up and carried him to his mother, the boy sat on her lap until noon, and then he died. [21] She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, then shut the door and went out.

[22] She called her husband and said, "Please send me one of the servants and a donkey so I can go to the man of God quickly and return."

[23] "Why go to him today?" he asked. "It's not the New Moon or the Sabbath."

"It's all right," she said.

[24] She saddled the donkey and said to her servant, "Lead on; don't slow down for me unless I

4:8 Elisha's Miracles

Elisha had asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit (2:9), and the Bible pointedly records about twice as many miracles performed by Elisha. Many of these miracles, especially those in chapter 4, have great similarities to the miracles Jesus himself would later perform; they show God caring for the needs of ordinary people. Although Elisha was very famous in his own time, his name appears only once outside the book of Kings (Luke 4:27). In contrast, Elijah is often mentioned, and John the Baptist is frequently compared to him.

tell you." 25So she set out and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel.

When he saw her in the distance, the man of God said to his servant Gehazi, "Look! There's the woman. 26Run to meet her and ask her, 'Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is your child all right?'"

"Everything is all right," she said.

When she reached the man of God at the mountain, she took hold of his feet. Gehazi came over to push her away, but the man of God said, "Leave her alone. She is in bitter distress, but the LORD has hidden it from me and has not told me why."

"Do you ask you for a son, my lord?" she said.

"No," he told her. "Don't raise my hopes?"

Elisha said to Gehazi, "Tuck your cloak into your belt, take my staff in your hand and run. If you meet anyone, do not greet him, and if anyone greets you, do not answer. Lay my staff on the boy's head."

As the boy's mother said, "As surely as the LORD lives, as you live, I will not leave you." So she followed him.

Elisha went on ahead and laid the staff on the boy's head, but there was no sound or response. So he went back to meet Elisha and told him, "The boy has not awakened."

When Elisha reached the house, there was the boy lying dead on his couch. 33He went in, shut the door behind the two of them and prayed to the LORD. When he got on the bed and lay upon the boy, putting his mouth, eyes to eyes, hands to hands, as he stretched himself out upon him, the boy's body grew warm. 35Elisha turned away and walked back and forth in the room and then got on the bed and stretched out upon him once more. Then he sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

Elisha summoned Gehazi and said, "Call the woman here." And he did. When she came, he said, "Take your son." 37She came in, fell at his feet and bowed to the ground. Then she took her child and went out.

Death in the Pot

Elisha returned to Gilgal and there was a famine in that region. While the company of the prophets was meeting with him, he said to his servant, "Put in the large pot and cook some stew for these men."

Some of them went out into the fields to gather herbs and found a wild vine. He gathered some of its buds and filled the fold of his cloak. When he returned, he cut them up into the pot of stew, though no one knew what they were. 40The stew was poured out for the men, but as they began to eat, they cried out, "O man of God, there is death in the pot!" And they could not eat it.

Elisha said, "Get some flour." He put it into the pot and said, "Serve it to the people to eat." And there was nothing harmful in the pot.

Feeding of a Hundred

42A man came from Baal Shalishah, bringing the

man of God twenty loaves of barley bread baked from the first ripe grain, along with some heads of new grain. "Give it to the people to eat," Elisha said.

43"How can I set this before a hundred men?" his servant asked.

But Elisha answered, "Give it to the people to eat. For this is what the LORD says: They will eat and have some left over." 44Then he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the LORD.

Naaman Healed of Leprosy

5 Now Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the LORD had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy.⁶

2 Now bands from Aram had gone out and had taken captive a young girl from Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. 3 She said to her mistress, "It only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy."

4 Naaman went to his master and told him what the girl from Israel had said. 5 "By all means, go," the king of Aram replied. "I will send a letter to the king of Israel." So Naaman left, taking with him ten talents⁷ of silver, six thousand shekels⁸ of gold and ten sets of clothing. 6 The letter that he took to the king of Israel read: "With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy."

7 As soon as the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his robes and said, "Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life? Why does this fellow send someone to me to be cured of his leprosy? See how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me!"

8 When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his robes, he sent him this message: "Why have you torn your robes? Have the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel." 9 So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house. 10 Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, "Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed."

11 But Naaman went away angry and said, "I thought that he would surely come out to me and

5:10 Harsher Treatment for the Upper Class

Elisha's treatment of the general Naaman here, and of the king of Israel elsewhere, contrasts sharply with his mild manner around the poor and oppressed. Elisha's prescribed cure obviously offended Naaman's pride. And Elisha pointedly refused to accept payment from the wealthy general, who was used to paying his way. In this incident, and in another (8:7-15), Elisha was serving the kingdom of Aram, an enemy of Israel.

⁶1 The Hebrew word was used for various diseases affecting the skin—not necessarily leprosy; also in verses 3, 6, 7, 11 and 27
⁷5 That is, about 750 pounds (about 340 kilograms)

⁸5 That is, about 150 pounds (about 70 kilograms)

stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than any of the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed?" So he turned and went off in a rage.

Naaman's servants went to him and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more then when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed'?" So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.

Then Naaman and all his attendants went back to the man of God. He stood before him and said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. Please accept now a gift from your servant."

The prophet answered, "As surely as the LORD lives, whom I serve, I will not accept a thing." And even though Naaman urged him, he refused.

"If you will not," said Naaman, "please let me, your servant, be given as much earth as a pair of mules can carry, for your servant will never again make burnt offerings and sacrifices to any other god but the LORD. But may the LORD forgive your servant for this one thing: When my master enters the temple of Rimmon to bow down and he is leaning on my arm and I bow there also—when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the LORD forgive your servant for this."

"Go in peace," Elisha said.

After Naaman had traveled some distance, Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said to himself, "My master was too easy on Naaman, this Aramean, by not accepting from him what he brought. As surely as the LORD lives, I will run after him and get something from him."

So Gehazi hurried after Naaman. When Naaman saw him running toward him, he got down from the chariot to meet him. "Is everything all right?" he asked.

"Everything is all right," Gehazi answered. "My master sent me to say, 'Two young men from the company of the prophets have just come to me from the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two sets of clothing.'"

"By all means, take two talents," said Naaman. He urged Gehazi to accept them, and then tied up the two talents of silver in two bags, with two sets of clothing. He gave them to two of his servants, and they carried them ahead of Gehazi. When Gehazi came to the hill, he took the things from the servants and put them away in the house. He sent the men away and they left. Then he went in and stood before his master Elisha.

"Where have you been, Gehazi?" Elisha asked.

"Your servant didn't go anywhere," Gehazi answered.

But Elisha said to him, "Was not my spirit with you when the man got down from his chariot to meet you? Is this the time to take money, or to accept clothes, olive groves, vineyards, flocks,

herds, or menservants and maidservants?" Naaman's leprosy will cling to you and to your descendants forever." Then Gehazi went from Elisha's presence and he was leprous, as white as snow.

An Axhead Floats

The company of the prophets said to Elisha, "Look, the place where we meet with you is too small for us. Let us go to the Jordan, where each of us can get a pole; and let us build a place there for us to live."

And he said, "Go."

Then one of them said, "Won't you please come with your servants?"

"I will," Elisha replied. And he went with them.

They went to the Jordan and began to cut down trees. As one of them was cutting down a tree, the iron axhead fell into the water. "Oh, my lord," he cried out, "it was borrowed!"

The man of God asked, "Where did it fall?" When he showed him the place, Elisha cut a stick and threw it there, and made the iron float. "Lift it out," he said. Then the man reached out his hand and took it.

Elisha Traps Blinded Arameans

Now the king of Aram was at war with Israel. After conferring with his officers, he said, "I will set up my camp in such and such a place."

The man of God sent word to the king of Israel: "Beware of passing that place, because the Arameans are going down there." So the king of Israel checked on the place indicated by the man of God. Time and again Elisha warned the king, so that he was on his guard in such places.

This enraged the king of Aram. He summoned his officers and demanded of them, "Will you not tell me which of us is on the side of the king of Israel?"

"None of us, my lord the king," said one of his officers, "but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the very words you speak in your bedroom."

"Go, find out where he is," the king ordered, "so I can send men and capture him." The report came back: "He is in Dothan." Then he sent horses and chariots and a strong force there. They went by night and surrounded the city.

When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh, my lord, what shall we do?" the servant asked.

"Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

And Elisha prayed, "O LORD, open his eyes so he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

As the enemy came down toward him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, "Strike these people with

*22 That is, about 75 pounds (about 34 kilograms)

blindness." So he struck them with blindness, as the Lord had asked.

Elisha told them, "This is not the road and this is a city. Follow me, and I will lead you to the man you are looking for." And he led them to Samaria.

As they entered the city, Elisha said, "Lord, open the eyes of these men so they can see." Then the Lord opened their eyes and they looked, and there they were, inside Samaria.

"When the king of Israel saw them, he asked Elisha, 'Shall I kill them, my father?' 'Shall I kill them?'"

"Do not kill them," he answered. "Would you kill men you have captured with your own sword or bow? Set food and water before them so that they may eat and drink and then go back to their master." So he prepared a great feast for them, and after they had finished eating and drinking, he sent them away, and they returned to their master.

INSIGHT

Replacing a Legend

Who could follow the great Elijah?

When they asked, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you." "I want a double portion of your spirit," Elisha replied. 2:9

When a prophet like Elijah leaves the scene, who will dare to take his place? As time came to choose a successor, Elijah looked to someone out of a different mold. He settled on his most faithful companion—a farmer named Elisha.

Similar Names but Different Styles

The slight variation in the two men's names expresses their difference in style. Elijah, whose name meant "The Lord is my God," dueled a king and the priests of Baal in dramatic confrontations of power. He lived apart from the people and preached judgment and the need for repentance.

Elisha ("God is salvation") shifted the emphasis. He lived among people, preferring the poor and outcast and offering hope, and God's grace. All social classes had access to Elisha, from lowly widows to foreign kings. His colorful life included work as a spy, a miracleworker, an adviser to the king, leader of a school of prophets, and an anointer of revolutionaries.

Elisha traveled widely, and his bald head and wooden walking staff became his trademarks. News of his miracles spread, making him a famous national figure for 50 years. As Elisha lay on his deathbed, the distraught king of Israel knelt beside him, asking for one last word of advice.

Serving the People and the Kingdom

Elisha's exploits fall roughly into two categories, and the Bible seems to group them that way. One set of stories concern people with evident needs. Elisha showed a deep sensitivity for the suffering and distressed, and sometimes helped them in miraculous ways—providing food, healing diseases, even raising a young boy from the dead. He dealt far more gently with the poor and downtrodden than with kings and generals.

Another group of stories relates to the nation. Israel was reeling from the corruption brought in during king Ahab's reign (see page 340). Politically, Israel was at the mercy of the neighboring state of Aram (the area known today as Syria), which launched periodic raids across the border.

Sometimes Elisha helped out Israel's army, using his special insight to detect bands of raiders. Twice, miracles he predicted allowed Israel's army to break out of an impossible situation and rout the enemy. Yet he refused to become a "court prophet" serving the king's whims. On at least one occasion, he blatantly insulted a king of Israel (3:13-14). Another time, he anointed a general to overthrow the king in an outright revolution.

A Dying Breed

Incidents from Elisha's life—the healing of Naaman, the chariots of fire, the widow's oil—have become among the most familiar of Old Testament stories. In a sense, Elijah and Elisha represent the last of a breed. Prophets who followed them relied less on spectacular displays and more on the power of verbal messages from God.

Elijah and Elisha used both words and dramatic events to convey their message. Everyone knew their power, especially the kings who sometimes sought them out for advice and others times tried to kill them. In a great irony, the kings and political leaders—who thought themselves the center of history at the time—all faded away. Meanwhile the stories and words of Israel's prophets live on, expressing a message as forceful today as ever.

Life Questions: Elijah and Elisha show how God uses quite different personalities to get his message across. From the description above, which of the two prophets do you more closely identify with?

So the bands from Aram stopped raiding Israel's territory.

Famine in Besieged Samaria

Ben-Hadad king of Aram mobilized his army and marched up and laid siege to Samaria. There was a great famine in the city. The siege lasted so long that a donkey's head sold for eighty shekels²⁵ of silver, and a quarter of a cab²⁶ of seed pods for five shekels.²⁷

As the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried to him, "Help me, my lord the king!"

The king replied, "If the LORD does not help me, where can I get help for you? From the threshing floor? From the winepress?"²⁸ Then he asked her, "What's the matter?"

She answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give up your son so we may eat him today, and tomorrow we'll eat my son.'"²⁹ So we cooked my son and ate him. The next day I said to her, 'Give up your son so we may eat him,' but she had hidden him."

When the king heard the woman's words, he tore his robes. As he went along the wall, the people looked, and there, underneath, he had sackcloth on his body.³¹ He said, "May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if the head of Elisha son of Shaphat remains on his shoulders today!"

Now Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. The king sent a messenger ahead, but before he arrived, Elisha said to the elders, "Don't you see how this murderer is sending someone to cut off my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door and hold it shut against him. Is not the sound of his master's footsteps behind him?"

While he was still talking to them, the messenger came down to him. And the king said, "This disaster is from the LORD. Why should I wait for the LORD any longer?"

Elisha said, "Hear the word of the LORD. This is what the LORD says: About this time tomorrow, a seah³² of flour will sell for a shekel³³ and two seahs³⁴ of barley for a shekel at the gate of Samaria."

The officer on whose arm the king was leaning said to the man of God, "Look, even if the LORD should open the floodgates of the heavens, could this happen?"

"You will see it with your own eyes," answered Elisha, "but you will not eat any of it!"

6:31 The Prophet and Politics

Elisha's long career spanned the reigns of six kings and included some dramatic ups and downs with them. On occasion Elisha outright insulted a king (3:14). But, as this chapter shows, he could also be an invaluable military resource, serving as a virtual spy. At Elisha's deathbed, the reigning king of Israel knelt beside him, weeping (13:14).

The Siege Lifted

Now there were four men with leprosy³⁵ at the entrance of the city gate. They said to each other, "Why stay here until we die? If we say, 'We'll go into the city'—the famine is there, and we will die. And if we stay here, we will die. So let's go over to the camp of the Arameans and surrender. If they spare us, we live; if they kill us, then we die."

At dusk they got up and went to the camp of the Arameans. When they reached the edge of the camp, not a man was there, for the LORD had caused the Arameans to hear the sound of chariots and horses and a great army, so that they said to one another, "Look, the king of Israel has hired the Hittite and Egyptian kings to attack us!"³⁶ So they got up and fled in the dusk and abandoned their tents and their horses and donkeys. They left the camp as it was and ran for their lives.

The men who had leprosy reached the edge of the camp and entered one of the tents. They ate and drank, and carried away silver, gold and clothes, and went off and hid them. They returned and entered another tent and took some things from it and hid them also.

Then they said to each other, "We're not doing right. This is a day of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves. If we wait until daylight, punishment will overtake us. Let's go at once and report this to the royal palace."

So they went and called out to the city gatekeepers and told them, "We went into the Aramean camp and not a man was there—not a sound of anyone—only tethered horses and donkeys, and the tents left just as they were."³⁷ The gatekeepers shouted the news, and it was reported within the palace.

The king got up in the night and said to his officers, "I will tell you what the Arameans have done to us. They know we are starving; so they have left the camp to hide in the countryside, thinking, 'They will surely come out, and then we will take them alive and get into the city.'"

One of his officers answered, "Have some men take five of the horses that are left in the city. Their plight will be like that of all the Israelites left here—yes, they will only be like all these Israelites who are doomed. So let us send them to find out what happened."

So they selected two chariots with their horses, and the king sent them after the Aramean army. He commanded the drivers, "Go and find out what has happened."³⁸ They followed them as far as the Jordan, and they found the whole road strewn with the clothing and equipment the Arameans had thrown away in their headlong flight. So the messengers returned and reported to the king.³⁹ Then the people went out and plundered the camp of the Arameans. So a seah of flour sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley sold for a shekel, as the LORD had said.

Now the king had put the officer on whose

²⁵ That is, about 2 pounds (about 1 kilogram)

²⁶ That is, about 2 ounces (about 55 grams)

²⁷ That is, about 2/5 ounce (about 11 grams); also in verses 16 and 18

verses 16 and 18

²⁸ That is, probably about 1/2 pint (about 0.3 liter)

²⁹ That is, probably about 7 quarts (about 7.3 liters); also in verses 16 and 18

³⁰ That is, probably about 13 quarts (about 15 liters); also in

verses 16 and 18

³¹ The Hebrew word is used for various diseases affecting the skin—not necessarily leprosy; also in verse 8

arm he leaned in charge of the gate, and the people trampled him in the gateway and he died, just as the man of God had foretold when the king came down to his house. ¹⁸It happened as the man of God had said to the king: "About this time tomorrow, a seah of flour will sell for a shekel and two seahs of barley for a shekel at the gate of Samaria."

¹⁹The officer had said to the man of God, "Look, even if the LORD should open the floodgates of the heavens, could this happen?" The man of God had replied, "You will see it with your own eyes, but you will not eat any of it!" ²⁰And that is exactly what happened to him, for the people trampled him in the gateway, and he died.

The Shunammite's Land Restored

8 Now Elisha had said to the woman whose son he had restored to life, "Go away with your family and stay for a while wherever you can, because the LORD has decreed a famine in the land that will last seven years." ²The woman proceeded to do as the man of God said. She and her family went away and stayed in the land of the Philistines seven years.

³At the end of the seven years she came back from the land of the Philistines and went to the king to beg for her house and land. ⁴The king was talking to Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, and had said, "Tell me about all the great things Elisha has done." ⁵Just as Gehazi was telling the king how Elisha had restored the dead to life, the woman whose son Elisha had brought back to life came to beg the king for her house and land.

Gehazi said, "This is the woman, my lord the king, and this is her son whom Elisha restored to life." ⁶The king asked the woman about it, and she told him.

Then he assigned an official to her case and said to him, "Give back everything that belonged to her, including all the income from her land from the day she left the country until now."

Hazael Murders Ben-Hadad

⁷Elisha went to Damascus, and Ben-Hadad king of Aram was ill. When the king was told, "The man of God has come all the way up here," ⁸he said to Hazael, "Take a gift with you and go to meet the man of God. Consult the LORD through him, ask him, 'Will I recover from this illness?'"

⁹Hazael went to meet Elisha, taking with him as a gift forty camel-loads of all the finest wares of Damascus. He went in and stood before him, and said, "Your son Ben-Hadad king of Aram has sent me to ask, 'Will I recover from this illness?'"

Elisha answered, "Go and say to him, 'You will certainly recover—but the LORD has revealed to me that he will in fact die.'" ¹¹He stared at him with a fixed gaze until Hazael felt ashamed. Then the man of God began to weep.

¹²"Why is my lord weeping?" asked Hazael.

"Because I know the harm you will do to the Israelites," he answered. "You will set fire to their fortified places, kill their young men with the

sword, dash their little children to the ground, and rip open their pregnant women."

¹³Hazael said, "How could your servant, a mere dog, accomplish such a feat?"

"The LORD has shown me that you will become king of Aram," answered Elisha.

¹⁴Then Hazael left Elisha and returned to his master. When Ben-Hadad asked, "What did Elisha say to you?" Hazael replied, "He told me that you would certainly recover." ¹⁵But the next day he took a thick cloth, soaked it in water and spread it over the king's face, so that he died. Then Hazael succeeded him as king.

Jehoram King of Judah

¹⁶In the fifth year of Joram son of Ahab king of Israel, when Jehoshaphat was king of Judah, Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat began his reign as king of Judah. ¹⁷He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years. ¹⁸He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done, for he married a daughter of Ahab. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD. ¹⁹Nevertheless, for the sake of his servant David, the LORD was not willing to destroy Judah. He had promised to maintain a lamp for David and his descendants forever.

²⁰In the time of Jehoram, Edom rebelled against Judah and set up its own king. ²¹So Jehoram^b went to Zair with all his chariots. The Edomites surrounded him and his chariot commanders, but he rose up and broke through by night, his army, however, fled back home. ²²To this day Edom has been in rebellion against Judah. Libnah revolted at the same time.

²³As for the other events of Jehoram's reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? ²⁴Jehoram rested with his fathers and was buried with them in the City of David. And Ahaziah his son succeeded him as king.

Ahaziah King of Judah

²⁵In the twelfth year of Joram son of Ahab king of Israel, Ahaziah son of Jehoram king of Judah began to reign. ²⁶Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem one year. His mother's name was Athaliah, a granddaughter of Omri king of Israel. ²⁷He walked in the ways of the house of Ahab and

8:16 Two Kings, One Name

It's difficult enough to keep 39 rulers straight. When two of them from neighboring countries have the same name, the plot thickens. Joram, a son of Ahab, ruled Israel at the same time Jehoram (sometimes spelled Joram also) took over Judah's throne. Both were wicked. Jehoram's marriage to Ahab's daughter ushered in a terrible period in Judah's history. (2 Chronicles 21 gives much more detail on this king.) In addition, both Judah and Israel had a king named Ahaziah.

^a The Hebrew may also be read Go and say, "You will certainly not recover," for verses 23 and 24.

^b Hebrew Joram, a variant of Jehoram, also in

did evil in the eyes of the LORD, as the house of Ahab had done, for he was related by marriage to Ahab's family.

Ahaziah went with Joram son of Ahab to war against Hazael king of Aram at Ramoth Gilead. The Arameans wounded Joram, ²⁹so King Joram returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds the Arameans had inflicted on him at Ramoth in his battle with Hazael king of Aram.

Then Ahaziah son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to Jezreel to see Joram son of Ahab, because he had been wounded.

Jehu Anointed King of Israel

9 The prophet Elisha summoned a man from the company of the prophets and said to him, "Tuck your cloak into your belt, take this flask of oil with you and go to Ramoth Gilead. ²When you get there, look for Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi. Go to him, get him away from his companions and take him into an inner room. ³Then take the flask and pour the oil on his head and declare, 'This is what the LORD says: I anoint you king over Israel.' Then open the door and run; don't delay!"

⁴So the young man, the prophet, went to Ramoth Gilead. ⁵When he arrived, he found the army officers sitting together. "I have a message for you, commander," he said.

"For which of us?" asked Jehu.

"For you, commander," he replied.

⁶Jehu got up and went into the house. Then the prophet poured the oil on Jehu's head and declared, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I anoint you king over the LORD's people Israel. ⁷You are to destroy the house of Ahab your master, and I will avenge the blood of my servants the prophets and the blood of all the LORD's servants shed by Jezebel. ⁸The whole house of Ahab will perish. I will cut off from Ahab every last male in Israel—slave or free. ⁹I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam son of Nebat and like the house of Baasha son of Ahijah. ¹⁰As for Jezebel, dogs will devour her on the plot of ground at Jezreel, and no one will bury her.'" Then he opened the door and ran.

¹¹When Jehu went out to his fellow officers, one of them asked him, "Is everything all right? Why did this madman come to you?"

"You know the man and the sort of things he says," Jehu replied.

8:27 Political Marriages

Ahab shrewdly arranged marriages to cement alliances with Israel's neighbors. His wife Jezebel, for example, hailed from Phoenicia, which thus became an ally of Israel. Ahab also married off his daughter to the king of Judah, bringing peace to the two warring neighbors. Later, when Jehu revolted and slaughtered all of Ahab's family members, he aroused the ire of those allies and threw Israel's foreign policy into disarray.

¹²"That's not true!" they said. "Tell us."

Jehu said, "Here is what he told me. 'This is what the LORD says: I anoint you king over Israel.'"

¹³They hurried and took their cloaks and spread them under him on the bare steps. Then they blew the trumpet and shouted, "Jehu is king!"

Jehu Kills Joram and Ahaziah

¹⁴So Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, conspired against Joram. (Now Joram and all Israel had been defending Ramoth Gilead against Hazael king of Aram, ¹⁵but King Joram had returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds the Arameans had inflicted on him in the battle with Hazael king of Aram.) Jehu said, "If this is the way you feel, don't let anyone slip out of the city to go and tell the news in Jezreel." ¹⁶Then he got into his chariot and rode to Jezreel, because Joram was resting there and Ahaziah king of Judah had gone down to see him.

¹⁷When the lookout standing on the tower in Jezreel saw Jehu's troops approaching, he called out, "I see some troops coming."

"Get a horseman," Joram ordered. "Send him to meet them and ask, 'Do you come in peace?'"

¹⁸The horseman rode off to meet Jehu and said, "This is what the king says: 'Do you come in peace?'"

"What do you have to do with peace?" Jehu replied. "Fall in behind me."

The lookout reported, "The messenger has reached them, but he isn't coming back."

¹⁹So the king sent out a second horseman. When he came to them he said, "This is what the king says: 'Do you come in peace?'"

Jehu replied, "What do you have to do with peace? Fall in behind me."

²⁰The lookout reported, "He has reached them, but he isn't coming back either. The driving is like that of Jehu son of Nimshi—he drives like a madman."

²¹"Hitch up my chariot," Joram ordered. And when it was hitched up, Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah rode out, each in his own chariot, to meet Jehu. They met him at the plot of ground that had belonged to Naboth the Jezreelite. ²²When Joram saw Jehu he asked, "Have you come in peace, Jehu?"

"How can there be peace," Jehu replied, "as long as all the idolatry and witchcraft of your mother Jezebel abound?"

²³Joram turned about and fled, calling out to Ahaziah, "Treachery, Ahaziah!"

²⁴Then Jehu drew his bow and shot Joram between the shoulders. The arrow pierced his heart and he slumped down in his chariot. ²⁵Jehu said to Bidkar, his chariot officer, "Pick him up and throw him on the field that belonged to Naboth the Jezreelite. Remember how you and I were riding together in chariots behind Ahab his father when the LORD made this prophecy about him: ²⁶'Yesterday I saw the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons, declares the LORD, and I will surely make

²⁹ Hebrew Ramoth, a variant of Ramoth

¹⁵ Hebrew Jehoram, a variant of Joram, also in verses 17 and 21-24

you pay for it on this plot of ground, declares the LORD.^a Now then, pick him up and throw him on that plot, in accordance with the word of the LORD."

²⁷When Ahaziah king of Judah saw what had happened, he fled up the road to Beth Haggan.^b Jehu chased him, shouting, "Kill him too!" They wounded him in his chariot on the way up to Gur near Ibleam, but he escaped to Megiddo and died there. ²⁸His servants took him by chariot to Jerusalem and buried him with his fathers in his tomb in the City of David. ²⁹(In the eleventh year of Joram son of Ahab, Ahaziah had become king of Judah.)

Jezebel Killed

³⁰Then Jehu went to Jezreel. When Jezebel heard about it, she painted her eyes, arranged her hair and looked out of a window. ³¹As Jehu entered the gate, she asked, "Have you come in peace, Zimri, you murderer of your master?"

³²He looked up at the window and called out, "Who is on my side? Who?" Two or three eunuchs looked down at him. ³³"Throw her down!" Jehu said. So they threw her down, and some of her blood splattered the wall and the horses as they trampled her underfoot.

³⁴Jehu went in and ate and drank. "Take care of that cursed woman," he said, "and bury her, for she was a king's daughter." ³⁵But when they went out to bury her, they found nothing except her skull, her feet and her hands. ³⁶They went back and told Jehu, who said, "This is the word of the LORD that he spoke through his servant Elijah the Tishbite: On the plot of ground at Jezreel dogs will devour Jezebel's flesh."^d ³⁷Jezebel's body will be like refuse on the ground in the plot at Jezreel, so that no one will be able to say, 'This is Jezebel.'"

Ahab's Family Killed

10 Now there were in Samaria seventy sons of the house of Ahab. So Jehu wrote letters and sent them to Samaria: to the officials of Jezreel,^e to the elders and to the guardians of Ahab's children. He said, ²"As soon as this letter reaches you, since your master's sons are with you and you have chariots and horses, a fortified city and weapons, ³choose the best and most worthy of your master's sons and set him on his father's throne. Then fight for your master's house."

⁴But they were terrified and said, "If two kings could not resist him, how can we?"

⁵So the palace administrator, the city governor, the elders and the guardians sent this message to Jehu: "We are your servants and we will do anything you say. We will not appoint anyone as king; you do whatever you think best."

⁶Then Jehu wrote them a second letter, saying, "If you are on my side and will obey me, take the heads of your master's sons and come to me in Jezreel by this time tomorrow."

Now the royal princes, seventy of them, were with the leading men of the city, who were rearing them. ⁷When the letter arrived, these men took the princes and slaughtered all seventy of them. They

put their heads in baskets and sent them to Jehu in Jezreel. ⁸When the messenger arrived, he told Jehu, "They have brought the heads of the princes."

Then Jehu ordered, "Put them in two piles at the entrance of the city gate until morning."

⁹The next morning Jehu went out. He stood before all the people and said, "You are innocent. It was I who conspired against my master and killed him, but who killed all these? ¹⁰Know then, that not a word the LORD has spoken against the house of Ahab will fail. The LORD has done what he promised through his servant Elijah." ¹¹So Jehu killed everyone in Jezreel who remained of the house of Ahab, as well as all his chief men, his close friends and his priests, leaving him no survivor.

¹²Jehu then set out and went toward Samaria. At Beth Eked of the Shepherds, ¹³he met some relatives of Ahaziah king of Judah and asked, "Who are you?"

They said, "We are relatives of Ahaziah, and we have come down to greet the families of the king and of the queen mother."

¹⁴"Take them alive!" he ordered. So they took them alive and slaughtered them by the well of Beth Eked—forty-two men. He left no survivor.

¹⁵After he left there, he came upon Jehonadab son of Recab, who was on his way to meet him. Jehu greeted him and said, "Are you in accord with me, as I am with you?"

"I am," Jehonadab answered.

"If so," said Jehu, "give me your hand." So he did, and Jehu helped him up into the chariot. ¹⁶Jehu said, "Come with me and see my zeal for the LORD." Then he had him ride along in his chariot.

¹⁷When Jehu came to Samaria, he killed all who were left there of Ahab's family; he destroyed them, according to the word of the LORD spoken to Elijah.

Ministers of Baal Killed

¹⁸Then Jehu brought all the people together and said to them, "Ahab served Baal a little; Jehu will serve him much. ¹⁹Now summon all the prophets of Baal, all his ministers and all his priests. See that no one is missing, because I am going to hold a great sacrifice for Baal. Anyone who fails to come

10:14 Jehu's Slaughters

Jehu's bold attacks against the princes of Judah had serious consequences. To protect Israel against revenge from Judah and its friends, Jehu had to pay Assyria tribute. In fact, he is the only king of Israel whose picture has survived. A carving on an archaeological relic, the Black Obelisk, shows him paying tribute to Assyria. Although God had chosen Jehu to purge Israel, the Bible makes clear that his violence went far beyond his original assignment. God himself condemns Jehu in Hosea 1:4.

^a26 See 1 Kings 21:19.

^b36 See 1 Kings 21:23.

^c27 Or fled by way of the garden house

^d1 Hebrew; some Septuagint manuscripts and Vulgate of the city

^e31 Or "Did Zimri have peace, who murdered his master?"

will no longer live." But Jehu was acting deceptively in order to destroy the ministers of Baal.

²⁰Jehu said, "Call an assembly in honor of Baal." So they proclaimed it. ²¹Then he sent word throughout Israel, and all the ministers of Baal throughout Israel, and all the ministers of Baal came, not one stayed away. They crowded into the temple of the LORD from one end to the other. ²²And Jehu said to the keeper of the wardrobe, "Bring robes for all the ministers of Baal." So he brought out robes for them.

²³Then Jehu and his sons of Reuben went to the temple of Baal. Jehu said to the ministers of Baal, "Look around and see that no servants of the LORD are here with you—only ministers of Baal." ²⁴So they went in to make sacrifices and burnt offerings. Now Jehu had posted eighty men outside with this warning: "If one of you lets any of the men I am placing in your hands escape, it will be your life for his life."

²⁵As soon as Jehu had finished making the burnt offering, he ordered the guards and officers: "Go in and kill them; let no one escape." So they cut them down with the sword. The guards and officers threw the bodies out and then entered the inner shrine of the temple of Baal. ²⁶They brought the sacred stone out of the temple of Baal and burned it. ²⁷They demolished the sacred stone of Baal and tore down the temple of Baal, and people have used it for a latrine to this day.

²⁸So Jehu destroyed Baal worship in Israel. ²⁹However, he did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit—the worship of the golden calves at Bethel and Dan.

³⁰The LORD said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in accomplishing what is right in my eyes and have done to the house of Ahab all I had in mind to do, your descendants will sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation." ³¹Yet Jehu was not careful to keep the law of the LORD, the God of Israel, with all his heart. He did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam, which he had caused Israel to commit.

³²In those days the LORD began to reduce the size of Israel. Hazael overpowered the Israelites throughout their territory ³³east of the Jordan in all the land of Gilead (the region of Gad, Reuben and Manasseh), from Aroer by the Arnon Gorge through Gilead to Bashan.

³⁴As for the other events of Jehu's reign, all he did, and all his achievements, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel?

³⁵Jehu rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. And Jehoahaz his son succeeded him as king. ³⁶The time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria was twenty-eight years.

Athaliah and Joash

11 When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she proceeded to destroy the whole royal family. ²But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Jehoram^a and sister of Ahaziah, took Joash son of Ahaziah and stole him away from among the royal princes, who were

about to be murdered. She put him and his nurse in a bedroom to hide him from Athaliah, so he was not killed. ⁴He remained hidden for seven years in the temple of the LORD for six years when Athaliah ruled the land.

⁵In the seventh year Jehoiada sent for the commanders of units of a hundred, the Cantes and the guards and had them brought to him in the temple of the LORD. He made a covenant with them and put them under oath at the temple of the LORD. Then he showed them the king's son. ⁶He commanded them, saying, "This is what you are to do: You who are in the three companies that are going on duty on the Sabbath—a third of you guarding the royal palace, ^{6a}a third at the Sur Gate, and a third at the gate behind the guard, who take turns guarding the temple—⁷and you who are in the other two companies that normally go off Sabbath duty are all to guard the temple for the king. ⁸Station yourselves around the king, each man with his weapon in his hand. Anyone who approaches your ranks^b must be put to death. Stay close to the king wherever he goes."

⁹The commanders of units of a hundred did just as Jehoiada the priest ordered. Each one took his men—those who were going on duty on the Sabbath and those who were going off duty—and came to Jehoiada the priest. ¹⁰Then he gave the commanders the spears and shields that had belonged to King David and that were in the temple of the LORD. ¹¹The guards, each with his weapon in his hand, stationed themselves around the king—near the altar and the temple, from the south side to the north side of the temple.

¹²Jehoiada brought out the king's son and put the crown on him; he presented him with a copy of the covenant and proclaimed him king. They anointed him, and the people clapped their hands and shouted, "Long live the king!"

¹³When Athaliah heard the noise made by the guards and the people, she went to the people at the temple of the LORD. ¹⁴She looked and there was the king, standing by the pillar, as the custom was. The officers and the trumpeters were beside the king, and all the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. Then Athaliah tore her robes and called out, "Treason! Treason!"

¹⁵Jehoiada the priest ordered the commanders of units of a hundred, who were in charge of the troops: "Bring her out between the ranks^c and put to the sword anyone who follows her." For the priest had said, "She must not be put to death in the temple of the LORD." ¹⁶So they seized her as

11:2 Preserving the Royal Line

Queen Athaliah came within one baby of wiping out the royal line descending from King David. The prophets predicted that Jesus the Messiah would come from David's line, so in a sense the entire future of God's plan rested with the family's success in hiding Joash and returning him to the throne.

^{a2} Hebrew Joram, a variant of Jehoram

^{b8} Or approaches the precincts

^{c15} Or out from the precincts

she reached the place where the horses enter the palace grounds, and there she was put to death.

¹⁷Jehoiada then made a covenant between the LORD and the king and people that they would be the LORD's people. He also made a covenant between the king and the people. ¹⁸All the people of the land went to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They smashed the altars and idols to pieces and killed Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altars.

Then Jehoiada the priest posted guards at the temple of the LORD. ¹⁹He took with him the commanders of hundreds, the Carites, the guards and all the people of the land, and together they brought the king down from the temple of the LORD and went into the palace, entering by way of the gate of the guards. The king then took his place on the royal throne, ²⁰and all the people of the land rejoiced. And the city was quiet, because Athaliah had been slain with the sword at the palace.

²¹Joash^a was seven years old when he began to reign.

Joash Repairs the Temple

12 In the seventh year of Jehu, Joash^b became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem forty years. His mother's name was Zibiah; she was from Beersheba. Joash did what was right in the eyes of the LORD all the years Jehoiada the priest instructed him. ³The high places, however, were not removed; the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there.

⁴Joash said to the priests, "Collect all the money that is brought as sacred offerings to the temple of the LORD—the money collected in the census, the money received from personal vows and the money brought voluntarily to the temple. ⁵Let every priest receive the money from one of the treasurers, and let it be used to repair whatever damage is found in the temple."

⁶But by the twenty-third year of King Joash the priests still had not repaired the temple. ⁷Therefore King Joash summoned Jehoiada the priest and the other priests and asked them, "Why aren't you repairing the damage done to the temple? Take no more money from your treasurers, but hand it over for repairing the temple." ⁸The priests agreed that they would not collect any more money from the people and that they would not repair the temple themselves.

⁹Jehoiada the priest took a chest and bored a hole in its lid. He placed it beside the altar, on the right side as one enters the temple of the LORD. The priests who guarded the entrance put into the chest all the money that was brought to the temple of the LORD. ¹⁰Whenever they saw that there was a large amount of money in the chest, the royal secretary and the high priest came, counted the money that had been brought into the temple of the LORD and put it into bags. ¹¹When the amount had been determined, they gave the money to the men appointed to supervise the work on the temple. With it they paid those who worked on the temple of the LORD—the carpenters and builders,

¹²the masons and stonecutters. They purchased timber and dressed stone for the repair of the temple of the LORD, and met all the other expenses of restoring the temple.

¹³The money brought into the temple was not spent for making silver basins, wick trimmers, sprinkling bowls, trumpets or any other articles of gold or silver for the temple of the LORD. ¹⁴It was paid to the workmen, who used it to repair the temple. ¹⁵They did not require an accounting from those to whom they gave the money to pay the workers, because they acted with complete honesty. ¹⁶The money from the guilt offerings and sin offerings was not brought into the temple of the LORD; it belonged to the priests.

¹⁷About this time Hazael king of Aram went up and attacked Gath and captured it. Then he turned to attack Jerusalem. ¹⁸But Joash king of Judah took all the sacred objects dedicated by his fathers—Jehoshaphat, Jehoram and Ahaziah, the kings of Judah—and the gifts he himself had dedicated and all the gold found in the treasuries of the temple of the LORD and of the royal palace, and he sent them to Hazael king of Aram, who then withdrew from Jerusalem.

¹⁹As for the other events of the reign of Joash, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? ²⁰His officials conspired against him and assassinated him at Beth Millo, on the road down to Silla. ²¹The officials who murdered him were Jozabad son of Shimeath and Jehozabad son of Shomer. He died and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. And Amaziah his son succeeded him as king.

Jehoahaz King of Israel

13 In the twenty-third year of Joash son of Ahaziah king of Judah, Jehoahaz son of Jehu became king of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned seventeen years. ²He did evil in the eyes of the LORD by following the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit, and he did not turn away from them. ³So the LORD's anger burned against Israel, and for a long time he kept them under the power of Hazael king of Aram and Ben-Hadad his son.

⁴Then Jehoahaz sought the LORD's favor, and the LORD listened to him, for he saw how severely the king of Aram was oppressing Israel. ⁵The LORD provided a deliverer for Israel, and they escaped from the power of Aram. So the Israelites lived in their own homes as they had before. ⁶But they did not turn away from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, which he had caused Israel to commit; they continued in them. Also, the Asherah pole^c remained standing in Samaria.

⁷Nothing had been left of the army of Jehoahaz except fifty horsemen, ten chariots and ten thousand foot soldiers, for the king of Aram had destroyed the rest and made them like the dust at threshing time.

⁸As for the other events of the reign of Jehoahaz, all he did and his achievements, are they not writ-

^a21 Hebrew *Jehoash*, a variant of *Joash*

symbol of the goddess Asherah; here and elsewhere in 2 Kings

^b1 Hebrew *Jehoash*, a variant of *Joash*; also in verses 2, 4, 6, 7 and 18

^c6 That is, a

ten in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel? ⁹Jehoahaz rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. And Jehoash^a his son succeeded him as king.

Jehoash King of Israel

¹⁰In the thirty-seventh year of Joash king of Judah, Jehoash son of Jehoahaz became king of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned sixteen years. ¹¹He did evil in the eyes of the Lord and did not turn away from any of the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit; he continued in them.

As for the other events of the reign of Jehoash, all he did and his achievements, including his war against Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel? ¹²Jehoash rested with his fathers, and Jeroboam succeeded him on the throne. Jehoash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

¹³Now Elisha was suffering from the illness from which he died. Jehoash king of Israel went down to see him and wept over him. "My father! My father!" he cried. "The chariots and horsemen of Israel!"

¹⁴Elisha said, "Get a bow and some arrows," and he did so. ¹⁵"Take the bow in your hands," he said to the king of Israel. When he had taken it, Elisha put his hands on the king's hands.

¹⁶"Open the east window," he said, and he opened it. "Shoot!" Elisha said, and he shot. "The Lord's arrow of victory, the arrow of victory over Aram!" Elisha declared. "You will completely destroy the Arameans at Aphek."

¹⁷Then he said, "Take the arrows," and the king took them. Elisha told him, "Strike the ground." He struck it three times and stopped. ¹⁸The man of God was angry with him and said, "You should have struck the ground five or six times; then you would have defeated Aram and completely destroyed it. But now you will defeat it only three times."

¹⁹Elisha died and was buried.

Now Moabite raiders used to enter the country every spring. ²⁰Once while some Israelites were burying a man, suddenly they saw a band of raiders; so they threw the man's body into Elisha's tomb. When the body touched Elisha's bones, the man came to life and stood up on his feet.

²¹Hazael king of Aram oppressed Israel throughout the reign of Jehoahaz. ²²But the Lord

was gracious to them and had compassion and showed concern for them because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. To this day he has been unwilling to destroy them or banish them from his presence.

²³Hazael king of Aram died, and Ben-Hadad his son succeeded him as king. ²⁴Then Jehoash son of Jehoahaz recaptured from Ben-Hadad son of Hazael the towns he had taken in battle from his father Jehoahaz. Three times Jehoash defeated him, and so he recovered the Israelite towns.

Amaziah King of Judah

14 In the second year of Jehoash^a son of Jehoahaz king of Israel, Amaziah son of Joash king of Judah began to reign. ²He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-two years. His mother's name was Jehoaddin; she was from Jerusalem. ³He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, but not as his father David had done. In everything he followed the example of his father Joash. ⁴The high places, however, were not removed; the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there.

⁵After the kingdom was firmly in his grasp, he executed the officials who had murdered his father the king. ⁶Yet he did not put the sons of the assassins to death, in accordance with what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses where the Lord commanded: "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sins."^c

⁷He was the one who defeated ten thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt and captured Sela in battle, calling it Joktheel, the name it has to this day.

⁸Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel, with the challenge: "Come, meet me face to face."

⁹But Jehoash king of Israel replied to Amaziah king of Judah: "A thistle in Lebanon sent a message to a cedar in Lebanon, 'Give your daughter to my son in marriage.' Then a wild beast in Lebanon came along and trampled the thistle underfoot."

¹⁰You have indeed defeated Edom and now you are arrogant. Glory in your victory, but stay at home! Why ask for trouble and cause your own downfall and that of Judah also?"

¹¹Amaziah, however, would not listen, so Jehoash king of Israel attacked. He and Amaziah king of Judah faced each other at Beth Shemesh in Judah. ¹²Judah was routed by Israel, and every man fled to his home. ¹³Jehoash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Ahaziah, at Beth Shemesh. Then Jehoash went to Jerusalem and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate—a section about six hundred feet long. ¹⁴He took all the gold and silver and all the articles found in the temple of the Lord and in the treasures of the royal palace. He also took hostages and returned to Samaria.

¹⁵As for the other events of the reign of Jehoash,

13:20 Troublesome Neighbors

Moab and Aram (Syria) often make an appearance in the book of Kings. They were small kingdoms much like Judah and Israel. Sometimes they fought against Israel or Judah, and sometimes they joined together in alliances to oppose a larger threat. On the world scene, constant threats came from Egypt and Assyria. Assyria cut a huge swath through history before its empire declined. Later, Babylon became the giant of the region.

^a Hebrew *Joash*, a variant of *Jehoash*, also in verses 12-14 and 25

^b Deut. 24:16 ^c Hebrew *four hundred cubits* (about 180 meters)

¹ Hebrew *Joash*, a variant of *Jehoash*; also in verses 13, 23 and 27

1 KINGS 16:10

...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel. ...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel.

...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel. ...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel.

...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel. ...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel.

...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel. ...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel.

Jeroboam II King of Israel

...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel. ...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel.

...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel. ...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel.

...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel. ...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel.

...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel. ...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel.

...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel. ...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel.

...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel. ...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel.

...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel. ...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel.

...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel. ...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel.

...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel. ...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel.

...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel. ...nor are the events of his reign, including his assassination, recorded in the book of the kings of Israel.

Azariah King of Judah

15 In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah began to reign. He was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-two years. His mother's name was Jecoliah; she was from Jerusalem. He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Amaziah had done. The high places, however, were not removed; the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there.

The LORD afflicted the king with leprosy²⁵ until the day he died, and he lived in a separate house.²⁶ Jotham the king's son had charge of the palace and governed the people of the land.

As for the other events of Azariah's reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? Azariah rested with his fathers and was buried near them in the City of David. And Jotham his son succeeded him as king.

Zechariah King of Israel

In the thirty-eighth year of Azariah king of Judah, Zechariah son of Jeroboam became king of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned six months. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, as his fathers had done. He did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit.

Shallum son of Jabesh conspired against Zechariah. He attacked him in front of the people,²⁸ assassinated him and succeeded him as king.

The other events of Zechariah's reign are written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel. So the word of the LORD spoken to Jehu was fulfilled: "Your descendants will sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation."²⁹

Shallum King of Israel

Shallum son of Jabesh became king in the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah king of Judah, and he reigned in Samaria one month. Then Menahem son of Gadi went from Tirzah up to Samaria. He attacked Shallum son of Jabesh in Samaria, assassinated him and succeeded him as king.

The other events of Shallum's reign, and the conspiracy he led, are written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel.

At that time Menahem, starting out from Tirzah, attacked Tiphshah and everyone in the city and its vicinity, because they refused to open their gates. He sacked Tiphshah and ripped open all the pregnant women.

Menahem King of Israel

In the thirty-ninth year of Azariah king of

²⁵ That is, the Dead Sea

²⁶ Or in a house where he was relieved of responsibility

²⁷ The Hebrew word

²⁸ Or Judah

²⁹ The Hebrew word

³⁰ Or in a house where he was relieved of responsibility

³¹ Or in a house where he was relieved of responsibility

³² Or in a house where he was relieved of responsibility

³³ Or in a house where he was relieved of responsibility

Judah. Menahem son of Gadi became king of Israel and he reigned in Samaria ten years. ¹⁸He did evil in the eyes of the LORD. During his entire reign he did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit.

¹⁹Then Pul king of Assyria invaded the land, and Menahem gave him a thousand talents^a of silver to gain his support and strengthen his own hold on the kingdom. ²⁰Menahem exacted this money from Israel. Every wealthy man had to contribute fifty shekels^c of silver to be given to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria withdrew and stayed in the land no longer.

²¹As for the other events of Menahem's reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel? ²²Menahem rested with his fathers. And Pekahiah his son succeeded him as king.

Pekahiah King of Israel

²³In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekahiah son of Menahem became king of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned two years. ²⁴Pekahiah did evil in the eyes of the LORD. He did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit. ²⁵One of his chief officers, Pekah son of Remaliah, conspired against him. Taking fifty men of Gilead with him, he assassinated Pekahiah, along with Argob and Arieah, in the citadel of the royal palace at Samaria. So Pekah killed Pekahiah and succeeded him as king.

²⁶The other events of Pekahiah's reign, and all he did, are written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel.

Pekah King of Israel

²⁷In the fifty-second year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekah son of Remaliah became king of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned twenty years. ²⁸He did evil in the eyes of the LORD. He did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit.

²⁹In the time of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came and took Ijon, Abel Beth Maacah, Janoah, Kedesh and Hazor. He took Gilead and Galilee, including all the land of Naphtali, and deported the people to Assyria. ³⁰Then Hoshea son of Elah conspired against Pekah son of Remaliah. He attacked and assassinated him, and then succeeded him as king in the twentieth year of Jotham son of Uzziah.

³¹As for the other events of Pekah's reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel?

Jotham King of Judah

³²In the second year of Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel, Jotham son of Uzziah king of Judah began to reign. ³³He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. His mother's name was Jerusha daughter of Zadok. ³⁴He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Uzziah had done. ³⁵The high places, however, were not re-

moved, the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there. Jotham rebuilt the Upper Gate of the temple of the LORD.

³⁶As for the other events of Jotham's reign, and what he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? ³⁷(In those days the LORD began to send Rezin king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah against Judah.) ³⁸Jotham rested with his fathers and was buried with them in the City of David, the city of his father. And Ahaz his son succeeded him as king.

Ahaz King of Judah

16 In the seventeenth year of Pekah son of Remaliah, Ahaz son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign. ²Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. Unlike David his father, he did not do what was right in the eyes of the LORD his God. ³He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and even sacrificed his son in^d the fire, following the detestable ways of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. ⁴He offered sacrifices and burned incense at the high places, on the hilltops and under every spreading tree.

⁵Then Rezin king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel marched up to fight against Jerusalem and besieged Ahaz, but they could not overpower him. ⁶At that time, Rezin king of Aram recovered Elath for Aram by driving out the men of Judah. Edomites then moved into Elath and have lived there to this day.

⁷Ahaz sent messengers to say to Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, "I am your servant and vassal. Come up and save me out of the hand of the king of Aram and of the king of Israel, who are attacking me." ⁸And Ahaz took the silver and gold found in the temple of the LORD and in the treasures of the royal palace and sent it as a gift to the king of Assyria. ⁹The king of Assyria complied by attacking Damascus and capturing it. He deported its inhabitants to Kir and put Rezin to death.

¹⁰Then King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria. He saw an altar in Damascus and sent to Uriah the priest a sketch of the altar, with detailed plans for its construction. ¹¹So Uriah the priest built an altar in accordance with all the plans that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus and finished it before King Ahaz returned. ¹²When the king came back from Damascus and saw the altar, he approached it and

16:1 Ahaz's Fateful Decisions

King Ahaz figured large in the histories of Israel and Judah. When Israel threatened his kingdom of Judah, he purchased military aid from Assyria. In response, Assyria obliterated Israel and made Judah a virtual puppet. Worse, Ahaz copied the pagan religions of his conquered territories, even to the extent of sacrificing his son in the fire (16:3-4).

^a19 Also called Tiglath Pileser
kilogram)

^b19 That is, about 37 tons (about 34 metric tons)
^c3 Or even made his son pass through

^d20 That is, about 1 1/4 pounds (about 0.6

Why All the Fuss about Idols?

The strange practice that led to a kingdom's fall

"They received worthless idols and themselves became worthless." 17-19

You cannot read very far in the Old Testament without encountering idols, for idolatry ranks as perhaps the most common topic in the Bible. A nagging question haunts these pages: Why did the Israelites keep deserting the God who had delivered them from Egypt for the sake of carved tree trunks and bronze statues? What was the big attraction?

Responses to Idols Today

Actually, idols still thrive today, and their effect on the people sheds light on Old Testament idolatry. In India, for example, each city and village has its own favorite god—thousands of different gods are worshiped. Portable idols stand on street corners of the major cities.

For devout Hindus, idolatry adds a dimension of magic to life. Hindus believe the gods control all events, including such disasters as monsoons, floods, diseases, and traffic accidents. These powerful gods must be kept happy at all costs.

But what pleases a god depends on the god's character, and gods can be fearsome and violent. Some Indians worship idols in the form of a snake; others worship the smallpox goddess. The largest city in India, Calcutta, has adopted the goddess Kali. Devotion to such gods can easily lead to a paralyzing fear. If Kali isn't kept happy, her followers believe, she will cruelly punish them.

Other Hindus, less devout, take a different approach. They treat their gods almost as good-luck charms. A tax driver mounts a tiny statue of a monkey god on the dashboard of his car, occasionally draping it with flowers for decoration. If you ask, he'll say he prays to the god for safety—but you know about the traffic in India, he adds with a laugh.

A Good-Luck Charm or an Evil Cult

Idolatry had similar effects on the ancient Israelites. Some Israelites took the same spirit as the Indian tax driver: Maybe an idol will help you out, maybe not, but why not play along? They drifted carelessly from god to god, adopting the religion of whatever group seemed to be having most success with its agriculture or armies.

No attitude could be further from that demanded by the true God. He had chosen the Israelites as a kingdom of priests, a "peculiar people" set apart for him. As Lord of the universe, he wanted not a casual faith, but total allegiance. He was not a good-luck charm.

Far too often, however, idols in Israel took on a more sinister form, resembling the evil goddess of Calcutta. Legends about Baal, for example, celebrated his drunkenness and debauchery. Followers worshiped him by having sex in the temple with prostitutes or even by sacrificing a human baby.

Worshiping Baal meant a complete rejection of God's special relationship with the Israelites—a crime very much like adultery, as the prophets often pointed out. Baal worship could not possibly coexist with the worship of God.

What Was the Appeal?

Why did Baal and the other idols prove so appealing to the Israelites? Like peasants gawking at big-city life, the Israelites moved from 40 years of wilderness wanderings into a land of cities and more advanced technology. They had been landless nomads and shepherds. When they settled down to a new occupation of farming, they looked to a Canaanite god, Baal, as a possible means of guaranteeing good crops. In other words, they sought a shortcut through magic.

Similarly, when a mighty army threatened their borders, they smuggled in a few of that army's favorite idols, hedging their bets in case their own religion did not bring them military success. Idols became a phantom source of power, an alternative place to invest faith and hope.

Idolatry made such inroads into Israel and Judah that God had to tear apart both kingdoms in order to root it out. Second Kings clearly blames idolatry as the chief sin leading to both nations' collapse. History records that the punishment ultimately worked. After the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions, never again did the Israelites dabble in idolatry.

Life Questions Idolatry need not involve images of wood or stone; it's possible to worship such things as money, another person, or fame. What are some 'idols' you might be tempted to worship?

presented offerings on it. ¹⁴He offered up his burnt offering and grain offering, poured out his drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of his fellowship offerings on the altar. ¹⁵He made the altar that stood before the Lord, he brought from the front of the temple—iron between the new altar and the temple of the Lord—and put it on the north side of the new altar.

¹⁶King Ahaz then gave these orders to Uriah the priest: "On the large new altar, offer the morning burnt offering and the evening grain offering, the king's burnt offering and his grain offering, and the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their grain offering and their drink offering. Sprinkle on the altar all the blood of the burnt offerings and sacrifice. But I will use the bronze altar for seeking guidance." ¹⁸And Uriah the priest did just as King Ahaz had ordered.

¹⁷King Ahaz took away the side panels and removed the basins from the movable stands. He removed the sea from the bronze bulls that supported it and set it on a stone base. ¹⁸He took away the Sabbath canopy that had been built at the temple and removed the royal entryway outside the temple of the Lord, in deference to the king of Assyria.

¹⁹As for the other events of the reign of Ahaz, and what he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? ²⁰Ahaz rested with his fathers and was buried with them in the City of David. And Hezekiah his son succeeded him as king.

Hoshea Last King of Israel

17 In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, Hoshea son of Elah became king of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned nine years. ²He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, but not like the kings of Israel who preceded him.

³Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up to attack Hoshea, who had been Shalmaneser's vassal and had paid him tribute. ⁴But the king of Assyria discovered that Hoshea was a traitor, for he had sent envoys to So^a king of Egypt, and he no longer paid tribute to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year. Therefore Shalmaneser seized him and put him in prison. ⁵The king of Assyria invaded the entire land, marched against Samaria and laid siege to it for three years. ⁶In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and deported the Israelites to Assyria. He settled them in Halah, in Gozan on the Habor River and in the towns of the Medes.

Israel Exiled Because of Sin

⁷All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the Lord their God, who had brought them up out of Egypt from under the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They worshiped other gods^b and followed the practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before them, as well as the practices that the kings of Israel had introduced. ⁹The Israelites secretly did things against the Lord their God that were not right. From

watchtower in fortified city they built themselves high places in all their towns. ¹⁰They set up sacred stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree. ¹¹At every high place they burned incense, as the nations whom the Lord had driven out before them had done. They did wicked things that provoked the Lord to anger. ¹²They worshiped idols, though the Lord had said, "You shall not do this." ¹³The Lord warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets and seers: "Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your fathers to obey and that I delivered to you through my servants the prophets."

¹⁴But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their fathers, who did not trust in the Lord their God. ¹⁵They rejected his decrees and the covenant he had made with their fathers and the warnings he had given them. They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless. They imitated the nations around them although the Lord had ordered them, "Do not do as they do," and they did the things the Lord had forbidden them to do.

¹⁶They forsook all the commands of the Lord their God and made for themselves two idols cast in the shape of calves, and an Asherah pole. They bowed down to all the starry hosts, and they worshiped Baal. ¹⁷They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They practiced divination and sorcery and sold themselves to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, provoking him to anger.

¹⁸So the Lord was very angry with Israel and removed them from his presence. Only the tribe of Judah was left, ^{19a} I even Judah did not keep the commands of the Lord their God. They followed the practices Israel had introduced. ²⁰Therefore the Lord rejected all the people of Israel; he afflicted them and gave them into the hands of plunderers, until he thrust them from his presence.

²¹When he tore Israel away from the house of David, they made Jeroboam son of Nebat their king. Jeroboam enticed Israel away from following the Lord and caused them to commit a great sin. ²²The Israelites persisted in all the sins of Jeroboam and did not turn away from them. ²³Until the Lord removed them from his presence, as he had warned through all his servants the prophets. So the people of Israel were taken from their homeland into exile in Assyria, and they are still there.

Samaria Resettled

²⁴The king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim and settled them in the towns of Samaria to replace the Israelites. They took over Samaria and lived in its towns. ²⁵When they first lived there, they did not worship the Lord; so he sent lions among them and they killed some of the people. ²⁶It was reported to the king of Assyria: "The people you deported and resettled in the towns of Samaria do not know what the god of that country requires. He has sent lions among them, which are killing

^a12 Or and went up ^b13 Traditionally peace offerings
possibly an abbreviation for Osorkon ^c12 Exodus 20:4, 5

^d18 Or the days of his throne (see Septuagint)

^e19 Or to Sam. to the; So is

^f17 Or They made their sons and daughters pass through

2 KINGS 17:27

them off because the people do not know what he requires.

²⁷Then the king of Assyria gave this order: Have one of the priests you took captive from Samaria go back to live there and teach the people what the god of the land requires. ²⁸So one of the priests who had been exiled from Samaria came to live in Bethel and taught them how to worship the Lord.

²⁹Nevertheless, each national group made its own gods in the several towns where they settled, and set them up in the shrines the people of Samaria had made at the high places. ³⁰The men from Babylon made Succoth Benoth, the men from Cuthah made Nergal, and the men from Hamath made Ashima; ³¹the Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burned their children in the fire as sacrifices to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim. ³²They worshiped the Lord, but they also appointed all sorts of their own people to officiate for them as priests in the shrines at the high places. ³³They worshiped the Lord, but they also served their own gods in accordance with the customs of the nations from which they had been brought.

³⁴To this day they persist in their former practices. They neither worship the Lord nor adhere to the decrees and ordinances, the laws and commands that the Lord gave the descendants of Jacob, whom he named Israel. ³⁵When the Lord made a covenant with the Israelites, he commanded them: "Do not worship any other gods or bow down to them, serve them or sacrifice to them." ³⁶But the Lord, who brought you up out of Egypt with mighty power and outstretched arm, is the one you must worship. To him you shall bow down and to him offer sacrifices. ³⁷You must always be careful to keep the decrees and ordinances, the laws and commands he wrote for you. Do not worship other gods. ³⁸Do not forget the covenant I have made with you, and do not worship other gods. ³⁹Rather, worship the Lord your God; it is he who will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies.

17:24 Changing the Scorched-Earth Policy

In early wars Assyrian conquerors followed a cruel policy of genocide. They exterminated their enemies and destroyed their land and property. But in later years they adopted a new technique: deporting their victims to Assyria and other countries and replacing them with foreigners from other conquered territories. In this way, they disrupted cultures and made sure the conquered peoples would never regroup and rise up as a new threat. This verse shows the origin of Samaritans, a group that still existed in New Testament times and, in fact, can still be found in modern Israel. They combined their own religions with some reverence for the true God.

⁴⁰They would not listen, however, but persisted in their former practices. ⁴¹Even while these people were worshiping the Lord, they were serving their idols. To this day their children and grandchildren continue to do as their fathers did.

Hezekiah King of Judah

18 In the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, Hezekiah son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign. He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. His mother's name was Abijah, daughter of Zechariah. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father David had done. He removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. He broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it. (It was called Nehushtan.)

⁵Hezekiah trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him. He held fast to the Lord and did not cease to follow him; he kept the commands the Lord had given Moses. ⁷And the Lord was with him; he was successful in whatever he undertook. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. ⁸From watchtower to fortified city, he defeated the Philistines, as far as Gaza and its territory.

⁹In King Hezekiah's fourth year, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, Shalmaneser king of Assyria marched against Samaria and laid siege to it. ¹⁰At the end of three years the Assyrians took it. So Samaria was captured in Hezekiah's sixth year, which was the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel. ¹¹The king of Assyria deported Israel to Assyria and settled them in Halah, in Gozan on the Habor River and in towns of the Medes. ¹²This happened because they had not obeyed the Lord their God, but had violated his covenant—all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded. They neither listened to the commands nor carried them out.

¹³In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. ¹⁴So Hezekiah king of Judah sent this message to the king of Assyria at Lachish: "I have done wrong. Withdraw from me, and I will pay whatever you demand of me." The king of Assyria exacted from Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents⁴ of silver and thirty talents⁵ of gold. ¹⁵So Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the temple of the Lord and in the treasuries of the royal palace.

¹⁶At this time Hezekiah king of Judah stripped off the gold with which he had covered the doors and doorposts of the temple of the Lord, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

Sennacherib Threatens Jerusalem

¹⁷The king of Assyria sent his supreme commander, his chief officer and his field commander

⁴² Hebrew *Abi*, a variant of *Abijah*.
thing

⁴⁴ Or *He called it*

⁴ *Nehushtan* sounds like the Hebrew for *bronze* and *snake* and *unclean*

¹⁴ That is, about 33 tons (about 10 metric tons)

¹⁵ That is, about 1 ton (about 1 metric ton)

with a large army, from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. They came up to Jerusalem and stopped at the aqueduct of the Upper Pool, on the road to the Washerman's Field.¹⁸ They called for the king, and Eliakim son of Hilkiah the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary, and Joah son of Asaph the recorder went out to them.

¹⁹The field commander said to them, "Tell Hezekiah

This is what the great king, the king of Assyria, says: On what are you basing this confidence of yours? ²⁰You say you have strategy and military strength—but you speak only empty words. On whom are you depending, that you rebel against me? ²¹Look now, you are depending on Egypt, that splintered reed of a staff, which pierces a man's hand and wounds him if he leans on it! Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who depend on him. ²²And if you say to me, "We are depending on the LORD our God"—isn't he the one whose high places and altars Hezekiah removed, saying to Judah and Jerusalem, "You must worship before this altar in Jerusalem"?

²³"Come now, make a bargain with my master, the king of Assyria: I will give you two thousand horses—if you can put riders on them! ²⁴How can you repulse one officer of the least of my master's officials, even though you are depending on Egypt for chariots and horsemen? ²⁵Furthermore, have I come to attack and destroy this place without word from the LORD? The LORD himself told me to march against this country and destroy it."

²⁶Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, and Shebna and Joah said to the field commander, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, since we understand it. Don't speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people on the wall."

²⁷But the commander replied, "Was it only to your master and you that my master sent me to say these things, and not to the men sitting on the wall—who, like you, will have to eat their own filth and drink their own urine?"

²⁸Then the commander stood and called out in Hebrew: "Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! ²⁹This is what the king says: Do not let Hezekiah deceive you. He cannot deliver you from my hand. ³⁰Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the LORD when he says, 'The LORD will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.'

³¹"Do not listen to Hezekiah. This is what the king of Assyria says: Make peace with me and come out to me. Then every one of you will eat from his own vine and fig tree and drink water from his own cistern, ³²until I come and take you to a land like your own, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey. Choose life and not death!

"Do not listen to Hezekiah, for he is misleading you when he says, 'The LORD will deliver us.' ³³Has the god of any nation ever delivered his land

from the hand of the king of Assyria? ³⁴Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah? Have they rescued Samaria from my hand? ³⁵Who of all the gods of these countries has been able to save his land from me? How then can the LORD deliver Jerusalem from my hand?"

³⁶But the people remained silent and said nothing in reply, because the king had commanded, "Do not answer him."

³⁷Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary and Joah son of Asaph the recorder went to Hezekiah, with their clothes torn, and told him what the field commander had said.

Jerusalem's Deliverance Foretold

19 When King Hezekiah heard this, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and went into the temple of the LORD. ²He sent Eliakim the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary and the leading priests, all wearing sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. ³They told him, "This is what Hezekiah says: This day is a day of distress and rebuke and disgrace, as when children come to the point of birth and there is no strength to deliver them. ⁴It may be that the LORD your God will hear all the words of the field commander, whom his master, the king of Assyria, has sent to ridicule the living God, and that he will rebuke him for the words the LORD your God has heard. Therefore pray for the remnant that still survives."

⁵When King Hezekiah's officials came to Isaiah, ⁶Isaiah said to them, "Tell your master, 'This is what the LORD says: Do not be afraid of what you have heard—those words with which the underlings of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. ⁷Listen! I am going to put such a spirit in him that when he hears a certain report, he will return to his own country, and there I will have him cut down with the sword.'"

⁸When the field commander heard that the king of Assyria had left Lachish, he withdrew and found the king fighting against Libnah.

⁹Now Sennacherib received a report that Tirhakah, the Cushite^b king of Egypt, was marching out to fight against him. So he again sent messengers to Hezekiah with this word: ¹⁰"Say to Hezekiah king of Judah: Do not let the god you depend on deceive you when he says, 'Jerusalem will not be handed over to the king of Assyria.' ¹¹Surely you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the countries, destroying them completely. And will you be delivered? ¹²Did the gods of the nations that were destroyed by my forefathers deliver them: the gods of Gozan, Haran, Rezeph and the people of Eden who were in Tel Assar? ¹³Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharvaim, or of Hena or Ivvah?"

Hezekiah's Prayer

¹⁴Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of

^a24 Or charioteers

^b9 That is, from the upper Nile region

[illegible]

1144

1. The first step is to identify the problem.
 2. The second step is to define the problem.
 3. The third step is to analyze the problem.
 4. The fourth step is to develop a solution.
 5. The fifth step is to implement the solution.
 6. The sixth step is to evaluate the solution.
 7. The seventh step is to monitor the solution.
 8. The eighth step is to maintain the solution.
 9. The ninth step is to improve the solution.
 10. The tenth step is to document the solution.

... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..
... ..

[illegible][illegible]

Have you not heard?
Long ago I planned it
in days of old I planned it
now I have brought it to pass
that you have turned nations into
a wilderness of stone

They're never drained of power
are dismissed and put to shame
They are like plants in the field
like grass sprouting on the road
won't bend before it grows up

But I know where you stay
and where you come and go
and how you rage against me
Because your rage against me
and your mockery has reached my ears.
I will put my hand on your nose
and my lip on your mouth

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

Herb:ah - illness

20 *Journal of Management Inquiry* 18(1)

1. *Chlorophyll a* (Chl *a*)
 2. *Chlorophyll b* (Chl *b*)
 3. *Chlorophyll c* (Chl *c*)
 4. *Chlorophyll d* (Chl *d*)
 5. *Chlorophyll e* (Chl *e*)
 6. *Chlorophyll f* (Chl *f*)
 7. *Chlorophyll g* (Chl *g*)
 8. *Chlorophyll h* (Chl *h*)
 9. *Chlorophyll i* (Chl *i*)
 10. *Chlorophyll j* (Chl *j*)
 11. *Chlorophyll k* (Chl *k*)
 12. *Chlorophyll l* (Chl *l*)
 13. *Chlorophyll m* (Chl *m*)
 14. *Chlorophyll n* (Chl *n*)
 15. *Chlorophyll o* (Chl *o*)
 16. *Chlorophyll p* (Chl *p*)
 17. *Chlorophyll q* (Chl *q*)
 18. *Chlorophyll r* (Chl *r*)
 19. *Chlorophyll s* (Chl *s*)
 20. *Chlorophyll t* (Chl *t*)
 21. *Chlorophyll u* (Chl *u*)
 22. *Chlorophyll v* (Chl *v*)
 23. *Chlorophyll w* (Chl *w*)
 24. *Chlorophyll x* (Chl *x*)
 25. *Chlorophyll y* (Chl *y*)
 26. *Chlorophyll z* (Chl *z*)
 27. *Chlorophyll aa* (Chl *aa*)
 28. *Chlorophyll ab* (Chl *ab*)
 29. *Chlorophyll ac* (Chl *ac*)
 30. *Chlorophyll ad* (Chl *ad*)
 31. *Chlorophyll ae* (Chl *ae*)
 32. *Chlorophyll af* (Chl *af*)
 33. *Chlorophyll ag* (Chl *ag*)
 34. *Chlorophyll ah* (Chl *ah*)
 35. *Chlorophyll ai* (Chl *ai*)
 36. *Chlorophyll aj* (Chl *aj*)
 37. *Chlorophyll ak* (Chl *ak*)
 38. *Chlorophyll al* (Chl *al*)
 39. *Chlorophyll am* (Chl *am*)
 40. *Chlorophyll an* (Chl *an*)
 41. *Chlorophyll ao* (Chl *ao*)
 42. *Chlorophyll ap* (Chl *ap*)
 43. *Chlorophyll aq* (Chl *aq*)
 44. *Chlorophyll ar* (Chl *ar*)
 45. *Chlorophyll as* (Chl *as*)
 46. *Chlorophyll at* (Chl *at*)
 47. *Chlorophyll au* (Chl *au*)
 48. *Chlorophyll av* (Chl *av*)
 49. *Chlorophyll aw* (Chl *aw*)
 50. *Chlorophyll ax* (Chl *ax*)
 51. *Chlorophyll ay* (Chl *ay*)
 52. *Chlorophyll az* (Chl *az*)
 53. *Chlorophyll aza* (Chl *aza*)
 54. *Chlorophyll abz* (Chl *abz*)
 55. *Chlorophyll acz* (Chl *acz*)
 56. *Chlorophyll adz* (Chl *adz*)
 57. *Chlorophyll aez* (Chl *aez*)
 58. *Chlorophyll afz* (Chl *afz*)
 59. *Chlorophyll agz* (Chl *agz*)
 60. *Chlorophyll ahz* (Chl *ahz*)
 61. *Chlorophyll aiz* (Chl *aiz*)
 62. *Chlorophyll ajz* (Chl *ajz*)
 63. *Chlorophyll akz* (Chl *akz*)
 64. *Chlorophyll alz* (Chl *alz*)
 65. *Chlorophyll amz* (Chl *amz*)
 66. *Chlorophyll anz* (Chl *anz*)
 67. *Chlorophyll aoz* (Chl *aoz*)
 68. *Chlorophyll apz* (Chl *apz*)
 69. *Chlorophyll aqz* (Chl *aqz*)
 70. *Chlorophyll arz* (Chl *arz*)
 71. *Chlorophyll asz* (Chl *asz*)
 72. *Chlorophyll atz* (Chl *atz*)
 73. *Chlorophyll auz* (Chl *auz*)
 74. *Chlorophyll avz* (Chl *avz*)
 75. *Chlorophyll awz* (Chl *awz*)
 76. *Chlorophyll axz* (Chl *axz*)
 77. *Chlorophyll ayz* (Chl *ayz*)
 78. *Chlorophyll ayz* (Chl *ayz*)
 79. *Chlorophyll azz* (Chl *azz*)
 80. *Chlorophyll azaa* (Chl *aza*)
 81. *Chlorophyll abz* (Chl *abz*)
 82. *Chlorophyll acz* (Chl *acz*)
 83. *Chlorophyll adz* (Chl *adz*)
 84. *Chlorophyll aez* (Chl *aez*)
 85. *Chlorophyll afz* (Chl *afz*)
 86. *Chlorophyll agz* (Chl *agz*)
 87. *Chlorophyll ahz* (Chl *ahz*)
 88. *Chlorophyll aiz* (Chl *aiz*)
 89. *Chlorophyll ajz* (Chl *ajz*)
 90. *Chlorophyll akz* (Chl *akz*)
 91. *Chlorophyll alz* (Chl *alz*)
 92. *Chlorophyll amz* (Chl *amz*)
 93. *Chlorophyll anz* (Chl *anz*)
 94. *Chlorophyll aoz* (Chl *aoz*)
 95. *Chlorophyll apz* (Chl *apz*)
 96. *Chlorophyll aqz* (Chl *aqz*)
 97. *Chlorophyll arz* (Chl *arz*)
 98. *Chlorophyll asz* (Chl *asz*)
 99. *Chlorophyll atz* (Chl *atz*)
 100. *Chlorophyll auz* (Chl *auz*)
 101. *Chlorophyll avz* (Chl *avz*)
 102. *Chlorophyll awz* (Chl *awz*)
 103. *Chlorophyll axz* (Chl *axz*)
 104. *Chlorophyll ayz* (Chl *ayz*)
 105. *Chlorophyll ayz* (Chl *ayz*)
 106. *Chlorophyll azz* (Chl *azz*)
 107. *Chlorophyll azaa* (Chl *aza*)
 108. *Chlorophyll abz* (Chl *abz*)
 109. *Chlorophyll acz* (Chl *acz*)
 110. *Chlorophyll adz* (Chl *adz*)
 111. *Chlorophyll aez* (Chl *aez*)
 112. *Chlorophyll afz* (Chl *afz*)
 113. *Chlorophyll agz* (Chl *agz*)
 114. *Chlorophyll ahz* (Chl *ahz*)
 115. *Chlorophyll aiz* (Chl *aiz*)
 116. *Chlorophyll ajz* (Chl *ajz*)
 117. *Chlorophyll akz* (Chl *akz*)
 118. *Chlorophyll alz* (Chl *alz*)
 119. *Chlorophyll amz* (Chl *amz*)
 120. *Chlorophyll anz* (Chl *anz*)
 121. *Chlorophyll aoz* (Chl *aoz*)
 122. *Chlorophyll apz* (Chl *apz*)
 123. *Chlorophyll aqz* (Chl *aqz*)
 124. *Chlorophyll arz* (Chl *arz*)
 125. *Chlorophyll asz* (Chl *asz*)
 126. *Chlorophyll atz* (Chl *atz*)
 127. *Chlorophyll auz* (Chl *auz*)
 128. *Chlorophyll avz* (Chl *avz*)
 129. *Chlorophyll awz* (Chl *awz*)
 130. *Chlorophyll axz* (Chl *axz*)
 131. *Chlorophyll ayz* (Chl *ayz*)
 132. *Chlorophyll ayz* (Chl *ayz*)
 133.

19 31 Deliverance for Jerusalem

[illegible]

⁴Before Isaiah had left the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him. ⁵"Go back and tell Hezekiah, the leader of my people, 'This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears, I will heal you. On the third day from now you will go up to the temple of the LORD. I will add fifteen years to your life. And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city for my sake and for the sake of my servant David.'"

⁶Then Isaiah said, "Prepare a poultice of figs." They did so and applied it to the boil, and he recovered.

⁸Hezekiah had asked Isaiah, "What will be the sign that the LORD will heal me and that I will go up to the temple of the LORD on the third day from now?"

⁹Isaiah answered, "This is the LORD's sign to you that the LORD will do what he has promised: Shall the shadow go forward ten steps, or shall it go back ten steps?"

¹⁰"It is a simple matter for the shadow to go forward ten steps," said Hezekiah. "Rather, have it go back ten steps."

¹¹Then the prophet Isaiah called upon the LORD, and the LORD made the shadow go back the ten steps it had gone down on the stairway of Ahaz.

Envoys From Babylon

¹²At that time Merodach-Baladan son of Baladan king of Babylon sent Hezekiah letters and a gift, because he had heard of Hezekiah's illness. ¹³Hezekiah received the messengers and showed them all that was in his storehouses—the silver, the gold, the spices and the fine oil—his armory and everything found among his treasures. There was nothing in his palace or in all his kingdom that Hezekiah did not show them.

¹⁴Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah and asked, "What did those men say, and where did they come from?"

"From a distant land," Hezekiah replied. "They came from Babylon."

¹⁵The prophet asked, "What did they see in your palace?"

"They saw everything in my palace," Hezekiah said. "There is nothing among my treasures that I did not show them."

¹⁶Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD: ¹⁷The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your fathers have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the LORD. ¹⁸And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood, that will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."

¹⁹"The word of the LORD you have spoken is good," Hezekiah replied. For he thought, "Will there not be peace and security in my lifetime?"

²⁰As for the other events of Hezekiah's reign, all his achievements and how he made the pool and the tunnel by which he brought water into the city,

are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? ²¹Hezekiah rested with his fathers. And Manasseh his son succeeded him as king.

Manasseh King of Judah

21 Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. His mother's name was Hephzibah. ²He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, following the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. ³He rebuilt the high places his father Hezekiah had destroyed, he also erected altars to Baal and made an Asherah pole, as Ahab king of Israel had done. He bowed down to all the starry hosts and worshiped them. ⁴He built altars in the temple of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem I will put my Name." ⁵In both courts of the temple of the LORD, he built altars to all the starry hosts. ⁶He sacrificed his own son in the fire, practiced sorcery and divination, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the LORD, provoking him to anger.

⁷He took the carved Asherah pole he had made and put it in the temple, of which the LORD had said to David and to his son Solomon, "In this temple and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my Name forever. ⁸I will not again make the feet of the Israelites wander from the land I gave their forefathers, if only they will be careful to do everything I commanded them and will keep the whole Law that my servant Moses gave them." ⁹But the people did not listen. Manasseh led them astray, so that they did more evil than the nations the LORD had destroyed before the Israelites.

¹⁰The LORD said through his servants the prophets: ¹¹"Manasseh king of Judah has committed these detestable sins. He has done more evil than the Amorites who preceded him and has led Judah into sin with his idols. ¹²Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I am going to bring such disaster on Jerusalem and Judah that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle. ¹³I will stretch out over Jerusalem the measuring line used against Samaria and the plumb line used against the house of Ahab. I will wipe out Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. ¹⁴I will forsake the remnant of my inheritance and hand them over to their enemies. They

20:20 A Lifeline Tunnel

The tunnel, one of Hezekiah's major accomplishments, can still be seen in modern Jerusalem. In ancient days, Jerusalem had no source of water within its walls, making it vulnerable to an extended siege. Hezekiah undertook a tremendous engineering feat to bring water from a spring to a reservoir inside Jerusalem. In the late 1800s some boys swimming in the pool of Siloam happened upon a carved record, dating from Hezekiah's time, of how the tunnel had been dug. The marks of pickaxes are still clearly visible.

⁴⁶ Or He made his own son pass through

2 KINGS 21:15

will be looted and plundered by all their foes, ¹⁵because they have done evil in my eyes and have provoked me to anger from the day their forefathers came out of Egypt until this day.

¹⁶Moreover, Manasseh also shed so much innocent blood that he filled Jerusalem from end to end—besides the sin that he had caused Judah to commit—so that they did evil in the eyes of the LORD.

As for the other events of Manasseh's reign, and all he did, including the sin he committed, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? ¹⁸Manasseh rested with his fathers and was buried in his palace garden, the garden of Uzza. And Amon his son succeeded him as king.

Amon King of Judah

¹⁹Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem two years. His mother's name was Meshullemeth daughter of Haruz; she was from Jotbah. ²⁰He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done. ²¹He walked in all the ways of his father; he worshiped the idols his father had worshiped, and bowed down to them. ²²He forsook the LORD, the God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the LORD.

²³Amon's officials conspired against him and assassinated the king in his palace. ²⁴Then the people of the land killed all who had plotted against King Amon, and they made Josiah his son king in his place.

²⁵As for the other events of Amon's reign, and what he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? ²⁶He was buried in his grave in the garden of Uzza. And Josiah his son succeeded him as king.

The Book of the Law Found

22 Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. His mother's name was Jedidah daughter of Adaiah; she was from Bozkath. ²He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and walked in all the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left.

³In the eighteenth year of his reign, King Josiah sent the secretary, Shaphan son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, to the temple of the LORD. He said: ⁴"Go up to Hilkiah the high priest and have him get ready the money that has been brought into the temple of the LORD, which the doorkeepers have collected from the people. ⁵Have them entrust it to the men appointed to supervise the work on the temple. And have these men pay the workers who repair the temple of the LORD—⁶the carpenters, the builders and the masons. Also have them purchase timber and dressed stone to repair the temple. ⁷But they need not account for the money entrusted to them, because they are acting faithfully."

⁸Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the temple of the LORD." He gave it to Shaphan, who

read it. ⁹Then Shaphan the secretary went to the king and reported to him: "Your officials have paid out the money that was in the temple of the LORD and have entrusted it to the workers and supervisors at the temple." ¹⁰Then Shaphan the secretary informed the king: "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king.

¹¹When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his robes. ¹²He gave these orders to Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Achor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the secretary and Asaiah the king's attendant: ¹³"Go and inquire of the LORD for me and for the people and for all Judah about what is written in this book that has been found. Great is the LORD's anger that burns against us because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written there concerning us."

¹⁴Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achor, Shaphan and Asaiah went to speak to the prophetess Huldah, who was the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe. She lived in Jerusalem, in the Second District.

¹⁵She said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Tell the man who sent you to me. ¹⁶This is what the LORD says: I am going to bring disaster on this place and its people, according to everything written in the book the king of Judah has read. ¹⁷Because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods and provoked me to anger by all the idols their hands have made,^a my anger will burn against this place and will not be quenched." ¹⁸Tell the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says concerning the words you heard: ¹⁹Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I have spoken against this place and its people, that they would become accursed and laid waste, and because you tore your robes and wept in my presence, I have heard you,' declares the LORD. ²⁰Therefore I will gather you to your fathers, and you will be buried in peace. Your eyes will not see all the disaster I am going to bring on this place.'"

So they took her answer back to the king.

Josiah Renews the Covenant

23 Then the king called together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. ²He went up to the temple of the LORD with the men of Judah, the people of Jerusalem, the priests and the prophets—all the people from the least to the greatest. He read in their hearing all the words of the Book of

22:11 Dramatic Discovery

Most scholars believe the Book of the Law referred to was Deuteronomy—or at least a portion of that book. The find, confirmed by a prophetess, resulted in the most thoroughgoing religious reform Judah had ever seen.

^a17 Or by everything they have done

the Covenant, which had been found in the temple of the LORD. The king stood by the pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the LORD—to follow the LORD and keep his commands, regulations and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, thus confirming the words of the covenant written in this book. Then all the people pledged themselves to the covenant.

¹The king ordered Hilkiah the high priest, the priests next in rank and the doorkeepers to remove from the temple of the LORD all the articles made for Baal and Asherah and all the starry hosts. He burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron Valley and took the ashes to Bethel. ²He did away with the pagan priests appointed by the kings of Judah to burn incense on the high places of the towns of Judah and on those around Jerusalem—those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun and moon, to the constellations and to all the starry hosts. ³He took the Asherah pole from the temple of the LORD to the Kidron Valley outside Jerusalem and burned it there. He ground it to powder and scattered the dust over the graves of the common people. ⁴He also tore down the quarters of the male shrine prostitutes, which were in the temple of the LORD and where women did weaving for Asherah.

⁵Josiah brought all the priests from the towns of Judah and desecrated the high places, from Geba to Beersheba, where the priests had burned incense. He broke down the shrines^a at the gates—at the entrance to the Gate of Joshua, the city governor, which is on the left of the city gate. ⁶Although the priests of the high places did not serve at the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, they ate unleavened bread with their fellow priests.

⁷He desecrated Topheth, which was in the Valley of Ben Hinnom, so no one could use it to sacrifice his son or daughter in^b the fire to Molech. ⁸He removed from the entrance to the temple of the LORD the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun. They were in the court near the room of an official named Nathan-Melech. Josiah then burned the chariots dedicated to the sun.

⁹He pulled down the altars the kings of Judah had erected on the roof near the upper room of Ahaz, and the altars Manasseh had built in the two courts of the temple of the LORD. He removed them from there, smashed them to pieces and threw the rubble into the Kidron Valley. ¹⁰The king also desecrated the high places that were east of Jerusalem on the south of the Hill of Corruption the ones Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the vile goddess of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the vile god of Moab, and for Molech^c the detestable god of the people of Ammon. ¹¹Josiah smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles and covered the sites with human bones.

¹²Even the altar at Bethel, the high place made by Jeroboam son of Nebat, who had caused Israel to sin—even that altar and high place he demolished. He burned the high place and ground it to powder, and burned the Asherah pole also.

¹³Then Josiah looked around, and when he saw the tombs that were there on the hillside, he had the bones removed from them and burned on the altar to defile it, in accordance with the word of the LORD proclaimed by the man of God who foretold these things.

¹⁴The king asked, "What is that tombstone I see?"

The men of the city said, "It marks the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and pronounced against the altar of Bethel the very things you have done to it."

¹⁵"Leave it alone," he said. "Don't let anyone disturb his bones." So they spared his bones and those of the prophet who had come from Samaria.

¹⁶Just as he had done at Bethel, Josiah removed and defiled all the shrines at the high places that the kings of Israel had built in the towns of Samaria that had provoked the LORD to anger. ¹⁷Josiah slaughtered all the priests of those high places on the altars and burned human bones on them. Then he went back to Jerusalem.

¹⁸The king gave this order to all the people: "Celebrate the Passover to the LORD your God, as it is written in this Book of the Covenant." ¹⁹Not since the days of the judges who led Israel, nor throughout the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah, had any such Passover been observed. ²⁰But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, this Passover was celebrated to the LORD in Jerusalem.

²¹Furthermore, Josiah got rid of the mediums and spiritists, the household gods, the idols and all the other detestable things seen in Judah and Jerusalem. This he did to fulfill the requirements of the law written in the book that Hilkiah the priest had discovered in the temple of the LORD. ²²Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the LORD as he did—with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses.

²³Nevertheless, the LORD did not turn away from the heat of his fierce anger, which burned against Judah because of all that Manasseh had done to provoke him to anger. ²⁴So the LORD said, "I will remove Judah also from my presence as I removed Israel, and I will reject Jerusalem, the city I chose, and this temple, about which I said, 'There shall my Name be.'^d"

²⁵As for the other events of Josiah's reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah?

²⁶While Josiah was king, Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt went up to the Euphrates River to help the king of Assyria. King Josiah marched out to meet him in battle, but Neco faced him and killed him at Megiddo. ²⁷Josiah's servants brought his body in a chariot from Megiddo to Jerusalem and buried him in his own tomb. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz son of Josiah and anointed him and made him king in place of his father.

Jehoahaz King of Judah

²⁸Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he

^a8 Or high places

^b10 Or to make his son or daughter pass through

^c13 Hebrew Milcom

^d27 1 Kings 8:29

became king and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah; she was from Libnah. ³²He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, just as his fathers had done. ³³Pharaoh Neco put him in chains at Riblah in the land of Hamath so that he might not reign in Jerusalem and he imposed on Judah a levy of a hundred talents^a of silver and a talent^b of gold. ³⁴Pharaoh Neco made Eliakim son of Josiah king in place of his father Josiah and changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. But he took Jehoahaz and carried him off to Egypt, and there he died. ³⁵Jehoiakim paid Pharaoh Neco the silver and gold he demanded. In order to do so, he taxed the land and exacted the silver and gold from the people of the land according to their assessments.

Jehoiakim King of Judah

³⁶Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. His mother's name was Zebidah daughter of Pedaiah; she was from Rumah. ³⁷And he did evil in the eyes of the LORD, just as his fathers had done.

24 During Jehoiakim's reign, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded the land, and Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years. But then he changed his mind and rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. ²The LORD sent Babylonian,^d Aramean, Moabite and Ammonite raiders against him. He sent them to destroy Judah, in accordance with the word of the LORD proclaimed by his servants the prophets. ³Surely these things happened to Judah according to the LORD's command, in order to remove them from his presence because of the sins of Manasseh and all he had done, ⁴including the shedding of innocent blood. For he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the LORD was not willing to forgive.

⁵As for the other events of Jehoiakim's reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? ⁶Jehoiakim rested with his fathers. And Jehoiachin his son succeeded him as king.

The king of Egypt did not march out from his own country again, because the king of Babylon had taken all his territory, from the Wadi of Egypt to the Euphrates River.

Jehoiachin King of Judah

⁷Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. His mother's name was Nehushta daughter of Elnathan; she was from Jerusalem. ⁸He did

evil in the eyes of the LORD just as his father had done.

¹⁰At that time the officers of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon advanced on Jerusalem and laid siege to it. ¹¹And Nebuchadnezzar himself came up to the city while his officers were besieging it. ¹²Jehoiachin king of Judah, his mother, his attendants, his nobles and his officials all surrendered to him.

In the eighth year of the reign of the king of Babylon, he took Jehoiachin prisoner. ¹³As the LORD had declared, Nebuchadnezzar removed all the treasures from the temple of the LORD and from the royal palace, and took away all the gold articles that Solomon king of Israel had made for the temple of the LORD. ¹⁴He carried into exile all Jerusalem: all the officers and fighting men, and all the craftsmen and artisans—a total of ten thousand. Only the poorest people of the land were left.

¹⁵Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin captive to Babylon. He also took from Jerusalem to Babylon the king's mother, his wives, his officials and the leading men of the land. ¹⁶The king of Babylon also deported to Babylon the entire force of seven thousand fighting men, strong and fit for war, and a thousand craftsmen and artisans. ¹⁷He made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle, king in his place and changed his name to Zedekiah.

Zedekiah King of Judah

¹⁸Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah; she was from Libnah. ¹⁹He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, just as Jehoiakim had done. ²⁰It was because of the LORD's anger that all this happened to Jerusalem and Judah, and in the end he thrust them from his presence.

The Fall of Jerusalem

Now Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

25 So in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his whole army. He encamped outside the city and built siege works all around it. ²The city was kept under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. ³By the ninth day of the fourth^c month the famine in the city had become so severe that there was no food for the people to eat. ⁴Then the city wall was broken through, and the whole army fled at night through the gate between the two walls near the king's garden, though the Babylonians^d were surrounding the city. They fled toward the Arabah,^e but the Babylonian^f army pursued the king and overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his soldiers were separated from him and scattered, ⁶and he was captured. He was taken to the king of Babylon at Riblah, where sentence was pronounced on him. ⁷They killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes.

24:1 Jeremiah's Influence

The last two chapters, which closely parallel material in Jeremiah 52, reveal the influence of that prophet on the book of Kings. Some scholars have concluded that he wrote this historical record.

^a Hebrew: Septuagint (see also 2 Chron. 36:3); Neco at Riblah in Hamath removed him.

^b That is, about 75 pounds (about 34 kilograms).

^c Verses 25 and 26.

^d Or the Jordan Valley.

^e Or Children; also in

^f Or Children.

¹³ That is, about 3 3/4 tons (about 3.4 metric

¹⁴ See Jer. 52:6.

¹⁵ Or Children; also in

then they put out his eyes, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon.

10 In the seventh day of the fifth month, in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard, an official of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. 11 He set fire to the temple of the Lord, the royal palace and all the houses of Jerusalem. Every important building he burned down. 12 The whole Babylonian army, under the commander of the imperial guard, broke down the walls around Jerusalem. 13 Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard carried into exile the people who remained in the city, along with the rest of the populace and those who had gone over to the king of Babylon. 14 But the commander left behind some of the poorest people of the land to work the vineyards and fields.

15 The Babylonians broke up the bronze pillars, the movable stands and the bronze Sea that were at the temple of the Lord and they carried the bronze to Babylon. 16 They also took away the pots, shovels, wick trimmers, dishes and all the bronze articles used in the temple service. 17 The commander of the imperial guard took away the censers and sprinkling bowls—all that were made of pure gold or silver.

18 The bronze from the two pillars, the Sea and the movable stands, which Solomon had made for the temple of the Lord, was more than could be weighed. 19 Each pillar was twenty-seven feet¹⁷ high. The bronze capital on top of one pillar was four and a half feet¹⁸ high and was decorated with a network and pomegranates of bronze all around. The other pillar, with its network, was similar.

20 The commander of the guard took as prisoners Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the priest next in rank and the three doorkeepers. 21 Of those still in the city, he took the officer in charge of the fighting men and five royal advisers. He also took the secretary who was chief officer in charge of conscripting the people of the land and sixty of his men who were found in the city. 22 Nebuzaradan the commander took them all and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. 23 There at Riblah, in the land of Hamath, the king had them executed.

So Judah went into captivity, away from her land.

10 In the seventh day of the fifth month, in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard, an official of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. 11 He set fire to the temple of the Lord, the royal palace and all the houses of Jerusalem. Every important building he burned down. 12 The whole Babylonian army, under the commander of the imperial guard, broke down the walls around Jerusalem. 13 Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard carried into exile the people who remained in the city, along with the rest of the populace and those who had gone over to the king of Babylon. 14 But the commander left behind some of the poorest people of the land to work the vineyards and fields.

15 The Babylonians broke up the bronze pillars, the movable stands and the bronze Sea that were at the temple of the Lord and they carried the bronze to Babylon. 16 They also took away the pots, shovels, wick trimmers, dishes and all the bronze articles used in the temple service. 17 The commander of the imperial guard took away the censers and sprinkling bowls—all that were made of pure gold or silver.

Jehoiachin Released

27 In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the year that Merodach-baladan became king of Babylon, he released Jehoiachin from prison on the twenty-seventh day of the twelfth month. 28 He spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat of honor higher than those of the other kings who were with him in Babylon. 29 Jehoiachin put aside his prison clothes and for the rest of his life ate regularly at the king's table. 30 Day by day the king gave Jehoiachin a regular allowance as long as he lived.

25:22 A Kingdom Disappears

Judah's final rebellion against mighty Babylon failed, resulting in an 18-month siege and the destruction of Jerusalem. Survivors were taken away in what became known as the "Babylonian captivity," a tragic moment in Jewish history. God spelled out the reasons for this disaster in 2 Kings 21:10-16.

¹⁷ Hebrew eighteen cubits (about 8.1 meters)

¹⁸ Hebrew three cubits (about 1.3 meters)

²⁷ Also called Amel-Marduk

A Lineup of Rulers

The two-part book of kings can be confusing. First, there's one nation to keep track of, then two, then one again. In all 39 rulers are profiled. Little wonder it takes a biblical scholar to keep all the details straight.

The following list of 38 kings and one queen should help clarify the history of Israel in the North and Judah in the South. As you come across the name of a ruler in one of the history books or in a book of the prophets, simply refer to the capsule description below for a brief summary of life during the time of that ruler or prophet.

In all, the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were united for 120 years and divided for just over 200 years. Then Israel disappeared and Judah lasted alone another 135 years. After that, no independent Jewish nation existed until the 20th century.

The timeline on the bottom of pages 340-346 places the major prophets in the appropriate time period along with the rulers of their era. Prophets whose names appear in shaded boxes spoke to Israel, those listed against a white background spoke to Judah. (Dating of some rulers is inexact because of overlapping reigns.)

UNITED KINGDOM

SAUL DAVID SOLOMON

These first three kings of Israel each ruled approximately 40 years, and so for 120 years, Israel was one nation. The books of Samuel and Chronicles, along with 1 Kings, describe their reigns in great detail. Later, Jews would look back on this time as the Golden Age of Israel.

DIVIDED KINGDOM

ISRAEL

JEROBOAM I • 22 Years

He was handpicked by God to lead a reform, but this first king of the Northern Kingdom proved to be one of Israel's worst. For years afterward, evil kings were described as "walking in the ways of Jeroboam." It was he who firmly established the split-off nation of Israel, uniting 10 rebel tribes. To prevent his people from worshiping in Jerusalem (now enemy territory), he built a new capital city and set up the notorious "high places" as alternative worship sites. The high places and calf worship plagued Israel throughout its entire history. First Kings records that God decided to abandon Israel during the reign of Jeroboam, the Northern Kingdom's very first ruler. (1 Kings 11:26-15:25; 2 Chronicles 10:2-13:20)

JUDAH

REHOBAM • 17 Years

Judah's first king had a checkered career. Sometimes he obeyed God and listened to the prophets; sometimes he did not. At first, the Jewish religion gained strength when all priests and Levites came over to Judah. But, before long, idolatry found its way into Judah as well as into Israel, and Judah suffered humiliating punishment from the armies of Egypt. Thus Judah's first king set an unfortunate pattern for his successors. (1 Kings 11:43-14:31; 2 Chronicles 10-12)

ABIJAH • 3 Years

War with Israel in the North dragged on throughout Abijah's three-year reign. The two splinter nations were still adjusting to each other's independence. Abijah offered no improvement on his father Rehoboam's immoral ways. (1 Kings 15:1-8; 2 Chronicles 13:1-14:1)

ISRAEL

JEROBOAM I (cont.)**NADAB • 2 Years**

Jeroboam's son followed the errors of his father in every way and his reign merits only eight verses. Israel's first dynasty ended abruptly when Nadab fell victim to a murder plot launched by Baasha. (1 Kings 15:25-32)

BAASHA • 24 Years

After gaining the throne in a violent manner, Baasha lasted 24 years. He showed no inclination to reverse the evil practices begun by Jeroboam. The prophet Jehu predicted his death. (1 Kings 15:33-16:7; 2 Chronicles 16)

ELAH • 2 Years

The Bible records only one incident from Elah's reign: his chariot commander staged a military coup while Elah was off getting drunk. Elah was killed, along with all other descendants of his father, Baasha. Israel's second dynasty, therefore, only lasted 26 years, and another family took the throne. (1 Kings 16:8-14)

ZIMRI • 7 Days

Evidently, mutinous chariot commander Zimri acted without his army's support. The army revolted against him, and his "reign" ended seven days after it had begun, in a suicidal fire set in his palace. (1 Kings 16:15-20)

JUDAH

ASA • 41 Years

Asa and his son Jehoshaphat were the only kings mentioned in 1 Kings who did "what was right in the eyes of the Lord." Second Chronicles gives a much fuller account of Asa's 41 years. He began religious reforms that turned into a kind of wildfire revival. He drove heathen cults out of the land—even removing his own grandmother as queen mother because of her idolatry. Asa also welcomed to Judah many refugees from Israel. Late in his reign he backslid and got bogged down in foreign wars, making an alliance with neighboring Aram to hold Israel at bay. (1 Kings 15:9-24; 2 Chronicles 14-16)

ISRAEL

OMRI • 12 Years

Secular historians rate Omri as one of Israel's most powerful and capable political rulers. In fact, Assyrian records call Israel "the land of Omri." He outlasted a rival to the throne, expanded Israel's lands, and founded the city of Samaria, which would remain Israel's capital for 150 years. But he gets scant mention in the Bible; it dismisses him for sinning "more than all those before him." (1 Kings 16:21-28)

AHAB • 22 Years

In a competition for alltime worst king of Israel, Ahab would win hands down. He married the notorious Jezebel, a pagan priestess who promptly installed Baal worship as Israel's official religion. First Kings departs from its usually brief style to give a detailed treatment of Ahab's life and the great spiritual crisis then. During that time, Elijah appeared on the scene to represent the true God against Queen Jezebel's religion. God gave Ahab plenty of opportunities to reform. Ahab humbled himself at least once, postponing disaster, but a nasty incident over Naboth's vineyard sealed his fate. Politically, Ahab forged a successful alliance with Israel's neighbor, Judah, and the divided kingdoms lived at peace for the first time since Jeroboam. Ultimately, however, his evil practices would spread into Judah. (1 Kings 16:29-22:40; 2 Chronicles 18)

AHAZIAH • 2 Years

Like his father, Ahab, and mother, Jezebel, Ahaziah continued to worship Baal and to fight against Elijah. He was no match. His reign lasted only part of two years, and the descriptions of him reveal a weak, vengeful ruler. (1 Kings 22:40-2 Kings 1:18)

JORAM • 12 Years

JUDAH

ASA (cont.)**JEHOSHAPHAT • 25 Years**

Judah enjoyed the rare blessing of two good kings back to back. Jehoshaphat continued the spirit of Asa's rule, and found ways to further it. He sent out princes to teach from the Book of the Law in the cities of Judah and established courts of justice throughout the country. With a large army and well-fortified cities, he attained a level of peace and prosperity rare in Judah's history. His one serious mistake was in linking himself to Israel's wicked king Ahab through marriage and military alliance. (1 Kings 22:41-50; 2 Chronicles 17-20)

PROPHETS

AHAB

AHAZIAH JORAM

ELIJAH

ASA

JEHOSHAPHAT

885 B.C.

850 B.C.

ISRAEL

JORAM (cont.)

Although an improvement over his father and mother (Ahab and Jezebel), Joram ultimately failed to do right. He modified some of the worship of Baal, and at times had a respectful relationship with the prophet Elisha. But Joram lived in treacherous times. The nation of Israel was attacking from the east, and God had set in motion an internal plot, led by Jehu, against Ahab's heirs. Finally, Joram fell victim to Jehu's arrow, ending the evil dynasty founded by Omri. (2 Kings 3:1-9:26)

JEHU • 28 Years

Not to be confused with the prophet of the same name, this Jehu was a fast-driving, impetuous military man. He began a holy mission to purge Ahab's influence out of Israel and Judah, but considerably overstepped his bounds. He killed Joram, had Jezebel thrown from a window, and slew 70 princes, piling their heads in two heaps by a gate. Then he slew all the priests and prophets of Baal and tricked the worshipers of Baal into a trap that led to a mass slaughter. Unfortunately, Jehu's zeal for violence did not translate into zeal for justice. His actions tore Israel apart for generations, and he did little to attend to the nation's spiritual health. Israel also began to lose political strength. (2 Kings 9-10)

JUDAH

JEHORAM • 8 Years

After 60 good years under Asa and Jehoshaphat, Judah experienced a terrible regression under Jehoram. He began by killing his brother and then marrying Athaliah, daughter of Israel's Ahab and Jezebel. She promptly led him into Baal worship. Elijah, who mostly prophesied to Israel, sent Judah's king Jehoram a letter predicting the severe bowel disease that would lead to his death. Second Chronicles reports that "he passed away, to no one's regret." (2 Kings 8:16-24; 2 Chronicles 21)

AHAZIAH • 1 Year

In effect Ahaziah served as a mere puppet representative of the notorious queen Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. He fell victim to the bloody purge of Jehu. (2 Kings 8:25-29; 2 Chronicles 22:1-9)

ATHALIAH • 7 Years

Queen Athaliah first corrupted her husband Jehoram and dominated her son Ahaziah. Then, after Ahaziah's death, she killed off her infant grandchildren to remove rivals to the throne. She ruled Judah for seven years, leading the kingdom into a dark time of Baal worship and evil. Providentially, however, one heir escaped her reach. The young Joash, hidden away by his mother, emerged at the age of seven to lead a popular revolt against Athaliah. Athaliah, the only woman to rule either of the two kingdoms, was the last of Ahab's family to die. She had come within one baby of wiping out King David's royal line. (2 Kings 11; 2 Chronicles 22:10-23:21)

JOASH • 40 Years

JEHU

ELISHA

JEHORAM AHAZIAH ATHALIAH JOASH

ISRAEL

JEHU (cont.)

JEHOAHAZ • 17 Years

After all his father Jehu had done to exterminate Baal worship, Jehoahaz immediately reinstated it. He ruled 17 years, marked by a series of embarrassing military defeats at the hands of neighboring Aram. He did turn to God in desperation at least once, and Israel got some reprieve. (2 Kings 13:1-9)

JEHOASH • 16 Years

Although Jehoash did not break the evil pattern of Israel's kings, he showed some bright spots. He honored the prophet Elisha, and God allowed him to recover much of the territory that Aram had taken from Israel. (Note that Judah also had a king named Joash, the shortened version of Jehoash.) (2 Kings 13:10-14 16)

JEROBOAM II • 41 Years

It seems that God gave Israel one last chance under King Jeroboam II. This king ruled a strong and prosperous nation. The Bible gives scant mention of his reign, but it lasted 41 years, during which Israel recovered nearly all its former territory. The prophet Jonah lived then possibly assisting the king in his frontier defense against Assyria. In addition, Amos and Hosea were active, railing against the terrible social and religious corruption of those affluent times. In a remarkable turn of events, Israel survived as a nation for only a few decades after this stable period. (2 Kings 14 23-29)

ZECHARIAH AND SHALLUM • 7 Months

After Jeroboam II, the nation splintered into rival factions. The first king (Zechariah) ruled for six months, the second (Shallum) only one month. Both died violently. (2 Kings 15:8-16)

JUDAH

JOASH (cont.)

He swept into power at the crest of a revolt against his wicked grandmother Athaliah. And as long as Joash followed the advice of Jehoida the priest, he did well. Most notably, he financed massive projects to repair the temple. After Jehoida died, however, Joash allowed idolatry to prosper once more. He strayed so far from the ideals of his youth that he ordered the prophet Zechariah to be stoned—the same prophet whose father, Jehoida, had saved his life. Punishment came swiftly, at the hands of a plundering army. Finally, Joash's own servants turned against him and avenged Zechariah's murder. (2 Kings 12; 2 Chronicles 24)

AMAZIAH • 29 Years

Second Kings concludes that Amaziah "did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, but not as his father David had done." Yet the author mostly comments on Amaziah's failures. He began his rule by executing those who had killed his father. Then he ignored a prophet's advice and attacked Edom, bringing back idols from there. Flushed with military success, he launched a foolhardy campaign against Israel. The trouncing that resulted discredited his leadership, and he spent his last 12 years in exile. (2 Kings 14:1-22; 2 Chronicles 25)

AZARIAH • 52 Years

Called Uzziah in Chronicles, this king reigned some 50 years, the longest of Judah's kings. As a young man, he took advice from a prophet named Zechariah. He built up the army of Judah and worked on its agriculture and water supplies. Until Azariah, Judah had been a struggling kingdom, with enemy fortifications just five miles from Jerusalem. Under him, the nation achieved true strength. Even so, Azariah gets a short review in the Bible because of his spiritual failings. He did not remove the high places, and he violated the Law of Moses by taking on the work of priests himself. (2 Kings 15:1-17, 2 Chronicles 26)

JEHU JEHOAHAZ JEHOASH

ELISHA (cont.)

JEROBOAM

JONAH

AMOS

JOASH

AMAZIAH

AZARIAH

750 B.C.

820 B.C.

ISRAEL

MENAHM • 10 Years

Menahem lasted for ten turbulent years. He gained the throne by murder, and his reign showed a similar ruthlessness. The first of Assyria's three invasions—Israel's "World War I" (see Introduction to 2 Kings)—occurred during Menahem's years, and he frantically tried to buy off the invaders. (2 Kings 15:14-22)

PEKAHIAH • 2 Years

Israel was quickly sliding toward anarchy and extermination. Pekahiah survived only two years before a military coup overthrew him. (2 Kings 15:23-26)

PEKAH • 20 Years

Pekah turned to international intrigue and conspiracy. He attempted to dethrone the king of Judah in the South. But Judah bought help from Assyria, which promptly invaded Israel for the second time. After occupying all major cities in Israel except the capital Samaria, Assyria began deporting thousands of conquered Israelites to other lands. (2 Kings 15:27-31)

HOSHEA • 9 Years

The Bible judges Hoshea as less wicked than some of his predecessors. Nevertheless, Israel's death was certain. Hoshea angered Assyria by turning south to Egypt for aid. The Assyrians attacked, and after a terrible three-year siege the last stronghold, Samaria, fell to the conquerors. Assyria deported the vast majority of Israel's population, who became the "ten lost tribes of Israel." (2 Kings 17)

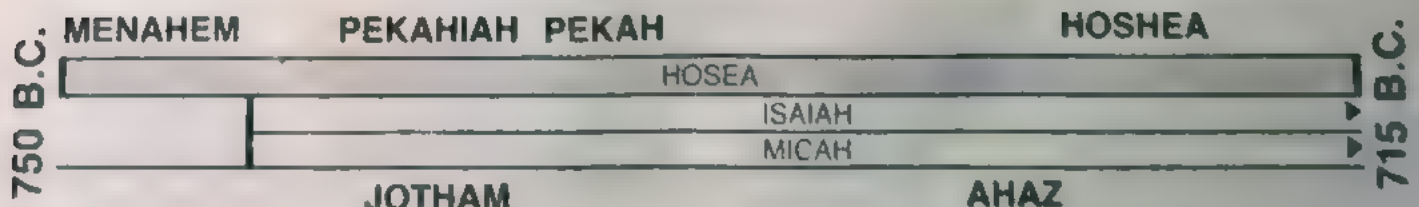
JUDAH

AZARIAH (cont.)**JOTHAM • 16 Years**

After serving as Azariah's proxy king for 15 years (while Azariah was quarantined with leprosy), Jotham took over and continued the practices of his father. He expanded Judah's economic and military strength, but did not pursue religious reforms as fully as he should have. (2 Kings 15:32-38; 2 Chronicles 27)

AHAZ • 16 Years

At the very moment Ahaz was being crowned, armies from the North led by king Pekah of Israel were marching into Judah. Ahaz ignored the prophet Isaiah's advice to put his trust in God rather than military alliances. Turning to the mighty empire of Assyria, he purchased aid with treasures from the temple and the king's palace. The strategy worked temporarily: Israel's armies withdrew to defend themselves. But Ahaz opened the doors for later Assyrian invasions of Judah itself. Worse, he made copies of foreign gods and set them up in Jerusalem. Under him, religion in Judah took a precipitous drop. He went so far as to sacrifice his sons in the fire, following the detestable ways of foreign nations. (2 Kings 16; 2 Chronicles 28)

ASSYRIAN INVASION

ASSYRIAN INVASION

ONLY JUDAH SURVIVES

HEZEKIAH • 29 Years

King Hezekiah gets full treatment in both Kings and Chronicles. The first book stresses the political side of his reign while the second reports on his religious reforms. Both were impressive: Hezekiah was one of the best and most important kings of Judah. He immediately stopped idolatry by reopening and cleansing the temple and calling for a period of national repentance. He resurrected the Passover celebration, and worship in Israel reached a peak that had not been seen since the time of David and Solomon. In all this, he listened carefully to advice from the prophet Isaiah. Yet Hezekiah hardly lived in a peaceful era. He faced imminent danger from Assyria and barely survived an invasion and siege. God honored his faithfulness with a miraculous military intervention. In an unprecedented act, he also added 15 years to Hezekiah's life. (2 Kings 18-20; 2 Chronicles 29-32; Isaiah 36-39)

MANASSEH • 55 Years

Whatever good Hezekiah had accomplished in his exemplary reign, his son Manasseh undid in 55 years of the worst rule in Judah's history. He reversed Hezekiah's reforms, bringing in all forms of idolatry, including the occult and witchcraft. He killed off prophets, erected idols in God's temple, and sacrificed his own sons on the altar of a heathen god. The Assyrian empire took Manasseh prisoner, leading him away with a hook through his nose. Later he repented, but great damage had been done. After Manasseh, God pronounced a final judgment on the future of Judah. (2 Kings 21:1-18; 2 Chronicles 33:1-20)

ISAIAH 700

MICAH 700

HEZEKIAH

MANASSEH

640 B.C.

715 B.C.

JUDAH

AMON • 2 Years

Amon merely continued the practices of his father. He died at the hands of his servants. (2 Kings 21:19-26; 2 Chronicles 33:21-25)

JOSIAH • 31 Years

Judah's slide to destruction was interrupted by the amazing rule of its all-time best king. Josiah came to the throne at age eight, but received great counsel from the high priests. In 11 years he carried out the most extensive religious reforms Judah had ever seen. He removed and destroyed the altars, idols, and symbols of ungodly worship from the temple, and destroyed pagan centers throughout the land. In a thrilling sequence of events, he oversaw the rediscovery of the Law of Moses and acted immediately on what it taught. No king equals Josiah for his sincere and devout practices. He even extended his reforms into the decimated regions of Israel in the North.

Josiah had a time of military peace, for during his reign the Assyrian empire was disintegrating. But he unwisely thrust himself into international politics by marching against Egypt. (The prophet Jeremiah had urged against the Egyptian campaign.) Judah would never recover from this fatal mistake, for Josiah died suddenly in battle. His death shocked the nation. After Josiah's death, Egypt installed a puppet king, and no one after him had the ability to rally Judah's religious or political strength. (2 Kings 22:1-23:30; 2 Chronicles 34-35)

JEHOAHAZ • 3 Months

The third son of Josiah lasted only three months before being sacked by a pharaoh and carried off in chains. (2 Kings 23:30-34; 2 Chronicles 36:1-4)

ZEPHANIAH

JEREMIAH

AMON

JEHOAHAZ

600 B.C.

JUDAH

JEHOIAKIM • 11 Years

Installed by an Egyptian pharaoh, Jehoiakim found himself trapped when Egypt was defeated by a surging Babylon. He quickly shifted allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. One of Judah's worst kings, he stubbornly tried to have the prophet Jeremiah put to death (Numerous passages in Jeremiah's book make plain his scorn for Jehoiakim.) Finally, after an ill advised revolt against Nebuchadnezzar, Jehoiakim was captured and killed. (2 Kings 23:36-24:6; 2 Chronicles 36:5-8)

JEHOIACHIN • 3 Months

The struggles with Babylon were the "World War II" in Israel's history (see Introduction to 2 Kings). After holding out for three months against Nebuchadnezzar's armies, Jehoiachin surrendered, and was carried away with many other captives, including the prophet Ezekiel. He lived in a Babylonian prison for 40 years. (2 Kings 24:6-17; 25:27-30; 2 Chronicles 36:8-10)

ZEDEKIAH • 11 Years

Zedekiah ruled over Judah during the last 11 years of its existence as an independent state. A weak king, he took bad advice from princes and advisers and often made unwise decisions. He ignored Jeremiah's advice to remain loyal to Babylon and joined an alliance against that empire. As a result, Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem for almost two years, bringing the city to the verge of starvation. At last the Babylonians made a breach in the wall and overran the city. They burned Solomon's temple, the king's palace, and other buildings, and destroyed the walls around Jerusalem. Finally, they took everything of value from the temple. The city was utterly looted. (2 Kings 24:17-25:7; 2 Chronicles 36:11-20)

BABYLONIAN INVASION

Zechariah, Haggai, and Malachi prophesied later, to the Jewish refugees who had returned from Babylon.

586 B.C. BABYLONIAN INVASION

JEREMIAH (cont.)	DANIEL
EZEKIEL	
JEHOIAKIM ZEDEKIAH	

600 B.C.

525 B.C.

1 CHRONICLES

INTRODUCTION

A Family Record

These facts reminded Israelites of their place in God's plan

And who is like your people Israel—the one nation on earth whose God went out to redeem a people for himself?" 17:21

In former days, many Christian families prized their family Bible. Often the only book in the house, it served for more than reading. It was also the family memory bank. Every important event—a marriage, a birth, a death—was recorded on its flyleaves. The Bible was passed down from generation to generation, and through it, a family kept track of its past.

The book of 1 Chronicles is something like that—a record of Israel's family history, and particularly of David, Israel's greatest king. In fact, at first glance, 1 Chronicles looks like a rehash of David's life as told in 2 Samuel and 1 Kings. Some of the most dramatic episodes in David's life—his clash with Goliath, his sin with Bathsheba—don't make it into this account. But David's organization of the temple is told in great detail, and long lists and genealogies fill over half the book.

Because of that, few people read 1 Chronicles. Most of us are more interested in personalities than in institutions and genealogies.

David's Lasting Impact

First Chronicles, however, is far more interested in David's lasting accomplishments than in his ups and downs as an individual. The nation he led was more than a collection of inspired individuals. It was founded on God's unshakable promises to the children of Abraham. He had promised to be with them. He had promised to provide leadership. He had promised to make them a blessing to the world. These promises took shape in enduring institutions—the temple and the monarchy, most notably.

Why a List of Names?

The first nine chapters of 1 Chronicles trace the genealogy of Israel back to Adam. The author brings together more family records than you'll find anywhere else in the Bible. These records helped the Israelites remember their position as members in God's chosen family. God had given them unique ways to follow and worship him. First Chronicles reminded the Israelites—as it reminds us—of how different their family was meant to be.

How to Read 1 Chronicles

Few will enjoy reading 1 Chronicles's many lists and genealogies straight through. You should approach them more like a puzzle. Don't get lost in the hundreds of names. Instead, try to understand how the different parts of 1 Chronicles fit together. For each section ask, "Why was this included? What did it mean to the original audience—to the Israelites who had returned from exile in Babylon? How did it encourage them as they made a new beginning?"

First Chronicles divides cleanly into two parts. The first nine chapters are mainly lists of names. In these, the Israelites read their family tree and discovered their heritage. Chapters 10 to 29 tell David's story, focusing on the legacy he left behind for future generations—especially the temple. David, a founding father of Israel, transformed the nation in a way that lasted hundreds of years.

PLANS FOR READING 1 CHRONICLES

PLAN 1: An Overview of 1 Chronicles in 1 Day

- Day 1: Read the Introduction to 1 Chronicles, and chapter 17, which describes God's promise to David and David's prayerful response.

PLAN 2: All of 1 Chronicles in 17 Days
 You should only skim chapters 1-9 and 23-27, which contain lists and genealogies.
☐ 1-9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22
☐ 23-27 ☐ 28 ☐ 29

Historical Records From Adam to Abraham

To Noah's Sons

1 Adam, Seth, Enosh, ²Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, ³Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah.

⁴The sons of Noah:^a
 Shem, Ham and Japheth

The Japhethites

⁵The sons^b of Japheth:
 Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Me-
 shech and Tiras.

⁶The sons of Gomer:
 Ashkenaz, Riphath^c and Togarmah.

⁷The sons of Javan
 Elshah, Tarshish, the Kittim and the
 Rodanum

The Hamites

⁸The sons of Ham:
 Cush, Mizraim,^d Put and Canaan.

⁹The sons of Cush:
 Seba, Havilah, Sabta, Raamah and Sab-
 techa.

The sons of Raamah:
 Sheba and Dedan.

¹⁰Cush was the father^e of
 Nimrod, who grew to be a mighty warrior
 on earth

¹¹Mizraim was the father of
 the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naph-
 tuhites, ¹²Pathrusites, Casluhites (from
 whom the Philistines came) and Caphto-
 nites

¹³Canaan was the father of
 Sidon his firstborn,^f and of the Hittites,
¹⁴Jebusites, Amontes, Girgashites, ¹⁵Hi-
 vites, Arkites, Sinites, ¹⁶Arvadites, Zema-
 nites and Hamathites.

The Semites

¹⁷The sons of Shem:
 Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud and Aram.

The sons of Aram:
 Uz, Hul, Gether and Meshech.

¹⁸Arphaxad was the father of Shelah,
 and Shelah the father of Eber.

¹⁹Two sons were born to Eber:

One was named Peleg,^h because in his
 time the earth was divided; his brother
 was named Joktan.

²⁰Joktan was the father of
 Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah,
²¹Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²²Obal,ⁱ
 Abimael, Sheba, ²³Ophir, Havilah and
 Jobab. All these were sons of Joktan.

²⁴Shem, Arphaxad,^j Shelah,

²⁵Eber, Peleg, Reu,

²⁶Serug, Nahor, Terah

²⁷and Abram (that is, Abraham).

The Family of Abraham

²⁸The sons of Abraham:
 Isaac and Ishmael.

Descendants of Hagar

²⁹These were their descendants:

Nebaioth the firstborn of Ishmael, Kedar,
 Adbeel, Mibsam, ³⁰Mishma, Dumah,
 Massa, Hadad, Tema, ³¹Jetur, Naphish
 and Kedemah. These were the sons of
 Ishmael.

Descendants of Keturah

³²The sons born to Keturah, Abraham's concu-
 bine:

Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak
 and Shuah.

The sons of Jokshan:
 Sheba and Dedan.

³³The sons of Midian:

Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida and El-
 daah.

All these were descendants of Keturah.

Descendants of Sarah

³⁴Abraham was the father of Isaac.

The sons of Isaac:

Esau and Israel.

Esau's Sons

³⁵The sons of Esau:

Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jalam and Korah.

³⁶The sons of Eliphaz:

^{a4} Septuagint, Hebrew does not have *The sons of Noah*

and 20 ^{b5} Sons may mean descendants or successors or nations; also in verses 6-10, 17
 and 20 ^{c6} Many Hebrew manuscripts and Vulgate (see also Septuagint and Gen 10:3), most Hebrew manuscripts Diphath

^{d8} That is, Egypt, also in verse 11

^{e10} Father may mean ancestor or predecessor or founder, also in verses 11, 13, 18 and 20

^{f13} Or of the Sidonians, the foremost

^{g17} One Hebrew manuscript and some Septuagint manuscripts (see also Gen. 10:23); most

Hebrew manuscripts do not have this line.

^{h19} Peleg means division.

ⁱ²² Some Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac (see also Gen

10:28), most Hebrew manuscripts Ebal

^{j24} Hebrew, some Septuagint manuscripts Arphaxad, Cainan (see also note at Gen 11:10)

Teman, Omar, Zepho,⁴ Gatam and Kenaz,

by Timna Amalek.⁵

¹The sons of Reuel

Nathath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah.

The People of Seir in Edom

¹The sons of Seir:

Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer and Dishan.

²The sons of Lotan

Hori and Homam. Timna was Lotan's sister.

³The sons of Shobal

Alvan,⁶ Manahath, Ebal, Shepho and Onam.

The sons of Zibeon:

Aiah and Anah.

⁴The son of Anah.

Dishon.

The sons of Dishon.

Hemdan,⁴ Eshban, Ithran and Keran.

⁴The sons of Ezer.

Bilhan, Zaavan and Akan.⁶

The sons of Dishan¹.

Uz and Aran.

The Rulers of Edom

¹These were the kings who reigned in Edom before any Israelite king reigned:

Bela son of Beor, whose city was named Dinhabah.

⁴When Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah from Bozrah succeeded him as king.

⁵When Jobab died, Husham from the land of the Temanites succeeded him as king.

⁶When Husham died, Hadad son of Bedad, who defeated Midian in the country of Moab, succeeded him as king. His city was named Avith.

⁷When Hadad died, Samlah from Masrekah succeeded him as king.

⁸When Samlah died, Shaul from Rehoboth on the river^h succeeded him as king.

⁹When Shaul died, Baal-Hanan son of Acbor succeeded him as king.

¹⁰When Baal-Hanan died, Hadad succeeded him as king. His city was named Pau,¹ and his wife's name was Mehetabel daughter of Matred, the daughter of Me-Zahab. ⁵Hadad also died.

The chiefs of Edom were:

Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, ⁵²Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, ⁵³Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar,

⁵⁴Magdiel and Iram. These were the chiefs of Edom.

Israel's Sons

2 These were the sons of Israel:

Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, ²Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad and Asher.

Judah

To Hezron's Sons

³The sons of Judah:

Er, Onan and Shelah. These three were born to him by a Canaanite woman, the daughter of Shua. Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the LORD's sight; so the LORD put him to death. ⁴Tamar, Judah's daughter-in-law, bore him Perez and Zerah. Judah had five sons in all.

⁵The sons of Perez:

Hezron and Hamul.

⁶The sons of Zerah:

Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol and Darda—five in all.

⁷The son of Carmi:

Achar,¹ who brought trouble on Israel by violating the ban on taking devoted things.¹

⁸The son of Ethan:

Azariah.

⁹The sons born to Hezron were:

Jerahmeel, Ram and Caleb.¹⁰

From Ram Son of Hezron

¹⁰Ram was the father of

Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, the leader of the people of Judah. ¹¹Nahshon was the father of Salmon,¹¹ Salmon the father of Boaz, ¹²Boaz the father of Obed and Obed the father of Jesse.

¹³Jesse was the father of

Eliab his firstborn; the second son was Abinadab, the third Shimea, ¹⁴the fourth Nethanel, the fifth Raddai, ¹⁵the sixth Ozem and the seventh David. ¹⁶Their sisters were Zeruah and Abigail. Zeruah's three sons were Abishai, Joab and Asahel. ¹⁷Abigail was the mother of Amasa, whose father was Jether the Ishmaelite.

Caleb Son of Hezron

¹⁸Caleb son of Hezron had children by his wife Azubah (and by Jerioth). These were her sons: Jeshar, Shobab and Ardon. ¹⁹When Azubah died, Caleb married Ephrath, who bore him Hur. ²⁰Hur was the father of Uri, and Uri the father of Bezalel.

²¹Later, Hezron lay with the daughter of Makir

³30 Many Hebrew manuscripts, some Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac (see also Gen. 36:11), most Hebrew manuscripts Zephi.

⁵30 Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also Gen. 36:12), Hebrew Gatam, Kenaz, Timna and Amalek.

and some Septuagint manuscripts (see also Gen. 36:23), most Hebrew manuscripts Ahan.

Septuagint manuscripts (see also Gen. 36:26), most Hebrew manuscripts Hamran.

(see also Gen. 36:27), most Hebrew manuscripts Zaavan, Jaakan.

Israelite king reigned over them.

⁴⁸ Possibly the Euphrates.

Vulgate and Syriac (see also Gen. 36:39), most Hebrew manuscripts Pau.

manuscripts and Syriac (see also 1 Kings 4:31), most Hebrew manuscripts Dara.

¹⁷ The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the Lord, often by totally destroying.

¹⁹ Hebrew Kerubai, a variant of Caleb.

²¹ Septuagint (see also Ruth 4:21), Hebrew Salma.

the father of Gilead (he had married her when he was sixty years old), and she bore him Segub. ²²Segub was the father of Iair, who controlled twenty-three towns in Gilead. ²³(But Geshur and Aram captured Havvoth Iair, as well as Kenath with its surrounding settlements—sixty towns.) All these were descendants of Makir the father of Gilead.

²⁴After Hezron died in Caleb Ephrathah, Abijah the wife of Hezron bore him Ashhur the father of Tekoa.

Jerahmeel Son of Hezron

²⁵The sons of Jerahmeel the firstborn of Hezron

Ram his firstborn, Bunah, Oren, Ozem and Ahijah. ²⁶Jerahmeel had another wife, whose name was Atarah; she was the mother of Onam.

²⁷The sons of Ram the firstborn of Jerahmeel: Maaz, Jamin and Eker.

²⁸The sons of Onam: Shammai and Jada.

The sons of Shammai: Nadab and Abishur.

²⁹Abishur's wife was named Abihail, who bore him Ahban and Molid.

³⁰The sons of Nadab: Seled and Appaim. Seled died without children.

³¹The son of Appaim: Ishu, who was the father of Sheshan. Sheshan was the father of Ahlai.

³²The sons of Jada, Shammai's brother: Jether and Jonathan. Jether died without children.

³³The sons of Jonathan: Peleth and Zaza. These were the descendants of Jerahmeel.

³⁴Sheshan had no sons—only daughters. He had an Egyptian servant named Jarha. ³⁵Sheshan gave his daughter in marriage to his servant Jarha, and she bore him Attai.

³⁶Attai was the father of Nathan, Nathan the father of Zabad.

³⁷Zabad the father of Ephlal, Ephlal the father of Obed.

³⁸Obed the father of Jehu, Jehu the father of Azariah.

³⁹Azariah the father of Helez, Helez the father of Eleasah.

⁴⁰Eleasah the father of Sismai, Sismai the father of Shallum.

⁴¹Shallum the father of Jekamiah, and Jekamiah the father of Elishama.

The Clans of Caleb

⁴²The sons of Caleb the brother of Jerahmeel: Mesha his firstborn, who was the father

of Ziph, and his son Mareshah, who was the father of Hebron.

⁴³The sons of Hebron:

Korah, Iappuah, Rekem and Shema. ⁴⁴Shema was the father of Raham, and Raham the father of Jorkeam. Rekem was the father of Shammai. ⁴⁵The son of Shammai was Maon, and Maon was the father of Beth Zur.

⁴⁶Caleb's concubine Ephah was the mother of Haran, Moza and Gazez. Haran was the father of Gazez.

⁴⁷The sons of Jahdai:

Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah and Shaaph.

⁴⁸Caleb's concubine Maacah was the mother of Sheber and Tirhanah. ⁴⁹She also gave birth to Shaaph the father of Madmannah and to Sheva the father of Macbenah and Gibeon. Caleb's daughter was Acsah. ⁵⁰These were the descendants of Caleb.

The sons of Hur the firstborn of Ephrathah: Shobal the father of Kiriath Jearim, ⁵¹Salma the father of Bethlehem, and Hareph the father of Beth Gader.

⁵²The descendants of Shobal the father of Kiriath Jearim were:

Haroeh, half the Manahathites, ⁵³and the clans of Kinath Jeonm: the Ithrites, Puthites, Shumathites and Mishraitites. From these descended the Zorathites and Esh-taolites.

⁵⁴The descendants of Salma:

Bethlehem, the Netophathites, Atroth Beth Joab, half the Manahathites, the Zorites, ⁵⁵and the clans of scribes who lived at Jabez: the Tirathites, Shimeathites and Sucathites. These are the Kenites who came from Hammath, the father of the house of Recab.

The Sons of David

3 These were the sons of David born to him in Hebron.

The firstborn was Amnon the son of Ahinoam of Jezreel; the second, Daniel the son of Abigail of Carmel;

²the third, Absalom the son of Maacah daughter of Talmai king of Geshur;

the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith;

³the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; and the sixth, Ithream, by his wife Eglah.

⁴These six were born to David in Hebron, where he reigned seven years and six months.

David reigned in Jerusalem thirty-three years, ⁵and these were the children born to him there.

Shammua, ⁶Shobab, Nathan and Solomon. These four were by Bathsheba daughter of Ammiel. ⁷There were also Ib-

²³ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

²⁵ Or Oren and Ozem, by

²⁶ Or father of Beth Ilacab.

²⁷ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

²⁴ Father may mean.

²⁵ Or Oren and Ozem, by

²⁶ Or father of Beth Ilacab.

²⁷ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

²⁸ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

²⁹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

³⁰ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

³¹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

³² Or captured the settlements of Iair.

³³ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

³⁴ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

³⁵ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

³⁶ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

³⁷ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

³⁸ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

³⁹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁴⁰ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁴¹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁴² Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁴³ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁴⁴ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁴⁵ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁴⁶ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁴⁷ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁴⁸ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁴⁹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁵⁰ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁵¹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁵² Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁵³ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁵⁴ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁵⁵ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁵⁶ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁵⁷ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁵⁸ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁵⁹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁶⁰ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁶¹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁶² Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁶³ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁶⁴ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁶⁵ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁶⁶ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁶⁷ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁶⁸ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁶⁹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁷⁰ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁷¹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁷² Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁷³ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁷⁴ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁷⁵ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁷⁶ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁷⁷ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁷⁸ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁷⁹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁸⁰ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁸¹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁸² Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁸³ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁸⁴ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁸⁵ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁸⁶ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁸⁷ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁸⁸ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁸⁹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁹⁰ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁹¹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁹² Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁹³ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁹⁴ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁹⁵ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁹⁶ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁹⁷ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁹⁸ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

⁹⁹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁰⁰ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁰¹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁰² Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁰³ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁰⁴ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁰⁵ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁰⁶ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁰⁷ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁰⁸ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁰⁹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹¹⁰ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹¹¹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹¹² Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹¹³ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹¹⁴ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹¹⁵ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹¹⁶ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹¹⁷ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹¹⁸ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹¹⁹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹²⁰ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹²¹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹²² Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹²³ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹²⁴ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹²⁵ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹²⁶ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹²⁷ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹²⁸ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹²⁹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹³⁰ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹³¹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹³² Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹³³ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹³⁴ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹³⁵ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹³⁶ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹³⁷ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹³⁸ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹³⁹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁴⁰ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁴¹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁴² Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁴³ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁴⁴ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁴⁵ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁴⁶ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁴⁷ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁴⁸ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁴⁹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁵⁰ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁵¹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁵² Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁵³ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁵⁴ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁵⁵ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁵⁶ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁵⁷ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁵⁸ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁵⁹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁶⁰ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁶¹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁶² Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁶³ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁶⁴ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁶⁵ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁶⁶ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁶⁷ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁶⁸ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁶⁹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁷⁰ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁷¹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁷² Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁷³ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁷⁴ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁷⁵ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁷⁶ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁷⁷ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁷⁸ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁷⁹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁸⁰ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁸¹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁸² Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁸³ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁸⁴ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁸⁵ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁸⁶ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁸⁷ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁸⁸ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁸⁹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁹⁰ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁹¹ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁹² Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁹³ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁹⁴ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁹⁵ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁹⁶ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁹⁷ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

¹⁹⁸ Or captured the settlements of Iair.

har, Hishua,^a Hiphel, Nogah, Ne-
phthai, Japhia, Elishama, Thola and
Uthai—nine in all. ^aAll these were the
sons of David besides his sons by his
concubines. And Tamar was their sister.

The Kings of Judah

- ¹⁰Solomon's son was Rehoboam
- Abijah his son
- Asa his son
- Jehoshaphat his son
- ¹¹Jehoram's son
- Ahaziah his son
- ¹²Jehoiash's son
- ¹³Azariah his son
- Azariah his son
- Jotham his son
- ¹⁴Ahaz his son,
- Hezekiah his son,
- Manasseh his son,
- ¹⁵Amon his son,
- Josiah his son
- ¹⁶The sons of Josiah
- Johanan the firstborn,
- Jehoiakim the second son,
- Zedekiah the third,
- Shallum the fourth
- ¹⁶The successors of Jehoiakim
- Jehoiachin's son,
- and Zedekiah

The Royal Line After the Exile

- ¹⁷The descendants of Jehoiachin the captive:
- Shealtiel his son, ¹⁸Malkiram, Pedaiah,
- Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama and
- Nedabiah.
- ¹⁹The sons of Pedaiah
- Zerubbabel and Shimei.
- The sons of Zerubbabel:
- Meshullam and Hananiah.
- Shelomith was their sister.
- ²⁰There were also five others:
- Hashubah, Ohel, Berekiyah, Hasadiah and
- Jushab-Hesed
- ²¹The descendants of Hananiah:
- Pelatiah and Jeshaiah, and the sons of Re-
- phaiah, of Arnan, of Obadiah and of
- Shecaniah

3:17 The Royal Line

Chronicles was written to people who no longer had a king. However, as this section reminds us, they still knew the royal line. God's promise to provide them with kingly leadership forever still held. They could expect a son of David to someday become king again. This is one reason why the New Testament takes the trouble to show that Jesus was descended from David. He was that King.

- ¹²The descendants of Shecaniah:
- Shemaiah and his sons:
- Hattush, Igai, Bariah, Neariah and Sha-
phat—six in all.
- ²³The sons of Neariah:
- Elioenai, Hizkiah and Azrikam—three in
all
- ²⁴The sons of Elioenai:
- Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub,
Johanan, Delaiah and Anani—seven in
all

Other Clans of Judah

- ⁴The descendants of Judah:
- Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur and Shobai.
- ²Reaiah son of Shobai was the father of Jahath, and Jahath the father of Ahumai and Lahad. These were the clans of the Zorathites.
- ³These were the sons of Etam:
- Jezreel, Ishma and Idbash. Their sister was named Hazzeliponi. ⁴Penuel was the father of Gedor, and Ezer the father of Hushah.
- These were the descendants of Hur, the first-born of Ephrathah and father of Bethlehem.
- ⁵Ashhur the father of Tekoa had two wives, Helah and Naarah.
- ⁶Naarah bore him Ahuzzam, Hephher, Temeni and Haahashtari. These were the descendants of Naarah.
- ⁷The sons of Helah:
- Zereth, Zohar, Ethnan, ⁸and Koz, who was the father of Anub and Hazzobebah and of the clans of Aharhel son of Harum.
- ⁹Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez,^f saying, "I gave birth to him in pain." ¹⁰Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, "Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain." And God granted his request.
- ¹¹Kelub, Shuhah's brother, was the father of Mehir, who was the father of Eshton.
- ¹²Eshton was the father of Beth Rapha, Paseah and Tehinnah the father of Ir Nahash.^g These were the men of Recah.
- ¹³The sons of Kenaz:
- Othniel and Seraiah.
- The sons of Othniel:
- Hathath and Meonothai.^h ¹⁴Meonothai was the father of Ophrah.
- Seraiah was the father of Joab, the father of Ge Harashim.ⁱ It was called this because its people were craftsmen.
- ¹⁵The sons of Caleb son of Jephunneh:
- Iru, Elah and Naam.
- The son of Elah:
- Kenaz.

^a Two Hebrew manuscripts (see also 2 Samuel 5:15 and 1 Chron. 14:5); most Hebrew manuscripts Elishama ^{b1} Hebrew Joram, a variant of Jehoram ¹⁶ Hebrew Jeconiah, a variant of Jehoiachin, also in verse 17 ⁴³ Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also Vulgate), Hebrew father ⁴ Father may mean civic leader or military leader, also in verses 12, 14, 17, 18 and possibly elsewhere ¹⁹ Jabez sounds like the Hebrew Joram ¹² Or of the city of Nahash ¹³ Some Septuagint manuscripts and Vulgate; Hebrew does not have and Meonothai ¹⁴ Ge Harashim means valley of craftsmen

¹⁶The sons of Jehallelel:
Ziph, Ziphah, Tiria and Asarel.

¹⁷The sons of Ezra:
Jether, Mered, Ephraim and Jalon. One of Mered's wives gave birth to Miriam, Shammai and Ishbah the father of Esh-temoa. ¹⁸(His Judean wife gave birth to Jered the father of Gedor, Heber the father of Soco, and Jekuthiel the father of Zanoah.) These were the children of Pharaoh's daughter Bithiah, whom Mered had married.

¹⁹The sons of Hodiah's wife, the sister of Naham:
the father of Keilah the Garmite, and Esh-temoa the Maacathite

²⁰The sons of Shimon:
Amnon, Rinnah, Ben-Hanan and Tilon.
The descendants of Ishi:
Zoheth and Ben-Zoheth.

²¹The sons of Shelah son of Judah:
Er the father of Lecah, Laadah the father of Mareshah and the clans of the linen workers at Beth Ashbea, ²²Jokim, the men of Cozeba, and Joash and Saraph, who ruled in Moab and Jashubi Lehem. (These records are from ancient times.) ²³They were the potters who lived at Netaim and Gederah; they stayed there and worked for the king

Simeon

²⁴The descendants of Simeon:
Nemuel, Jamin, Jarib, Zerah and Shaul;
²⁵Shallum was Shaul's son, Mibsam his son and Mishma his son.

²⁶The descendants of Mishma:
Hammuel his son, Zaccur his son and Shimei his son.

²⁷Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters, but his brothers did not have many children; so their entire clan did not become as numerous as the people of Judah. ²⁸They lived in Beersheba, Moladah, Hazar Shual, ²⁹Bilhah, Ezem, Tolad, ³⁰Bethuel, Hormah, Ziklag, ³¹Beth Marcaboth, Hazar Susim, Beth Biri and Shaaraim. These were their towns until the reign of David. ³²Their surrounding villages were Etam, Ain, Rimmon, Token and Ashan—five towns—³³and all the villages around these towns as far as Baalath.^a These were their settlements. And they kept a genealogical record.

³⁴Meshobab, Jamlech, Joshah son of Amaziah, ³⁵Joel, Jehu son of Joshibiah, the son of Seraiah, the son of Asiel, ³⁶also Elioenai, Jaakobah, Jeshohaiah, Asaiah, Adiel, Jesimiel, Benaiah, ³⁷and Ziza son of Shiphi, the son of Allon, the son of Jedaiiah, the son of Shimri, the son of Shemaiah.

³⁸The men listed above by name were leaders of their clans. Their families increased greatly, ³⁹and they went to the outskirts of Gedor to the east of the valley in search of pasture for their flocks.

^a33 Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also Joshua 19:8). Hebrew *Ber* things or persons to the Lord, often by totally destroying them

⁴⁰They found rich, good pasture, and the land was spacious, peaceful and quiet. Some Hamites had lived there formerly.

⁴¹The men whose names were listed came in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah. They attacked the Hamites in their dwellings and also the Meunites who were there and completely destroyed^b them, as is evident to this day. Then they settled in their place, because there was pasture for their flocks. ⁴²And five hundred of these Simeonites, led by Pelatah, Nearah, Rephaiah and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi, invaded the hill country of Seir. ⁴³They killed the remaining Amalekites who had escaped, and they have lived there to this day.

Reuben

5 The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (he was the firstborn, but when he defiled his father's marriage bed, his rights as firstborn were given to the sons of Joseph son of Israel; so he could not be listed in the genealogical record in accordance with his birthright, ²and though Judah was the strongest of his brothers and a ruler came from him, the rights of the firstborn belonged to Joseph)—³the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel:

Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron and Carmi.

⁴The descendants of Joel:

Shemaiah his son, Gog his son,
Shimei his son, ⁵Micah his son,
Reaiah his son, Baal his son,

⁶and Beerah his son, whom Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria took into exile. Beerah was a leader of the Reubenites.

⁷Their relatives by clans, listed according to their genealogical records:

Jeiel the chief, Zechariah, ⁸and Bela son of Azaz, the son of Shema, the son of Joel. They settled in the area from Aroer to Nebo and Baal Meon. ⁹To the east they occupied the land up to the edge of the desert that extends to the Euphrates River, because their livestock had increased in Gilead.

¹⁰During Saul's reign they waged war against the Hagrites, who were defeated at their hands; they occupied the dwellings of the Hagrites throughout the entire region east of Gilead.

Gad

¹¹The Gadites lived next to them in Bashan, as far as Salecah:

¹²Joel was the chief, Shapham the second, then Janai and Shaphat, in Bashan.

¹³Their relatives, by families, were:

Michael, Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jacan, Zia and Eber—seven in all

¹⁴These were the sons of Abihail son of Huri, the son of Jaroah, the son of Gilead, the son of Michael, the son of Jeshishai, the son of Jahdo, the son of Buz.

^b41 The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of

^c42 Hebrew *Tiglath-Pileser*, a variant of *Tiglath-Pileser*, also in verse

Ahi son of Abdiel, the son of Guni, was head of their family. The Gadites lived in Gilead, in Bashan and its outlying villages, and on all the pastures and lands of Shaton as far as they extended.

All these were entered in the genealogical record during the reigns of Jotham king of Judah and Jehoahaz king of Israel.

The Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh had 44,600 men ready for military service—able-bodied men who could handle shield and sword, who could use a bow, and who were trained for battle. ¹⁹They waged war against the Hagrites, Jetur, Naphish and Nodab. ²⁰They were helped in fighting them, and God handed the Hagrites and all their allies over to them, because they cried out to him during the battle. He answered their prayers, because they trusted in him.

They seized the livestock of the Hagrites—fifty thousand camels, two hundred fifty thousand sheep and two thousand donkeys. They also took one hundred thousand people captive, ²²and many others fell slain, because the battle was God's. And they occupied the land until the exile.

The Half-Tribe of Manasseh

²³The people of the half-tribe of Manasseh were numerous; they settled in the land from Bashan to Baal Hermon, that is, to Senir (Mount Hermon).

²⁴These were the heads of their families: Ephraim, Ishi, Eiel, Azriel, Jeremiah, Hodaviah and Jahdiel. They were brave warriors, famous men, and heads of their families. ²⁵But they were unfaithful to the God of their fathers and prostituted themselves to the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God had destroyed before them. ²⁶So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria (that is, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria), who took the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh into exile. He took them to Halah, Habor, Hara and the river of Gozan, where they are to this day.

Levi

6 The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari.

²The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel.

³The children of Amram: Aaron, Moses and Miriam.
The sons of Aaron:

Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

⁴Eleazar was the father of Phinehas, Phinehas the father of Abishua,

⁵Abishua the father of Bukki, Bukki the father of Uzzi,

⁶Uzzi the father of Zerahiah, Zerahiah the father of Meraioth,

⁷Meraioth the father of Amariah, Amariah the father of Ahitub,

⁸Ahitub the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Ahimaaz,

⁹Ahimaaz the father of Azariah, Azariah the father of Johanan,

¹⁰Johanan the father of Azariah (it was he who served as priest in the temple Solomon built in Jerusalem),

¹¹Azariah the father of Amariah, Amariah the father of Ahitub,

¹²Ahitub the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Shallum,

¹³Shallum the father of Hilkiah, Hilkiah the father of Azariah,

¹⁴Azariah the father of Seraiah, and Seraiah the father of Jehozadak.

¹⁵Jehozadak was deported when the Lord sent Judah and Jerusalem into exile by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

¹⁶The sons of Levi:

Gershon,^a Kohath and Merari.

¹⁷These are the names of the sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei.

¹⁸The sons of Kohath:

Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel.

¹⁹The sons of Merari:

Mahli and Mushi.

These are the clans of the Levites listed according to their fathers:

²⁰Of Gershon:

Libni his son, Jehath his son, Zimmah his son, ²¹Joah his son, Iddo his son, Zerah his son and Jeatherai his son.

²²The descendants of Kohath:

Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son, ²³Elkanah his son, Ebiasaph his son, Assir his son.

²⁴Tahath his son, Uriel his son, Uzziel his son and Shaul his son.

²⁵The descendants of Elkanah:

Amasai, Ahimoth, ²⁶Elkanah his son,^b Zophai his son, Nahath his son, ²⁷Eliab his son, Jeroham his son, Elkanah his son and Samuel his son.^c

²⁸The sons of Samuel:

Joel^d the firstborn and Abijah the second son.

²⁹The descendants of Merari:

Mahli, Libni his son, Shimei his son, Uzziel his son,

³⁰Shimea his son, Haggiah his son.

6:1 Key People

First Chronicles 1-9 form the Bible's most complete genealogical record. They emphasize the two tribes most crucial to God's plans: Judah, the tribe that David and all the later kings of Judah came from, and the Levites, who had responsibility to lead Israel in worship.

^a16 Hebrew *Gershon*, a variant of *Gershon*, also in verses 17, 20, 43, 62 and 71. Synac, most Hebrew manuscripts *Ahimoth* ²⁶and *Elkanah*. The sons of *Elkanah* 1:19, 20 and 1 Chron. 6:33, 34). Hebrew does not have *and Samuel his son* 1 Samuel 8:2 and 1 Chron. 6:33). Hebrew does not have *Joel*.

^b26 Some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint and

^c27 Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 1 Samuel

^d28 Some Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac (see also

[Faint, illegible text on the left page, appearing as horizontal lines.]

[Faint, illegible text on the right page, appearing as horizontal lines.]

then received Jokneam, Kartah,⁶ Rimmon and Tabor, together with their pasturelands.

From the tribe of Reuben across the Jordan east of Jericho

they received Bezer in the desert, Jahzah, Kedemoth and Mephaath, together with their pasturelands,

and from the tribe of Gad

they received Ramoth in Gilead, Mahanaim, Heshbon and Jazer, together with their pasturelands.

Issachar

7 The sons of Issachar:

Tola, Puah, Jashub and Shumron—four in all.

The sons of Tola

Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Ibsam and Samuel—heads of their families. During the reign of David, the descendants of Tola listed as fighting men in their genealogy numbered 22,600.

The son of Uzzi

Izrahiah

The sons of Izrahiah

Michael, Obadiah, Joel and Isshiah. All five of them were chiefs. ⁴According to their family genealogy, they had 36,000 men ready for battle, for they had many wives and children.

⁵The relatives who were fighting men belonging to all the clans of Issachar, as listed in their genealogy, were 87,000 in all.

Benjamin

⁶Three sons of Benjamin:

Bela, Beker and Jediah

The sons of Bela

Ezbon, Uzzi, Uzziel, Jerimoth and Iri, heads of families—five in all. Their genealogical record listed 22,034 fighting men.

⁸The sons of Beker

Zemurah, Joash, Elezer, Elieonai, Omri, Jeremoth, Abijah, Anathoth and Alemeth. All these were the sons of Beker. ⁹Their genealogical record listed the heads of families and 20,200 fighting men.

¹⁰The son of Jediah

Bilhan

The sons of Bilhan:

Jeush, Benjamin, Ehud, Kenaanah, Zethan, Tarshish and Ahishahar. ¹¹All these sons of Jediah were heads of families. There were 17,200 fighting men ready to go out to war.

¹²The Shuppites and Huppites were the descendants of Ir, and the Hushutes the descendants of Aher.

Naphtali

¹³The sons of Naphtali

Jahziel, Guni, Jezer and Shullem^b—the descendants of Bilhah.

Manasseh

¹⁴The descendants of Manasseh.

Asriel was his descendant through his Aramean concubine. She gave birth to Makir, the father of Gilead. ¹⁵Makir took a wife from among the Huppites and Shuppites. His sister's name was Maacah.

Another descendant was named Zelophehad, who had only daughters.

¹⁶Makir's wife Maacah gave birth to a son and named him Peresh. His brother was named Sheresh, and his sons were Ulam and Rakem.

¹⁷The son of Ulam:

Bedan.

These were the sons of Gilead son of Makir, the son of Manasseh. ¹⁸His sister Ham-moleketh gave birth to Ishhod, Abiezer and Mahlah.

¹⁹The sons of Shemida were:

Ahian, Shechem, Likhi and Aniam.

Ephraim

²⁰The descendants of Ephraim:

Shuthelah, Bered his son, Tahath his son, Eleadah his son, Tahath his son, ²¹Zabad his son and Shuthelah his son.

Ezer and Elead were killed by the native-born men of Gath, when they went down to seize their livestock. ²²Their father Ephraim mourned for them many days, and his relatives came to comfort him. ²³Then he lay with his wife again, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. He named him Benah,^c because there had been misfortune in his family. ²⁴His daughter was Sheerah, who built Lower and Upper Beth Horon as well as Uzzen Sheerah.

²⁵Rephah was his son, Resheph his son,^d

Telah his son, Tahan his son,

²⁶Ladan his son, Ammihud his son,

Elishama his son, ²⁷Nun his son

and Joshua his son.

²⁸Their lands and settlements included Bethel and its surrounding villages, Naaran to the east, Gezer and its villages to the west, and Shechem and its villages all the way to Ayyah and its villages. ²⁹Along the borders of Manasseh were Beth Shan, Taanach, Megiddo and Dor, together with their villages. The descendants of Joseph son of Israel lived in these towns.

Asher

³⁰The sons of Asher:

Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi and Beriah. Their sister was Serah.

³¹The sons of Beriah:

Heber and Malkiel, who was the father of Birzaith.

⁶⁷ See Septuagint and Joshua 21:34. Hebrew does not have Jokneam, Kartah, also Gen. 46:24 and Num. 26:49). most Hebrew manuscripts Shullem

⁴²⁵ Some Septuagint manuscripts, Hebrew does not have his son

¹³ Some Hebrew and Septuagint manuscripts (see

²³ Benah sounds like the Hebrew for misfortune

know the father of David's mother and
father and of their mother's name.

The sons of David:

Amnon, Daniel, Absalom,

Adonias, and others.

The sons of Haggai:

Abijah, Shimon, and Abiathar.

The sons of Abiathar:

Phineas, Abiathar, and others.

The sons of Phineas:

Phineas, Abiathar, and others.

The sons of Abiathar:

Phineas,

The sons of Phineas:

Phineas, Abiathar, and others.

The sons of Phineas:

Phineas, Abiathar, and others.

The sons of Phineas:

Phineas, Abiathar, and others.

The sons of Phineas:

Phineas, Abiathar, and others.

The sons of Phineas:

Phineas, Abiathar, and others.

The Genealogy of Saul the Benamite

The sons of Saul the Benamite:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

Jonathan, and others.

The sons of Jonathan:

9 All Israel was listed in the genealogies compiled in the book of the kings of Israel.

The People in Jerusalem

The people of Israel were taken captive to Babylon because of their unfaithfulness. David the first of the kings of Israel was the first to take them captive. He took them to Babylon and they were there for seventy years.

9-1 The Source of Genealogies

The author of 1 Chronicles acknowledges that he relied on other documents for his information. In 1 and 2 Chronicles originally one work. The information is taken from the Bible and other sources. The author of 1 Chronicles acknowledges the work of the genealogists. He says that he took the names of the people of Israel from the Bible and other sources.

Pithon, Melech, Tahrea and Ahaz.⁴¹

⁴²Ahaz was the father of Jadah, Jadah^b was the father of Alemeth, Azmaveth and Zimri, and Zimri was the father of Moza.

⁴³Moza was the father of Binea; Rephaiah was his son, Eleasah his son and Azel his son.

⁴⁴Azel had six sons, and these were their names:

Azrikam, Bokeru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah and Hanan. These were the sons of Azel.

Saul Takes His Life

10 Now the Philistines fought against Israel, the Israelites fled before them, and many fell slain on Mount Gilboa. ²The Philistines pressed hard after Saul and his sons, and they killed his sons Jonathan, Abinadab and Malki-Shua. ³The fighting grew fierce around Saul, and

when the archers overtook him, they wounded him.

⁴Saul said to his armor bearer, "Draw your sword and run me through, or these uncircumcised fellows will come and abuse me."

But his armor bearer was terrified and would not do it; so Saul took his own sword and fell on it. ⁵When the armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he too fell on his sword and died. ⁶So Saul and his three sons died, and all his house died together.

⁷When all the Israelites in the valley saw that the army had fled and that Saul and his sons had died, they abandoned their towns and fled. And the Philistines came and occupied them.

⁸The next day, when the Philistines came to strip the dead, they found Saul and his sons fallen on Mount Calboi. They stripped him and took his head and his armor, and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines to proclaim the news among their idols and their people. ¹⁰They put his armor in the temple of their gods.

⁴¹ Vulgate and Syriac (see also Septuagint and 1 Chron. 8:35). Hebrew does not have *and Ahaz* and Septuagint (see also 1 Chron. 8:36), most Hebrew manuscripts *Jarah, Jarah*.

⁴² Some Hebrew manuscripts

INSIGHT

Hope in a Time of Sorrow

A people starting over need to know God's promises

"Who am I, O LORD God, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?" 17:16

First Chronicles was written for Israelites living centuries after David. In those years Israel had gone through tremendous sorrow. None of the kings who followed David had matched him. Israel had deteriorated until God let Babylon capture and destroy Jerusalem, carrying its population into exile.

After half a century as captives, a small proportion of the Israelites returned to their former home. They had lost, in those beaten-down years, their own sense of identity. They were no longer self-governing. They had no king to follow in David's footsteps. Their relatives were scattered all over the Middle East. Chronicles was written to help them get in touch with what Israel had once been and could become again.

After devoting nine chapters to genealogies, 1 Chronicles tells the life of David. In keeping with its goal of encouragement, Chronicles leaves out stories of David's personal sin and failure. Nor does it tell of David's life before he became king. Instead it concentrates on the accomplishments David left behind for future generations.

The Importance of Worship

David emphasized worship as the foundation of Israel. As soon as he conquered Jerusalem, he brought the ark of the covenant there. He made preparations to build the temple and organized the priests and Levites to serve there. He established large corps of musicians to praise God. In response, God promised that a line of leaders would descend from him (17:10-14).

David's days were the high point of Israelite history: prosperous, secure, and, above all, devoted to God. How could the returned exiles recapture that grandeur? What resources could they use to begin again? First Chronicles emphasizes a legacy they still possessed. They had Jerusalem, and they had a new temple built on the site of the old one. They had the priests and Levites, so essential to proper worship. In short, they had the resources necessary to rise again, to be God's people in God's land.

Most important, they had God. They could find strength in worshiping him, as David always had. God had made them great before; he could make them great again, and provide a new leader in David's line. A sorrowful people could start over on the old foundations—foundations that depended on an unchanging God and his unchanging choice of them.

Life Questions: If you were to suffer great personal and material loss, as the Israelites did, what would you cling to?

and hung up his head in the temple of Dagon.

When all the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead heard of everything the Philistines had done to Saul, all their valiant men went and took the bodies of Saul and his sons and brought them to Jabesh. Then they buried their bones under the great tree in Jabesh, and they fasted seven days.

¹³Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD; he did not keep the word of the LORD and even consulted a medium for guidance, ¹⁴and did not inquire of the LORD. So the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse.

David Becomes King Over Israel

11 All Israel came together to David at Hebron and said, "We are your own flesh and blood. ²In the past, even while Saul was king, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns. And the LORD your God said to you, 'You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.'"

³When all the elders of Israel had come to King David at Hebron, he made a compact with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel, as the LORD had promised through Samuel.

David Conquers Jerusalem

⁴David and all the Israelites marched to Jerusalem (that is, Jebus). The Jebusites who lived there ⁵said to David, "You will not get in here." Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion, the City of David.

⁶David had said, "Whoever leads the attack on the Jebusites will become commander-in-chief." Joab son of Zeruiah went up first, and so he received the command.

⁷David then took up residence in the fortress, and so it was called the City of David. ⁸He built up the city around it, from the supporting terraces^a to the surrounding wall, while Joab restored the rest of the city. ⁹And David became more and more powerful, because the LORD Almighty was with him.

David's Mighty Men

¹⁰These were the chiefs of David's mighty men—they, together with all Israel, gave his kingship strong support to extend it over the whole land, as the LORD had promised— ¹¹this is the list of David's mighty men:

Jashobeam,^b a Hachmonite, was chief of the officers; he raised his spear against three hundred men, whom he killed in one encounter.

¹²Next to him was Eleazar son of Dodai the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men. ¹³He was with David at Pas Dammim when the Philistines gathered there for battle. At a place where there was a field full of barley, the troops fled from the Philistines. ¹⁴But they took their stand in the middle of the field. They defended it and struck the Philistines down, and the LORD brought about a great victory.

¹⁵Three of the thirty chiefs came down to David to the rock at the cave of Adullam, while a band of Philistines was encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. ¹⁶At that time David was in the stronghold, and the Philistine garrison was at Bethlehem. ¹⁷David longed for water and said, "Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem!" ¹⁸So the Three broke through the Philistine lines, drew water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem and carried it back to David. But he refused to drink it; instead, he poured it out before the LORD. ¹⁹"God forbid that I should do this!" he said. "Should I drink the blood of these men who went at the risk of their lives?" Because they risked their lives to bring it back, David would not drink it.

Such were the exploits of the three mighty men.

²⁰Abishai the brother of Joab was chief of the Three. He raised his spear against three hundred men, whom he killed, and so he became as famous as the Three. ²¹He was doubly honored above the Three and became their commander, even though he was not included among them.

²²Benaiah son of Jehoiada was a valiant fighter from Kabzeel, who performed great exploits. He struck down two of Moab's best men. He also went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion. ²³And he struck down an Egyptian who was seven and a half feet^d tall. Although the Egyptian had a spear like a weaver's rod in his hand, Benaiah went against him with a club. He snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear. ²⁴Such were the exploits of Benaiah son of Jehoiada; he too was as famous as the three mighty men. ²⁵He was held in greater honor than any of the Thirty, but he was not included among the Three. And David put him in charge of his bodyguard.

²⁶The mighty men were:

Asahel the brother of Joab,

Elhanan son of Dodo from Bethlehem,

²⁷Shammoth the Harorite,

Helez the Pelonite,

²⁸Ira son of Ikkesh from Tekoa,

Abiezer from Anathoth,

²⁹Sibbecai the Hushathite,

Ilai the Ahohite,

³⁰Maharai the Netophathite,

Heled son of Baanah the Netophathite,

³¹Ithai son of Ribai from Gibeath in Benjamin,

Benaiah the Pirathonite,

³²Hurai from the ravines of Gaash,

Abiel the Arbathite,

³³Azmaveth the Baharumite,

Eliabha the Shaalbonite,

³⁴the sons of Hashem the Gizonite,

Jonathan son of Shagee the Hararite,

³⁵Ahiam son of Sacar the Hararite,

Eliphal son of Ur,

³⁶Hepher the Mekerathite,

Ahijah the Pelonite,

³⁷Hezro the Carmelite,

^a Or the Millo

^b 11 Possibly a variant of Jashob-Baal

^d 23 Hebrew five cubits (about 2.3 meters)

^e 11 Or Thirty; some Septuagint manuscripts Thew (see also 2 Samuel 23.8)

- Naarai son of Ezrai
 18Joel the brother of Nathan.
 Abihai son of Hagri.
 19Zehek the Ammonite
 Naharai the Berothite, the armor-bearer
 of Ioshb son of Zeruiah.
 20Ira the Ithrite
 Gareb the Ithrite
 21Unah the Hittite
 Zabadi son of Ahlai.
 22Adina son of Shiza the Reubenite, who
 was chief of the Reubenites, and the thirty
 with him
 23Hanan son of Maacah
 Joshaphat the Mithnite
 24Uzzia the Ashterathite
 Shama and Jeiel the sons of Hotham the
 Aroerite
 25Jediael son of Shimri,
 his brother Ioha the Tizite.
 26Eliel the Mahavite
 Ieribai and Ioshaviah the sons of Elnaam,
 Ithmah the Moabite.
 27Eliel, Obed and Jaasiel the Mezobaite.

Warriors Join David

12 These were the men who came to David at Ziklag while he was banished from the presence of Saul son of Kish (they were among the warriors who helped him in battle; 2 they were armed with bows and were able to shoot arrows or to sling stones right-handed or left-handed; they were kinsmen of Saul from the tribe of Benjamin):

Ahiezer their chief and Ioshab the sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite, Jeziel and Pelet the sons of Azmaveth; Beracah, Jehu the Anathothite, 4 and Ishmaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the Thirty, who was a leader of the Thirty, Jeremiaah, Jahaziel, Johanan, Jozabad the Gederathite, 5 Eluzai, Jerimoth, Bealiah, Shephaniah and Shephatiah the Haruphite, 6 Elkanah, Isshiah, Azarel, Joezer and Jashobeam the Korahites; 7 and Joelah and Zebadiah the sons of Ieroham from Gedor.

8 Some Gadites defected to David at his stronghold in the desert. They were brave warriors, ready for battle and able to handle the shield and spear. Their faces were the faces of lions, and they were as swift as gazelles in the mountains.

9 Ezer was the chief,

Obadiah the second in command, Eliab the third,

10 Mishmannah the fourth, Jeremiah the fifth,

11 Attai the sixth, Eliel the seventh,

12 Johanan the eighth, Elzabad the ninth,

13 Jeremiaah the tenth and Macbannai the eleventh

14 These Gadites were army commanders; the least was a match for a hundred, and the greatest for a thousand. 15 It was they who crossed the Jordan in the first month when it was overflowing all its banks, and they put to flight everyone living in the valleys, to the east and to the west.

²² Or a great and mighty army

16 Other Benjamites and some men from Judah also came to David in his stronghold. 17 David went out to meet them and said to them: "If you have come to me in peace, to help me, I am ready to have you unite with me. But if you have come to betray me to my enemies when my hands are free from violence, may the God of our fathers see it and judge you."

18 Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, chief of the Thirty, and he said:

"We are yours, O David!

We are with you, O son of Jesse!

Success, success to you,

and success to those who help you,
 for your God will help you."

So David received them and made them leaders of his raiding bands.

19 Some of the men of Manasseh defected to David when he went with the Philistines to fight against Saul. (He and his men did not help the Philistines because, after consultation, their rulers sent him away. They said, "It will cost us our heads if he deserts to his master Saul.") 20 When David went to Ziklag, these were the men of Manasseh who defected to him: Adnah, Jozabad, Jediael, Michael, Jozabad, Elihu and Zillethai, leaders of units of a thousand in Manasseh. 21 They helped David against raiding bands, for all of them were brave warriors, and they were commanders in his army. 22 Day after day men came to help David, until he had a great army, like the army of God.⁴

Others Join David at Hebron

23 These are the numbers of the men armed for battle who came to David at Hebron to turn Saul's kingdom over to him, as the LORD had said:

24 men of Judah, carrying shield and spear—
 6,800 armed for battle;

25 men of Simeon, warriors ready for battle—
 7,100;

26 men of Levi—4,600, 27 including Jehoiada, leader of the family of Aaron, with 3,700 men, 28 and Zadok, a brave young warrior, with 22 officers from his family;

29 men of Benjamin, Saul's kinsmen—3,000, most of whom had remained loyal to Saul's house until then;

30 men of Ephraim, brave warriors, famous in their own clans—20,800;

31 men of half the tribe of Manasseh, designated by name to come and make David king—18,000;

32 men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do—200 chiefs, with all their relatives under their command;

33 men of Zebulun, experienced soldiers prepared for battle with every type of weapon, to help David with undivided loyalty—50,000;

34 men of Naphtali—1,000 officers, together

37,000 men carrying shields and

38,000

of Dan, ready for battle—28,600.

39 Asner, experienced soldiers prepared for battle—40,000

40 from east of the Jordan, men of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh, armed with every type of weapon—120,000

41

42 All these were fighting men who volunteered to join the ranks. They came to Hebron fully armed to make David king over all Israel. All the Israelites were also of one mind to make David king. 43 The men spent three days eating and drinking, for their enemies had supplied provisions for them. 44 Also, the neighbors from as far away as Issachar, Zebulun and Naphtali came bringing food on donkeys, James mules and oxen. There were plentiful supplies of flour, fig cakes, raisin cakes, wine, oil, and sheep, for there was joy in Israel.

Bringing Back the Ark

13 David conferred with each of his officers, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds. 2 He then said to the whole assembly of Israel, "If it seems good to you and if it is the will of the LORD our God, let us send word far and wide to the rest of our brothers throughout the territories of Israel, and also to the priests and Levites who are with them in their towns and pasturelands to come and join us. 3 Let us bring the ark of our God back to us, for we did not inquire of the LORD during the reign of Saul." 4 The whole assembly agreed to do this, because it seemed right to all the people.

5 So David assembled all the Israelites, from the Shishir River in Egypt to Lebor Hamath, to bring the ark of God from Kirath Jearim. 6 David and all the Israelites with him went to Baalah of Judah, Kirath Jearim, to bring up from there the ark of God, the LORD, who is enthroned between the cherubim—the ark that is called by the Name.

7 They moved the ark of God from Abinadab's house on a new cart, with Uzzah and Ahio guiding it. 8 David and all the Israelites were celebrating with a shout of praise before God, with songs and with harps, lyres, tambourines, cymbals and trumpets.

9 When they came to the threshing floor of Kidon, Uzzah reached out his hand to steady the ark, because the oxen stumbled. 10 The LORD's anger burned against Uzzah, and he struck him down because he had put his hand on the ark. So he died there before God.

11 Then David was angry because the LORD's wrath had broken out against Uzzah, and to this day that place is called Perez Uzzah.⁴

12 David was afraid of God that day and asked, "How can I ever bring the ark of God to me?" 13 He did not take the ark to be with him in the City of David. Instead, he took it aside to the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. 14 The ark of God remained with the family of Obed-Edom in his house for

three months, and the LORD blessed his household and everything he had.

David's House and Family

14 Now Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with cedar logs, stonemasons and carpenters to build a palace for him. 2 And David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel and that his kingdom had been highly exalted for the sake of his people Israel.

3 In Jerusalem David took more wives and became the father of more sons and daughters. 4 These are the names of the children born to him there: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, 5 Ishhar, Elishua, Elpelet, 6 Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, 7 Elishama, Beeliada⁶ and Eliphelet.

David Defeats the Philistines

8 When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over all Israel, they went up in full force to search for him, but David heard about it and went out to meet them. 9 Now the Philistines had come and raided the Valley of Rephaim; 10 so David inquired of God: "Shall I go and attack the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?"

The LORD answered him, "Go, I will hand them over to you."

11 So David and his men went up to Baal Perazim, and there he defeated them. He said, "As waters break out, God has broken out against my enemies by my hand." So that place was called Baal Perazim.⁷ 12 The Philistines had abandoned their gods there, and David gave orders to burn them in the fire.

13 Once more the Philistines raided the valley; 14 so David inquired of God again, and God answered him, "Do not go straight up, but circle around them and attack them in front of the balsam trees. 15 As soon as you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, move out to battle, because that will mean God has gone out in front of you to strike the Philistine army." 16 So David did as God commanded him, and they

13:9 Why Did Uzzah Die?

People who read of Uzzah's death in 2 Samuel 6:6,7 have often puzzled over why he died for trying to keep God's ark from tipping over. In 1 Chronicles the reason is clearer. David explained (15:13) that the Lord had been angry at them for moving the ark in a way disobedient to God's law.

Numbers 4:14-15 and Exodus 37:5 specify that Levites were to carry the ark with poles—and never touch it, on pain of death. Uzzah and his brother, non-Levites, were carrying it on an oxcart—the same vehicle the Philistines had used (1 Samuel 6:7). When the oxen stumbled and Uzzah stepped in to catch the ark, that was the final straw. Uzzah's death resulted from prolonged (though possibly well-intentioned) disobedience to God's direction. God had told them how to honor the ark, a sign of his presence. Their sloppiness revealed a lack of concern for God's honor.

⁴ Or we neglected. ⁵ Or him. ⁶ Or to the entrance to Elada. ⁷ Baal Perazim means the land who breaks out.

¹¹ Perez Uzzah means outbreak against Uzzah.

¹² A variant of

struck down the Philistine army, all the way from Gibeon to Gezer.

¹⁷So David's fame spread throughout every land, and the LORD made all the nations fear him.

The Ark Brought to Jerusalem

15 After David had constructed buildings for himself in the City of David, he prepared a place for the ark of God and pitched a tent for it. ²Then David said, "No one but the Levites may carry the ark of God, because the LORD chose them to carry the ark of the LORD and to minister before him forever."

³David assembled all Israel in Jerusalem to bring up the ark of the LORD to the place he had prepared for it. ⁴He called together the descendants of Aaron and the Levites:

⁵From the descendants of Kohath,
Uriel the leader and 120 relatives;

⁶from the descendants of Merari,
Asaiah the leader and 220 relatives;

⁷from the descendants of Gershon,^a
Joel the leader and 130 relatives;

⁸from the descendants of Elizaphan,
Shemaiah the leader and 200 relatives;

⁹from the descendants of Hebron,
Eliel the leader and 80 relatives;

¹⁰from the descendants of Uzziel,
Amminadab the leader and 112 relatives.

¹¹Then David summoned Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel and Amminadab the Levites. ¹²He said to them, "You are the heads of the Levitical families; you and your fellow Levites are to consecrate yourselves and bring up the ark of the LORD, the God of Israel, to the place I have prepared for it. ¹³It was because you, the Levites, did not bring it up the first time that the LORD our God broke out in anger against us. We did not inquire of him about how to do it in the prescribed way." ¹⁴So the priests and Levites consecrated themselves in order to bring up the ark of the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹⁵And the Levites carried the ark of God with the poles on their shoulders, as Moses had commanded in accordance with the word of the LORD.

¹⁶David told the leaders of the Levites to appoint their brothers as singers to sing joyful songs, accompanied by musical instruments: lyres, harps and cymbals.

¹⁷So the Levites appointed Heman son of Joel; from his brothers, Asaph son of Berekiah; and from their brothers the Merarites, Ethan son of Kushaiah; ¹⁸and with them their brothers next in rank: Zechariah,^b Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-Edom and Jeiel,^c the gatekeepers.

¹⁹The musicians Heman, Asaph and Ethan were to sound the bronze cymbals; ²⁰Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah and Benaiah were to play the lyres according to *alamoth*,^d ²¹and Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-Edom, Jeiel and Azariah were to play the

harps, directing according to *sheminith*.^e ²²Kenaniah the head Levite was in charge of the singing, that was his responsibility because he was skillful at it.

²³Berekiah and Etkanah were to be doorkeepers for the ark. ²⁴Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah and Elezer the priests were to blow trumpets before the ark of God. Obed-Edom and Jehiah were also to be doorkeepers for the ark.

²⁵So David and the elders of Israel and the commanders of units of a thousand went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the house of Obed-Edom, with rejoicing. ²⁶Because God had helped the Levites who were carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD, seven bulls and seven rams were sacrificed. ²⁷Now David was clothed in a robe of fine linen, as were all the Levites who were carrying the ark, and as were the singers, and Kenaniah, who was in charge of the singing of the choirs. David also wore a linen ephod. ²⁸So all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouts, with the sounding of rams' horns and trumpets, and of cymbals, and the playing of lyres and harps.

²⁹As the ark of the covenant of the LORD was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David dancing and celebrating, she despised him in her heart.

16 They brought the ark of God and set it inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and they presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings^f before God. ²After David had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD. ³Then he gave a loaf of bread, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins to each Israelite man and woman.

⁴He appointed some of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, to make petition, to give thanks, and to praise the LORD, the God of Israel: ⁵Asaph was the chief, Zechariah second, then Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Ehab, Benaiah, Obed-Edom and Jeiel. They were to play the lyres and harps, Asaph was to sound the cymbals, ⁶and Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests were to blow the trumpets regularly before the ark of the covenant of God.

David's Psalm of Thanks

⁷That day David first committed to Asaph and his associates this psalm of thanks to the LORD:

⁸Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name;
make known among the nations what he has done.

⁹Sing to him, sing praise to him;
tell of all his wonderful acts.

¹⁰Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD
rejoice.

¹¹Look to the LORD and his strength;

^a Hebrew *Gershon*, a variant of *Gershon*

^b 1 Chron. 16:5; most Hebrew manuscripts *Zechariah son of* or *Zechariah Ben* and ^c 18 Hebrew Septuagint (see also verse 21) *jeiel* and *Azariah*

^d 20, 21 Probably a musical term

^e 1 Traditionally *peace offerings*, also in verse 2

^f 2 Traditionally *peace offerings*, also in verse 2

from everlasting to everlasting.

Then all the people said "Amen" and "Praise the Lord."

¹⁷David left Asaph and his associates before the ark of the covenant of the Lord to minister there regularly according to each day's requirements. ¹⁸He also left Obed-Edom and his sixty-eight associates to minister with them. Obed-Edom son of Jeduthun, and also Hosah, were gatekeepers.

¹⁹David left Zadok the priest and his fellow priests before the tabernacle of the Lord at the high place in Gibeon ²⁰to present burnt offerings to the Lord on the altar of burnt offering regularly, morning and evening in accordance with everything written in the Law of the Lord, which he had given Israel. ²¹With them were Heman and Jeduthun and the rest of those chosen and designated by name to give thanks to the Lord, "for his love endures forever." ²²Heman and Jeduthun were responsible for the sounding of the trumpets and cymbals and for the playing of the other instruments for sacred song. The sons of Jeduthun were stationed at the gate.

²³Then all the people left, each for his own home, and David returned home to bless his family.

God's Promise to David

17 After David was settled in his palace, he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of the covenant of the Lord is under a tent."

²Nathan replied to David, "Whatever you have in mind, do it, for God is with you."

³That night the word of God came to Nathan, saying,

⁴"Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the Lord says: You are not the one to build me a house to dwell in. ⁵I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought Israel up out of Egypt to this day. I have moved from one tent site to another, from one dwelling place to another. ⁶Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their leaders whom I commanded to shepherd my people, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'"

⁷"Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the Lord Almighty says: I took you from

16:39 Two Tabernacles

For a number of years, Israel had two tabernacles. David had constructed a new tent for the ark of the covenant when it came to Jerusalem. Yet the old tent, dating from Moses' time, still stood at Gibeon, five miles away. Sacrifices were offered at both locations. When the temple was built under David's son Solomon, worship was centralized at Jerusalem.

ask his own affairs.
He has chosen for his chosen
his judgments he
has made his servant
his chosen ones
our God
are in all the earth
his covenant forever
be remembered, for a thousand
generations

the covenant he made with Abraham,
to which he swore to Isaac.

He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree
of Israel as an everlasting covenant
"For you I will give the land of Canaan
as the portion you will inherit

"When they were but few in number,
few indeed, and strangers in it
they wandered from nation to nation,
from one kingdom to another
He allowed no man to oppress them,
for their sake he rebuked kings
Do not touch my anointed ones
do my prophets no harm

¹Sing to the Lord, all the earth;
proclaim his salvation day after day
²Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.
³For great is the Lord and most worthy of
praise,

he is to be feared above all gods
⁴For all the gods of the nations are idols,
but the Lord made the heavens
⁵Splendor and majesty are before him;
strength and joy in his dwelling place
⁶Ascribe to the Lord, O families of nations,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength,
⁷ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name.
Bring an offering and come before him;
worship the Lord in the splendor of his
holiness

⁸Tremble before him, all the earth!
The world is firmly established; it cannot be
moved

⁹Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;
let them say among the nations, "The Lord
reigns!"

¹⁰Let the sea resound, and all that is in it;
let the fields be jubilant, and everything in
them!

¹¹Then the trees of the forest will sing,
they will sing for joy before the Lord,
for he comes to judge the earth.

¹²Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

¹³Cry out, "Save us, O God our Savior;
gather us and deliver us from the nations,
that we may give thanks to your holy name,
that we may glory in your praise."

¹⁴Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,

¹⁵ Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also Psalm 105:8). Hebrew Remember ¹⁸⁻²⁰ One Hebrew manuscript, Septuagint and Vulgate (see also Psalm 105:12). most Hebrew manuscripts inherit, ¹⁹ though you are but few in number, / few indeed, and strangers in it ²¹ / ²² They ²⁹ Or Low, with the splendor of ²⁶ Traditionally judges, also in verse 10

the pasture and from following the flock, to be ruler over my people Israel. ⁸I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name like the names of the greatest men of the earth. ⁹And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning ¹⁰and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also subdue all your enemies.

"I declare to you that the LORD will build a house for you: ¹¹When your days are over and you go to be with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹²He is the one who will build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. ¹³I will be his father, and he will be my son. I will never take my love away from him, as I took it away from your predecessor. ¹⁴I will set him over my house and my kingdom forever; his throne will be established forever."

¹⁵Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation

David's Prayer

¹⁶Then King David went in and sat before the LORD, and he said

"Who am I, O LORD God, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? ¹⁷And as if this were not enough in your sight, O God, you have spoken about the future of the house of your servant. You have looked on me as though I were the most exalted of men, O LORD God.

¹⁸"What more can David say to you for honoring your servant? For you know your servant, ¹⁹O LORD. For the sake of your servant and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made known all these great promises.

²⁰"There is no one like you, O LORD, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears. ²¹And who is like your people Israel—the one nation on earth whose God went out to redeem a people for himself, and to make a name for yourself, and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt? ²²You made your people Israel your very own forever, and you, O LORD, have become their God.

²³"And now, LORD, let the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house be established forever. Do as you promised, ²⁴so that it will be established and that your name will be great forever. Then men will say, 'The LORD Almighty, the God over Israel, is Israel's God!' And the house of your

servant David will be established before you. ²⁵"You, my God, have revealed to your servant that you will build a house for him. So your servant has found courage to pray to you. ²⁶O LORD, you are God! You have promised these good things to your servant. ²⁷Now you have been pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you, O LORD, have blessed it, and it will be blessed forever."

David's Victories

18 In the course of time, David defeated the Philistines and subdued them, and he took Gath and its surrounding villages from the control of the Philistines.

²David also defeated the Moabites, and they became subject to him and brought tribute.

³Moreover, David fought Hadadezer king of Zobah, as far as Hamath, when he went to establish his control along the Euphrates River. ⁴David captured a thousand of his chariots, seven thousand charioteers and twenty thousand foot soldiers. He hamstrung all but a hundred of the chariot horses.

⁵When the Arameans of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David struck down twenty-two thousand of them. ⁶He put garrisons in the Aramean kingdom of Damascus, and the Arameans became subject to him and brought tribute. The LORD gave David victory everywhere he went.

⁷David took the gold shields carried by the officers of Hadadezer and brought them to Jerusalem. ⁸From Tebah^a and Cun, towns that belonged to Hadadezer, David took a great quantity of bronze, which Solomon used to make the bronze Sea, the pillars and various bronze articles.

⁹When Tou king of Hamath heard that David had defeated the entire army of Hadadezer king of Zobah, ¹⁰he sent his son Hadoram to King David to greet him and congratulate him on his victory in battle over Hadadezer, who had been at war with Tou. Hadoram brought all kinds of articles of gold and silver and bronze.

¹¹King David dedicated these articles to the LORD, as he had done with the silver and gold he had taken from all these nations. Edom and Moab, the Ammonites and the Philistines, and Amalek.

¹²Abishai son of Zeruiah struck down eighteen thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt. ¹³He put garrisons in Edom, and all the Edomites became subject to David. The LORD gave David victory everywhere he went.

David's Officials

¹⁴David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all his people. ¹⁵Joab son of Zeruiah was over the army, Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was recorder; ¹⁶Zadok son of Ahitub and Ahimelech^b son of Abiathar were priests. Shavsha was secretary, ¹⁷Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over the Kerethites and Pelethites, and David's sons were chief officials at the king's side.

^a Hebrew Tibhath, a variant of Tebah; manuscripts Abimelech

^b Some Hebrew manuscripts, Vulgate and Syriac (see also 2 Samuel 8:17), most Hebrew

The Battle Against the Ammonites

19 In the course of time, Nahash king of the Ammonites died, and his son succeeded him as king. ²David thought, "I will show kindness to Hanun son of Nahash, because his father showed kindness to me." So David sent a delegation to express his sympathy to Hanun concerning his father.

When David's men came to Hanun in the land of the Ammonites to express sympathy to him, the Ammonite nobles said to Hanun, "Do you think David is honoring your father by sending men to you to express sympathy? Haven't his men come to you to explore and spy out the country and overthrow it?" ⁴So Hanun seized David's men, shaved them, cut off their garments in the middle at the buttocks, and sent them away.

⁵When someone came and told David about the men, he sent messengers to meet them, for they were greatly humiliated. The king said, "Stay at Jericho till your beards have grown, and then come back."

⁶When the Ammonites realized that they had become a stench in David's nostrils, Hanun and the Ammonites sent a thousand talents^a of silver to hire chariots and charioteers from Aram Naharaim,^b Aram Maacah and Zobah. ⁷They hired thirty-two thousand chariots and charioteers, as well as the king of Maacah with his troops, who came and camped near Medeba, while the Ammonites were mustered from their towns and moved out for battle.

⁸On hearing this, David sent Joab out with the entire army of fighting men. ⁹The Ammonites came out and drew up in battle formation at the entrance to their city, while the kings who had come were by themselves in the open country.

¹⁰Joab saw that there were battle lines in front of him and behind him; so he selected some of the best troops in Israel and deployed them against the Arameans. ¹¹He put the rest of the men under the command of Abishai his brother, and they were deployed against the Ammonites. ¹²Joab said, "If the Arameans are too strong for me, then you are to rescue me; but if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will rescue you. ¹³Be strong and let us fight bravely for our people and the cities of our God. The LORD will do what is good in his sight."

¹⁴Then Joab and the troops with him advanced to fight the Arameans, and they fled before him. ¹⁵When the Ammonites saw that the Arameans were fleeing, they too fled before his brother Abishai and went inside the city. So Joab went back to Jerusalem.

¹⁶After the Arameans saw that they had been routed by Israel, they sent messengers and had Arameans brought from beyond the River,^c with Shophach the commander of Hadadezer's army leading them.

¹⁷When David was told of this, he gathered all Israel and crossed the Jordan; he advanced against them and formed his battle lines opposite them. David formed his lines to meet the Arameans in

battle, and they fought against him. ¹⁸But they fled before Israel, and David killed seven thousand of their charioteers and forty thousand of their foot soldiers. He also killed Shophach the commander of their army.

¹⁹When the vassals of Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they made peace with David and became subject to him.

So the Arameans were not willing to help the Ammonites anymore.

The Capture of Rabbah

20 In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, Joab led out the armed forces. He laid waste the land of the Ammonites and went to Rabbah and besieged it, but David remained in Jerusalem. Joab attacked Rabbah and left it in ruins. ²David took the crown from the head of their king^d—its weight was found to be a talent^e of gold, and it was set with precious stones—and it was placed on David's head. He took a great quantity of plunder from the city and brought out the people who were there, consigning them to labor with saws and with iron picks and axes. David did this to all the Ammonite towns. Then David and his entire army returned to Jerusalem.

War With the Philistines

⁴In the course of time, war broke out with the Philistines, at Gezer. At that time Sibbecai the Hushathite killed Sippai, one of the descendants of the Rephaites, and the Philistines were subjugated.

⁵In another battle with the Philistines, Elhanan son of Jar killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, who had a spear with a shaft like a weaver's rod.

⁶In still another battle, which took place at Gath, there was a huge man with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot—twenty-four in all. He also was descended from Rapha. ⁷When he taunted Israel, Jonathan son of Shimea, David's brother, killed him.

⁸These were descendants of Rapha in Gath, and they fell at the hands of David and his men.

David Numbers the Fighting Men

21 Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel. ²So David said to Joab and the commanders of the troops, "Go and count the Israelites from Beersheba to Dan. Then report back to me so that I may know how many there are."

³But Joab replied, "May the LORD multiply his troops a hundred times over. My lord the king, are they not all my lord's subjects? Why does my lord want to do this? Why should he bring guilt on Israel?"

⁴The king's word, however, overruled Joab; so Joab left and went throughout Israel and then came back to Jerusalem. ⁵Joab reported the number of the fighting men to David: In all Israel there were one million one hundred thousand men who

^a6 That is, about 37 tons (about 34 metric tons)
Milcom, that is, Molech

^b6 That is, Northwest Mesopotamia

^c2 That is, about 75 pounds (about 34 kilograms)

^d16 That is, the Euphrates

^e2 Or of

1 CHRONICLES 21:6

could handle a sword, including four hundred and seventy thousand in Judah.

⁸But Joab did not include Levi and Benjamin in the numbering, because the king's command was repulsive to him. This command was also evil in the sight of God; so he punished Israel.

⁹Then David said to God, "I have sinned greatly by doing this. Now, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing."

¹⁰The LORD said to Gad, David's seer, "Go and tell David, 'This is what the LORD says: I am giving you three options. Choose one of them for me to carry out against you.'"

¹¹So Gad went to David and said to him, "This is what the LORD says: 'Take your choice: ¹²three years of famine, three months of being swept away^a before your enemies, with their swords overtaking you, or three days of the sword of the LORD—days of plague in the land, with the angel of the LORD ravaging every part of Israel.' Now then, decide how I should answer the one who sent me."

¹³David said to Gad, "I am in deep distress. Let me fall into the hands of the LORD, for his mercy is very great, but do not let me fall into the hands of men."

¹⁴So the LORD sent a plague on Israel, and seventy thousand men of Israel fell dead. ¹⁵And God sent an angel to destroy Jerusalem. But as the angel was doing so, the LORD saw it and was grieved because of the calamity and said to the angel who was destroying the people, "Enough! Withdraw your hand." The angel of the LORD was then standing at the threshing floor of Araunah^b the Jebusite.

¹⁶David looked up and saw the angel of the LORD standing between heaven and earth, with a drawn sword in his hand extended over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell facedown.

¹⁷David said to God, "Was it not I who ordered the fighting men to be counted? I am the one who has sinned and done wrong. These are but sheep. What have they done? O LORD my God, let your hand fall upon me and my family, but do not let this plague remain on your people."

¹⁸Then the angel of the LORD ordered Gad to tell David to go up and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. ¹⁹So David went up in obedience to the word that Gad had spoken in the name of the LORD.

²⁰While Araunah was threshing wheat, he turned and saw the angel; his four sons who were with him hid themselves. ²¹Then David approached, and when Araunah looked and saw him, he left the threshing floor and bowed down before David with his face to the ground.

²²David said to him, "Let me have the site of your threshing floor so I can build an altar to the LORD, that the plague on the people may be stopped. Sell it to me at the full price."

²³Araunah said to David, "Take it! Let my lord the king do whatever pleases him. Look, I will give

the oxen for the burnt offerings, the threshing sledges for the wood, and the wheat for the grain offering. I will give all this."

²⁴But King David replied to Araunah, "No. I insist on paying the full price. I will not take for the LORD what is yours, or sacrifice a burnt offering that costs me nothing."

²⁵So David paid Araunah six hundred shekels^c of gold for the site. ²⁶David built an altar to the LORD there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings.^d He called on the LORD, and the LORD answered him with fire from heaven on the altar of burnt offering.

²⁷Then the LORD spoke to the angel, and he put his sword back into its sheath. ²⁸At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, he offered sacrifices there. ²⁹The tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses had made in the desert, and the altar of burnt offering were at that time on the high place at Gibeon. ³⁰But David could not go before it to inquire of God, because he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

22 Then David said, "The house of the LORD God is to be here, and also the altar of burnt offering for Israel."

Preparations for the Temple

²So David gave orders to assemble the aliens living in Israel, and from among them he appointed stonemasons to prepare dressed stone for building the house of God. ³He provided a large amount of iron to make nails for the doors of the gateways and for the fittings, and more bronze than could be weighed. ⁴He also provided more cedar logs than could be counted, for the Sidonians and Tynians had brought large numbers of them to David.

⁵David said, "My son Solomon is young and inexperienced, and the house to be built for the LORD should be of great magnificence and fame and splendor in the sight of all the nations. Therefore I will make preparations for it." So David made extensive preparations before his death.

⁶Then he called for his son Solomon and charged him to build a house for the LORD, the God of Israel. ⁷David said to Solomon: "My son, I had it in my heart to build a house for the Name of the LORD my God. ⁸But this word of the LORD came to me: 'You have shed much blood and have fought many wars. You are not to build a house for my Name, because you have shed much blood on

22:8 A Man of Blood

David explained to Solomon that the Lord had not allowed him to build the temple because of his life of bloodshed. This does not suggest that David had been wrong to lead Israel in battle. God had directed him to conduct at least some of the wars. Nonetheless, war and bloodshed, even when necessary, fall short of God's ideal. He wanted the temple built by a man of peace.

^a22 Hebrew, Septuagint and Vulgate (see also 2 Samuel 24:13) of firing
18-28 ^c25 That is, about 15 pounds (about 7 kilograms)

^d26 Hebrew *Ornan*, a variant of Araunah, also in verses
Traditionally peace offerings

the earth in my sight.⁹ But you will have a son who will be a man of peace and rest, and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side. His name will be Solomon,¹⁰ and I will grant Israel peace and quiet during his reign. ¹⁰He is the one who will build a house for my Name. He will be my son, and I will be his father. And I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.

¹¹"Now, my son, the LORD be with you, and may you have success and build the house of the LORD your God, as he said you would. ¹²May the LORD give you discretion and understanding when he puts you in command over Israel, so that you may keep the law of the LORD your God. ¹³Then you will have success if you are careful to observe the decrees and laws that the LORD gave Moses for Israel. Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged.

¹⁴"I have taken great pains to provide for the temple of the LORD a hundred thousand talents^b of gold, a million talents^c of silver, quantities of bronze and iron too great to be weighed, and wood and stone. And you may add to them. ¹⁵You have many workmen: stonecutters, masons and carpenters, as well as men skilled in every kind of work ¹⁶in gold and silver, bronze and iron—craftsmen beyond number. Now begin the work, and the LORD be with you."

¹⁷Then David ordered all the leaders of Israel to help his son Solomon. ¹⁸He said to them, "Is not the LORD your God with you? And has he not granted you rest on every side? For he has handed the inhabitants of the land over to me, and the land is subject to the LORD and to his people. ¹⁹Now devote your heart and soul to seeking the LORD your God. Begin to build the sanctuary of the LORD God, so that you may bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD and the sacred articles belonging to God into the temple that will be built for the Name of the LORD."

The Levites

23 When David was old and full of years, he made his son Solomon king over Israel.

²He also gathered together all the leaders of Israel, as well as the priests and Levites. ³The Levites thirty years old or more were counted, and the total number of men was thirty-eight thousand. ⁴David said, "Of these, twenty-four thousand are to supervise the work of the temple of the LORD and six thousand are to be officials and judges. ⁵Four thousand are to be gatekeepers and four thousand are to praise the LORD with the musical instruments I have provided for that purpose."

⁶David divided the Levites into groups corresponding to the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari.

Gershonites

⁷Belonging to the Gershonites:

Ladan and Shimei.

⁸The sons of Ladan:

Jehiel the first, Zetham and Joel—three in all.

⁹The sons of Shimei,

Shelomoth, Haziël and Haran—three in all.

These were the heads of the families of Ladan.

¹⁰And the sons of Shimei:

Jahath, Ziza,^d Jeush and Beriah.

These were the sons of Shimei—four in all.

¹¹Jahath was the first and Ziza the second, but Jeush and Beriah did not have many sons; so they were counted as one family with one assignment.

Kohathites

¹²The sons of Kohath:

Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel—four in all.

¹³The sons of Amram:

Aaron and Moses.

Aaron was set apart, he and his descendants forever, to consecrate the most holy things, to offer sacrifices before the LORD, to minister before him and to pronounce blessings in his name forever. ¹⁴The sons of Moses the man of God were counted as part of the tribe of Levi.

¹⁵The sons of Moses:

Gershom and Eliezer.

¹⁶The descendants of Gershom:

Shubael was the first.

¹⁷The descendants of Eliezer:

Rehabiah was the first.

Eliezer had no other sons, but the sons of Rehabiah were very numerous.

¹⁸The sons of Izhar:

Shelomith was the first.

¹⁹The sons of Hebron:

Jeriah the first, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third and Jekameam the fourth.

²⁰The sons of Uzziel:

Micah the first and Isshiah the second.

Merarites

²¹The sons of Merari:

Mahli and Mushi.

The sons of Mahli:

Eleazar and Kish.

23:6 Keeping the Temple

Ever since the time of Moses, the Levites had been in charge of carrying and caring for the tabernacle—the portable tent where God was worshiped. But now that the ark had been placed permanently in Jerusalem, and a temple was to be built, the Levites needed new duties and organization. Chapters 23-26 describe those duties in detail.

^a9 Solomon sounds like and may be derived from the Hebrew for peace.

^b14 That is, about 37,500 tons (about 34,500 metric tons).

most Hebrew manuscripts Ziza

^d14 That is, about 3,750 tons (about 3,450 metric tons).

^e10 One Hebrew manuscript, Septuagint and Vulgate (see also verse 11);

²²Eleazar died without having sons: he had only daughters. Their cousins, the sons of Kish, married them.

²³The sons of Mushi:

Mahli, Eder and Jerimoth—three in all.

²⁴These were the descendants of Levi by their families—the heads of families as they were registered under their names and counted individually, that is, the workers twenty years old or more who served in the temple of the LORD. ²⁵For David had said, "Since the LORD, the God of Israel, has granted rest to his people and has come to dwell in Jerusalem forever, ²⁶the Levites no longer need to carry the tabernacle or any of the articles used in its service." ²⁷According to the last instructions of David, the Levites were counted from those twenty years old or more.

²⁸The duty of the Levites was to help Aaron's descendants in the service of the temple of the LORD: to be in charge of the courtyards, the side rooms, the purification of all sacred things and the performance of other duties at the house of God. ²⁹They were in charge of the bread set out on the table, the flour for the grain offerings, the unleavened wafers, the baking and the mixing, and all measurements of quantity and size. ³⁰They were also to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD. They were to do the same in the evening. ³¹and whenever burnt offerings were presented to the LORD on Sabbaths and at New Moon festivals and at appointed feasts. They were to serve before the LORD regularly in the proper number and in the way prescribed for them.

³²And so the Levites carried out their responsibilities for the Tent of Meeting, for the Holy Place and, under their brothers the descendants of Aaron, for the service of the temple of the LORD.

The Divisions of Priests

24 These were the divisions of the sons of Aaron:

The sons of Aaron were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. ²But Nadab and Abihu died before their father did, and they had no sons; so Eleazar and Ithamar served as the priests. ³With the help of Zadok a descendant of Eleazar and Ahimelech a descendant of Ithamar, David separated them into divisions for their appointed order of ministering. ⁴A larger number of leaders were found among Eleazar's descendants than among Ithamar's, and they were divided accordingly: sixteen heads of families from Eleazar's descendants and eight heads of families from Ithamar's descendants. ⁵They divided them impartially by drawing lots, for there were officials of the sanctuary and officials of God among the descendants of both Eleazar and Ithamar.

⁶The scribe Shemaiah son of Nethanel, a Levite, recorded their names in the presence of the king and of the officials: Zadok the priest, Ahimelech son of Abiathar and the heads of families of the priests and of the Levites—one family being taken from Eleazar and then one from Ithamar.

⁷The first lot fell to Jehoiarib,
the second to Jedaiiah,
⁸the third to Harim,
the fourth to Seorim,
⁹the fifth to Malkijah,
the sixth to Mijamin,
¹⁰the seventh to Hakkoz,
the eighth to Abijah,
¹¹the ninth to Jeshua,
the tenth to Shecaniah,
¹²the eleventh to Elashib,
the twelfth to Jakim,
¹³the thirteenth to Huppah,
the fourteenth to Jeshebeab,
¹⁴the fifteenth to Bilgah,
the sixteenth to Immer,
¹⁵the seventeenth to Hezir,
the eighteenth to Happizzzez,
¹⁶the nineteenth to Pethahiah,
the twentieth to Jehezkel,
¹⁷the twenty-first to Jakin,
the twenty-second to Gamul,
¹⁸the twenty-third to Delaiah
and the twenty-fourth to Maaziah.

¹⁹This was their appointed order of ministering when they entered the temple of the LORD, according to the regulations prescribed for them by their forefather Aaron, as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded him.

The Rest of the Levites

²⁰As for the rest of the descendants of Levi:

from the sons of Amram: Shubael;
from the sons of Shubael: Jehdeiah.

²¹As for Rehabiah, from his sons:
Isshiah was the first.

²²From the Izharites: Shelomoth;
from the sons of Shelomoth: Jahath.

²³The sons of Hebron: Jeriah the first,^a Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third and Jekameam the fourth.

²⁴The son of Uzziel: Micah;
from the sons of Micah: Shamir.

²⁵The brother of Micah: Isshiah;
from the sons of Isshiah: Zechariah.

²⁶The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi.
The son of Jaaziah: Beno.

²⁷The sons of Merari:
from Jaaziah: Beno, Shoham, Zaccur and Ibri.

²⁸From Mahli: Eleazar, who had no sons.

²⁹From Kish: the son of Kish:
Jerahmeel.

³⁰And the sons of Mushi: Mahli, Eder and Jerimoth.

These were the Levites, according to their families. ³¹They also cast lots, just as their brothers the descendants of Aaron did, in the presence of King David and of Zadok, Ahimelech, and the heads of families of the priests and of the Levites. The families of the oldest brother were treated the same as those of the youngest.

^a2: Two Hebrew manuscripts and some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 1 Chron. 23:19) most Hebrew manuscripts The sons of Jeriah

The Singers

25 David, together with the commanders of the army, set apart some of the sons of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun for the ministry of prophesying, accompanied by harps, lyres and cymbals. Here is the list of the men who performed this service:

¹From the sons of Asaph.

Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah and Asarelah. The sons of Asaph were under the supervision of Asaph, who prophesied under the king's supervision.

²As for Jeduthun, from his sons:

Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiiah, Shimei,^a Hashabiah and Mattithiah, six in all, under the supervision of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied, using the harp in thanking and praising the LORD.

³As for Heman, from his sons:

Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shubael and Jerimoth; Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalh and Romamti-Ezer; Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir and Mahazioth. ⁵All these were sons of Heman the king's seer. They were given him through the promises of God to exalt him.^b God gave Heman fourteen sons and three daughters.

⁶All these men were under the supervision of their fathers for the music of the temple of the LORD, with cymbals, lyres and harps, for the ministry at the house of God. Asaph, Jeduthun and Heman were under the supervision of the king. ⁷Along with their relatives—all of them trained and skilled in music for the LORD—they numbered 288. ⁸Young and old alike, teacher as well as student, cast lots for their duties.

⁹The first lot, which was for Asaph, fell to Joseph,

his sons and relatives,^c 12^d

the second to Gedaliah,
he and his relatives and sons, 12

¹⁰the third to Zaccur,
his sons and relatives, 12

¹¹the fourth to Izri,^e
his sons and relatives, 12

¹²the fifth to Nethaniah,
his sons and relatives, 12

¹³the sixth to Bukkiah,
his sons and relatives, 12

¹⁴the seventh to Jesarelah,^f
his sons and relatives, 12

¹⁵the eighth to Jeshaiiah,
his sons and relatives, 12

¹⁶the ninth to Mattaniah,
his sons and relatives, 12

¹⁷the tenth to Shimei,
his sons and relatives, 12

¹⁸the eleventh to Azarel,^g
his sons and relatives, 12

¹⁹the twelfth to Hashabiah,
his sons and relatives, 12

²⁰the thirteenth to Shubael,
his sons and relatives, 12

²¹the fourteenth to Mattithiah,
his sons and relatives, 12

²²the fifteenth to Jerimoth,
his sons and relatives, 12

²³the sixteenth to Hananiah,
his sons and relatives, 12

²⁴the seventeenth to Joshbekashah,
his sons and relatives, 12

²⁵the eighteenth to Hanani,
his sons and relatives, 12

²⁶the nineteenth to Mallothi,
his sons and relatives, 12

²⁷the twentieth to Eliathah,
his sons and relatives, 12

²⁸the twenty-first to Hothir,
his sons and relatives, 12

²⁹the twenty-second to Giddalti,
his sons and relatives, 12

³⁰the twenty-third to Mahazioth,
his sons and relatives, 12

³¹the twenty-fourth to Romamti-Ezer,
his sons and relatives, 12

The Gatekeepers

26 The divisions of the gatekeepers:

From the Korahites: Meshelemiah son of Kore, one of the sons of Asaph.

²Meshelemiah had sons:

Zechanah the firstborn,

Jediael the second,

Zebadiah the third,

Jathniel the fourth,

³Elam the fifth,

Jehohanan the sixth

and Eliehoenai the seventh.

⁴Obed-Edom also had sons:

Shemaiah the firstborn,

Jehozabad the second,

Joah the third,

Sacar the fourth,

Nethanel the fifth,

⁵Ammiel the sixth,

Issachar the seventh

and Peullethai the eighth.

(For God had blessed Obed-Edom.)

⁶His son Shemaiah also had sons, who were leaders in their father's family because they were very capable men. ⁷The sons of Shemaiah: Othni, Rephael, Obed and Elzabad; his relatives Elihu and Semakiah were also able men. ⁸All these were descendants of Obed-Edom; they and their sons and their relatives were capable men with the strength to do the work—descendants of Obed-Edom, 62 in all.

⁹Meshelemiah had sons and relatives, who were able men—18 in all.

¹⁰Hosah the Merarite had sons: Shimri the first (although he was not the firstborn, his

^{a1} One Hebrew manuscript and some Septuagint manuscripts (see also verse 17), most Hebrew manuscripts do not have Shimei.

^{b5} Hebrew exalt the horn

^{c9} See Septuagint, Hebrew does not have his sons and relatives

^{d9} See the total in verse 7; Hebrew

does not have twelve.

^{e11} A variant of Zeri

^{f14} A variant of Asarelah

^{g18} A variant of Uzziel

either had appointed him the first), 11th till both the second: Iatubah the third and Zebadiah the fourth. The men and relatives of Iatubah were 13 in all.

These divisions of the gatekeepers, through the chief men, had duties for ministering in the temple of the LORD, just as their relatives had. There were 13 for each gate according to their courses, young and old alike.

12th The lot for the East Gate fell to Shelemiah. Then lots were cast for his son Zebadiah, a wise counsellor, and the lot for the North Gate fell to him. 13th The lot for the South Gate fell to Obed-Edom, and the lot for the storehouse fell to his sons. 14th The lots for the West Gate and the Shalman Gate on the upper road fell to Shuppim and Haphtai.

15th Guard was alongside of guard. 16th There were six courses a day on the east, four a day on the north, four a day on the south and two at a time at the storehouse. 17th As for the court to the west, there were four at the road and two at the court itself.

18th These were the divisions of the gatekeepers, who were descendants of Korah and Merari.

The Treasurers and Other Officials

19th Their fellow Levites were^a in charge of the treasures of the house of God and the treasures for the dedicated things.

20th The descendants of Ladan, who were Gershonites through Ladan and who were heads of families belonging to Ladan the Gershonite, were the sons of Jehieli. Zetham and his brothers were in charge of the treasures of the temple of the LORD.

21st From the Amramites, the Izharites, the Hebronites and the Uzzielites

22nd Shubael, a descendant of Gershon son of Moses, was the officer in charge of the treasures. 23rd His relatives through Eliezer: Rehabiah his son, Jeshaiiah his son, Joram his son, Zicri his son and Shelomith his son. 24th Shelomith and his relatives were in charge of all the treasures for the things dedicated by King David, by the heads of families who were the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and by the other army commanders. 25th Some of the plunder taken in battle they dedicated for the repair of the temple of the LORD. 26th And everything dedicated by Samuel the seer and by Saul son of Kish, Abner son of Ner and Joab son of Zeruiah, and all the other dedicated things were in the care of Shelomith and his relatives.

27th From the Izharites: Kenaniah and his sons were assigned duties away from the temple, as officials and judges over Israel.

28th From the Hebronites: Hashabiah and his relatives—seventeen hundred able men—were responsible in Israel west of the Jordan for all the work of the LORD and for the king's service. 29th As for the Hebron-

ites, Benaiah was the chief, but according to the genealogy of each of their families. In the fortieth year, David's reign a search was made in the records, and capable men among the Izharites were found at Jazer in Gilead. Benaiah had twenty-seven hundred relatives, who were able men and heads of families, and King David put them in charge of the Benjamites, the Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh for every matter pertaining to God and for the affairs of the king.

Army Divisions

27th This is the list of the Israelites—heads of families, commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds and their officers, who served the king in all that concerned the army divisions that were on duty month by month throughout the year. Each division consisted of 24,000 men.

1st In charge of the first division, for the first month, was Jashobeam son of Zabdiel. There were 24,000 men in his division. 2nd He was a descendant of Perez and chief of all the army officers for the first month.

3rd In charge of the division for the second month was Dodai the Ahohite. Mikloth was the leader of his division. There were 24,000 men in his division.

4th The third army commander, for the third month, was Benaiah son of Jehoiada the priest. He was chief and there were 24,000 men in his division. 5th This was the Benaiah who was a mighty man among the Thirty and was over the Thirty. His son Ammizabad was in charge of his division.

6th The fourth, for the fourth month, was Asahel the brother of Joab; his son Zebadiah was his successor. There were 24,000 men in his division.

7th The fifth, for the fifth month, was the commander Shamhuth the Izrahite. There were 24,000 men in his division.

8th The sixth, for the sixth month, was Ira the son of Ikkeish the Tekoite. There were 24,000 men in his division.

9th The seventh, for the seventh month, was Helez the Pelonite, an Ephraimite. There were 24,000 men in his division.

10th The eighth, for the eighth month, was Sibbecai the Hushathite, a Zerahite. There were 24,000 men in his division.

11th The ninth, for the ninth month, was Abiezer the Anathothite, a Benjamite. There were 24,000 men in his division.

12th The tenth, for the tenth month, was Maharai the Netophathite, a Zerahite. There were 24,000 men in his division.

13th The eleventh, for the eleventh month, was Benaiah the Pirathonite, an Ephraimite. There were 24,000 men in his division.

14th The twelfth, for the twelfth month, was Heldai the Netophathite, from the family of

^a16 A variant of Meshelemiah

^b20 Septuagint; Hebrew As for the Levites, Abijah was

¹⁷Chuniel There were 24,000 men in his division

Officers of the Tribes

¹⁸The officers over the tribes of Israel

over the Rubenites: Eliezer son of Zier,
over the Simeonites: Shephatiah son of Ma-
ach

over Levi: Hashabiah son of Kemuel
over Aaron: Zadok

¹⁹Over Judah: Elihu, a brother of David

over Issachar: Omri son of Michael,

²⁰Over Zebulun: Ishmaiah son of Obadiah,

over Naphtali: Jeremoth son of Azriel,

²¹Over the Ephraimites: Hoshea son of Az-
ariah

over half the tribe of Manasseh: Joel son of
Pedaiah,

²²Over the half-tribe of Manasseh in Gilead:

Iddo son of Zechariah

over Benjamin: Jaasiel son of Abner

²³Over Dan: Azarel son of Jeroham

These were the officers over the tribes of Israel

²⁴David did not take the number of the men twenty years old or less, because the LORD had promised to make Israel as numerous as the stars in the sky. ²⁵Joab son of Zeruiah began to count the men but did not finish. Wrath came on Israel on account of this numbering, and the number was not entered in the books of the annals of King David

The King's Overseers

²⁶Azmaveth son of Adiel was in charge of the royal storehouses

Jonathan son of Uzziel was in charge of the storehouses in the outlying districts, in the towns, the villages and the watchtowers

²⁷Ezer son of Kelub was in charge of the field workers who farmed the land.

²⁸Shimei the Ramathite was in charge of the vineyards

Zabdi the Shiphmite was in charge of the produce of the vineyards for the wine vats

²⁹Baal-Hanan the Gedente was in charge of the olive and sycamore-fig trees in the western foothills

Joash was in charge of the supplies of olive oil.

³⁰Shitrai the Sharonite was in charge of the herds grazing in Sharon.

Shaphat son of Adlai was in charge of the herds in the valleys

³¹Obil the Ishmaelite was in charge of the camels

Jehdeiah the Meronothite was in charge of the donkeys

³²Jaziz the Hagrite was in charge of the flocks.

All these were the officials in charge of King David's property

³³Jonathan, David's uncle, was a counselor, a man of insight and a scribe. Jehiel son of Hacmoni took care of the king's sons.

³⁴Ahithophel was the king's counselor.

Hushai the Arkite was the king's friend
³⁵Ahithophel was succeeded by Jehoiada son of Benaiah and by Abiathar.

Joab was the commander of the royal army.

David's Plans for the Temple

28 David summoned all the officials of Israel to assemble at Jerusalem, the officers over the tribes, the commanders of the divisions in the service of the king, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of all the property and livestock belonging to the king and his sons, together with the palace officials, the mighty men and all the brave warriors

²King David rose to his feet and said: "Listen to me, my brothers and my people. I had it in my heart to build a house as a place of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, for the footstool of our God, and I made plans to build it. But God said to me, 'You are not to build a house for my Name, because you are a warrior and have shed blood.'

³"Yet the LORD, the God of Israel, chose me from my whole family to be king over Israel forever. He chose Judah as leader, and from the house of Judah he chose my family, and from my father's sons he was pleased to make me king over all Israel. ⁴Of all my sons—and the LORD has given me many—he has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. ⁵He said to me: 'Solomon your son is the one who will build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. ⁶I will establish his kingdom forever if he is unswerving in carrying out my commands and laws, as is being done at this time.'

⁷"So now I charge you in the sight of all Israel and of the assembly of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God: Be careful to follow all the commands of the LORD your God, that you may possess this good land and pass it on as an inheritance to your descendants forever.

⁸"And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever. ⁹Consider now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a temple as a sanctuary. Be strong and do the work."

28:9 A Condition on the Promise

God's promise to David of unending descendants on the throne was so important to Israel that it was reported, in different forms, several times. (See chapter 17, for instance.) Sometimes it read as though God would bless a line of successful kings regardless of their behavior. Here, though, David explained that God's favor would depend on Solomon's devotion to God.

11Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the portico of the temple, its buildings, its storerooms, its upper parts, its inner rooms and the place of atonement. 12He gave him the plans of all that the Spirit had put in his mind for the courts of the temple of the Lord and all the surrounding rooms, for the treasures of the temple of God and for the treasures for the dedicated things. 13He gave him instructions for the divisions of the priests and Levites, and for all the work of serving in the temple of the Lord, as well as for all the articles to be used in its service. 14He designated the weight of gold for all the gold articles to be used in various kinds of service, and the weight of silver for all the silver articles to be used in various kinds of service: 15the weight of gold for the gold lampstands and their lamps, with the weight for each lampstand and its lamps; and the weight of silver for each silver lampstand and its lamps, according to the use of each lampstand. 16the weight of gold for each table for consecrated bread, the weight of silver for the silver tables, 17the weight of pure gold for the forks, sprinkling bowls and pitchers, the weight of gold for each gold dish; the weight of silver for each silver dish; 18and the weight of the refined gold for the altar of incense. He also gave him the plan for the chariot, that is, the cherubim of gold that spread their wings and shelter the ark of the covenant of the Lord.

19“All this,” David said, “I have in writing from the hand of the Lord upon me, and he gave me understanding in all the details of the plan.”

20David also said to Solomon his son, “Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the Lord is finished. 21The divisions of the priests and Levites are ready for all the work on the temple of God, and every willing man skilled in any craft will help you in all the work. The officials and all the people will obey your every command.”

Gifts for Building the Temple

29 Then King David said to the whole assembly: “My son Solomon, the one whom God has chosen, is young and inexperienced. The task is great, because this palatial structure is not for man but for the Lord God. 2With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God—gold for the gold work, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze, iron for the iron and wood for the wood, as well as onyx for the settings, turquoise,^a stones of various colors, and all kinds of fine stone and marble—all of these in large quantities. 3Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple: 4three thousand talents^b of gold (gold of Ophir) and seven thousand talents^c of refined silver, for the overlaying of the walls of the buildings, 5for the

gold work and the silver work, and for all the work to be done by the craftsmen. Now, who is willing to consecrate himself today to the Lord?”

6Then the leaders of families, the officers of the tribes of Israel, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of the king's work gave willingly. 7They gave toward the work on the temple of God five thousand talents^d and ten thousand darics^e of gold, ten thousand talents^f of silver, eighteen thousand talents^g of bronze and a hundred thousand talents^h of iron. 8Any who had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the temple of the Lord in the custody of Jehiel the Gershonite. 9The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord. David the king also rejoiced greatly.

David's Prayer

10David praised the Lord in the presence of the whole assembly, saying,

“Praise be to you, O Lord,
God of our father Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting.

11Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power
and the glory and the majesty and the
splendor,

for everything in heaven and earth is yours.

Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom;
you are exalted as head over all.

12Wealth and honor come from you;
you are the ruler of all things.

In your hands are strength and power
to exalt and give strength to all.

13Now, our God, we give you thanks,
and praise your glorious name.

14“But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. 15We are aliens and strangers in your sight, as were all our forefathers. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. 16O Lord our God, as for all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name, it comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you. 17I know, my

29:10 David's Great Prayer

David's prayer at the beginning of temple construction shows why he was a man after God's own heart. Despite all his achievements, he was deeply humble. He wanted glory to go to God, not himself. This passage would have reminded the original readers of Chronicles, back from exile and without a king, that David's greatest concern was for the temple, where his people could worship and serve God. They, his descendants, did not need

^a2 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.
^b260 tons (about 240 metric tons)

^c17 That is, about 190 tons (about 170 metric tons)
^dkilograms) ^e17 That is, about 375 tons (about 345 metric tons)

^f4 about 3 750 tons (about 3 450 metric tons)

^g4 That is, about 110 tons (about 100 metric tons)

^h4 That is, about

^e7 That is, about 185 pounds (about 84

^f8 That is, about 675 tons (about 610 metric tons)

^g8 That

God that you test the heart and are pleased with honesty. All these things have I given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with my eyes how willingly your people who are here have given to you, O Lord our God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, keep this desire in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you. ¹⁹And give my son Solomon the wholehearted devotion to keep your commands, requirements and decrees and to do everything to build the palatial structure for which I have provided.

²⁰Then David said to the whole assembly, "Praise the Lord your God." So they all praised the Lord, the God of their fathers; they bowed low and fell prostrate before the Lord and the king.

Solomon Acknowledged as King

²¹The next day they made sacrifices to the Lord and presented burnt offerings to him: a thousand bulls, a thousand rams and a thousand male lambs, together with their drink offerings, and other sacrifices in abundance for all Israel. ²²They ate and drank with great joy in the presence of the Lord that day.

Then they acknowledged Solomon son of David as king a second time, anointing him before the Lord to be ruler and Zadok to be priest. ²³So Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king in place of his father David. He prospered and all Israel obeyed him. ²⁴All the officers and mighty men, as well as all of King David's sons, pledged their submission to King Solomon.

²⁵The Lord highly exalted Solomon in the sight of all Israel and bestowed on him royal splendor such as no king over Israel ever had before.

The Death of David

²⁶David son of Jesse was king over all Israel. ²⁷He ruled over Israel forty years—seven in Hebron and thirty three in Jerusalem. ²⁸He died at a good old age, having enjoyed long life, wealth and honor. His son Solomon succeeded him as king.

²⁹As for the events of King David's reign, from beginning to end, they are written in the records of Samuel the seer, the records of Nathan the prophet and the records of Gad the seer, ³⁰together with the details of his reign and power, and the circumstances that surrounded him and Israel and the kingdoms of all the other lands.

29:24 A Second Coronation

Assuming that his readers were familiar with the family quarrels told of in 1 Kings 1, the author refers to this coronation as the "second time" (verse 22). The first coronation happened when David learned that Solomon's older brother had been conspiring to become king. David immediately called for a private coronation (1 Kings 1:32-40). Only later did this public ceremony occur, when the rebellious brother swore his loyalty. Typically, 1 Chronicles leaves out the nasty politics, and emphasizes the positive result.

2 CHRONICLES

INTRODUCTION

A Time for Hope

Restoring pride to a group of refugees

“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” 7:14

There was a time when the Israelites desperately needed a new look at the past. Their ancestors had been torn from home, beaten, and dragged off in chains to serve as slaves in a foreign country. In Babylon, a new generation grew up knowing little of the Israelite past—the covenant with God, the promised line of kings, the magnificent temple in Jerusalem.

When captive Israelites were finally allowed to return home, they found a pile of rubble. In Israel's Golden Age, people had traveled thousands of miles to view the majesty of Jerusalem and its temple. But to the refugees' horror, not one stone of the temple remained standing. The carved beams had all been hacked to pieces, the gold and ivory stripped away, and the furniture auctioned off or destroyed.

Outside the capital, whole villages had disappeared. Vital religious customs had gone uncelebrated for 70 years. Jewish culture was in danger of leaking away.

The book of Chronicles was written to those refugees who returned. For that dispirited group of people, the author recounted the glory days of Israel. He wanted to restore pride in the Israelite past, and bring hope to their future.

History in a New Light

Chronicles (both 1 and 2) thus retells history, starting all the way at the beginning, with Adam. Most of the characters are familiar, but Chronicles tells old stories in a new light. Its author isn't just reciting facts. He is delivering a word of bright hope, a pep talk, to just-freed refugees.

Some accuse Chronicles of being a “whitewashed” history, especially in comparison to the Bible's other history books. True, the book barely mentions the Israelites' great failures—it says nothing of David's or Solomon's mistakes, for instance. Presumably, the refugees had heard plenty about the dark side of their nation's recent past: the books of Samuel and Kings, which ruthlessly exposed those failures, had been around for years.

Similarly, Chronicles ignores the chaotic Northern Kingdom of Israel, and the civil war Judah waged against it. Nothing remained of the ten scattered tribes of the North, and the book wastes little space on them. Instead, Chronicles reaches higher, seeking to restore pride in the original ideals of the nation.

A Distant Hope

The good kings of Judah, eight in all, dominate the story: over two-thirds of 2 Chronicles is devoted to their reigns. Chronicles focuses on God's special relationship with the Israelites, recalling the covenant that had brought about their Golden Age. It reviews the religious reforms led by each king, and, above all, highlights the temple, the house where God's presence came to rest. If God had lived among them in the past, couldn't he do so again?

How to Read 2 Chronicles

You will recognize many of the stories in 2 Chronicles—about half of it closely follows other Bible passages. The author freely admits he has relied on the books of Moses, Samuel, and Kings. He also quotes from Judges, Jeremiah, the Psalms, Isaiah, and Lamentations, as well as many books that have been lost to history.

But 2 Chronicles does not merely repeat. It weaves together stories and facts for a specific purpose: a Jewish philosophy of history. Chronicles sheds new light on that history by

highlighting rare moments of peace and prosperity. Worship of the true God had made Israel strong. As you read, notice how 2 Chronicles underscores that fact by stressing the temple and the priests.

For comparison, you may want to read companion passages in the book of Kings (for a list, see "Lineup of Rulers," page 338). Read side by side; the two accounts clearly reveal the distinct purpose behind the book of Chronicles.

Look past all the names and events for the few kings who did right. (See "The Great Reformers," page 392.) What made them successful? What lessons about faith can we learn from them?

PLANS FOR READING 2 CHRONICLES

PLAN 1: An Overview of 2 Chronicles in 3 Days

- Day 1 Read the Introduction to 2 Chronicles and then chapter 20. It tells of a high point when King Jehoshaphat brought the whole nation together in prayer.
- ☐ Day 2 Hezekiah had an eventful life, with soaring highs and deep lows. Read about a national high point in chapter 30.
- ☐ Day 3 Hezekiah lived in treacherous times. Read of his close scrape with disaster in chapter 32.

PLAN 2: All of 2 Chronicles in 34 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16-17
- ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26-27 ☐ 28 ☐ 29 ☐ 30 ☐ 31 ☐ 32
- ☐ 33 ☐ 34 ☐ 35 ☐ 36

Solomon Asks for Wisdom

1 Solomon son of David established himself firmly over his kingdom, for the LORD his God was with him and made him exceedingly great.

²Then Solomon spoke to all Israel—to the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, to the judges and to all the leaders in Israel, the heads of families—³and Solomon and the whole assembly went to the high place at Gibeon, for God's Tent of Meeting was there, which Moses the LORD's servant had made in the desert. ⁴Now David had brought up the ark of God from Kiriath Jearim to the place he had prepared for it, because he had pitched a tent for it in Jerusalem. ⁵But the bronze altar that Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made was in Gibeon in front of the tabernacle of the LORD; so Solomon and the assembly inquired of him there. ⁶Solomon went up to the bronze altar before the LORD in the Tent of Meeting and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.

⁷That night God appeared to Solomon and said

to him, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you."

⁸Solomon answered God, "You have shown great kindness to David my father and have made me king in his place. ⁹Now, LORD God, let your promise to my father David be confirmed, for you have made me king over a people who are as numerous as the dust of the earth. ¹⁰Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of yours?"

¹¹God said to Solomon, "Since this is your heart's desire and you have not asked for wealth, riches or honor, nor for the death of your enemies, and since you have not asked for a long life but for wisdom and knowledge to govern my people over whom I have made you king, ¹²therefore wisdom and knowledge will be given you. And I will also give you wealth, riches and honor, such as no king who was before you ever had and none after you will have."

¹³Then Solomon went to Jerusalem from the

high place at Gibeon, from before the Tent of Meeting. And he reigned over Israel

¹⁴Solomon accumulated chariots and horses; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses,^a which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem. ¹⁵The king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycamore-fig trees in the foothills. ¹⁶Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt^b and from Kue^c—the royal merchants purchased them from Kue. ¹⁷They imported a chariot from Egypt for six hundred shekels^d of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty.^e They also exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and of the Arameans

Preparations for Building the Temple

2 Solomon gave orders to build a temple for the Name of the LORD and a royal palace for himself. ²He conscripted seventy thousand men as carriers and eighty thousand as stonecutters in the hills and thirty-six hundred as foremen over them.

³Solomon sent this message to Hiram^f king of Tyre

"Send me cedar logs as you did for my father David when you sent him cedar to build a palace to live in. ⁴Now I am about to build a temple for the Name of the LORD my God and to dedicate it to him for burning fragrant incense before him, for setting out the consecrated bread regularly, and for making burnt offerings every morning and evening and on Sabbaths and New Moons and at the appointed feasts of the LORD our God. This is a lasting ordinance for Israel.

⁵"The temple I am going to build will be great, because our God is greater than all other gods. ⁶But who is able to build a temple for him, since the heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain him? Who then am I to build a temple for him, except as a place to burn sacrifices before him?

⁷"Send me, therefore, a man skilled to work in gold and silver, bronze and iron, and in

purple, crimson and blue yarn, and experienced in the art of engraving, to work in Judah and Jerusalem with my skilled craftsmen, whom my father David provided.

⁸"Send me also cedar, pine and algum^g logs from Lebanon, for I know that your men are skilled in cutting timber there. My men will work with yours ⁹to provide me with plenty of lumber, because the temple I build must be large and magnificent. ¹⁰I will give your servants, the woodsmen who cut the timber, twenty thousand cors^h of ground wheat, twenty thousand cors of barley, twenty thousand bathsⁱ of wine and twenty thousand baths of olive oil."

¹¹Hiram king of Tyre replied by letter to Solomon.

"Because the LORD loves his people, he has made you their king."

¹²And Hiram added:

"Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who made heaven and earth! He has given King David a wise son, endowed with intelligence and discernment, who will build a temple for the LORD and a palace for himself.

¹³"I am sending you Hiram-Abi, a man of great skill, ¹⁴whose mother was from Dan and whose father was from Tyre. He is trained to work in gold and silver, bronze and iron, stone and wood, and with purple and blue and crimson yarn and fine linen. He is experienced in all kinds of engraving and can execute any design given to him. He will work with your craftsmen and with those of my lord, David your father.

¹⁵"Now let my lord send his servants the wheat and barley and the olive oil and wine he promised, ¹⁶and we will cut all the logs from Lebanon that you need and will float them in rafts by sea down to Joppa. You can then take them up to Jerusalem."

¹⁷Solomon took a census of all the aliens who were in Israel, after the census his father David had taken; and they were found to be 153,600.

¹⁸He assigned 70,000 of them to be carriers and 80,000 to be stonecutters in the hills, with 3,600 foremen over them to keep the people working.

Solomon Builds the Temple

3 Then Solomon began to build the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David. It was on the threshing floor of Araunah^j the Jebusite, the place provided by David. ²He began building on the second day of the second month in the fourth year of his reign.

³The foundation Solomon laid for building the temple of God was sixty cubits long and twenty cubits wide^k (using the cubit of the old standard).

2:2 Solomon's Forced Labor

King Solomon drafted laborers for his construction projects much like an army drafts soldiers. His policy of forced labor sowed dissension in the kingdom, especially among resentful northern tribes. In keeping with its morale-building purpose, 2 Chronicles has little bad to say about Solomon. The author mentions Solomon's wealth (1:14; 9:22-25) without comment, although such excess defied the rules for kings (Deuteronomy 17:15-17). Chronicles also omits reference to Solomon's palace, which Kings had pointedly described as exceeding even the temple in its splendor.

^a14 Or *horses*

^b16 Or possibly Muzur, a region in Cilicia, also in verse 17

pounds (about 7 kilograms)

^c17 That is, about 3 3/4 pounds (about 1.7 kilograms)

measures 11 and 12

^d18 Probably a variant of *almug*, possibly juniper

kiloliters)

^e10 That is, probably about 115,000 gallons (about 440 kiloliters)

^f11 That is, about 90 feet (about 27 meters) long and 30 feet (about 9 meters) wide

^g16 Probably Cilicia

^h17 That is, about 15

ⁱ13 Hebrew *Huram*, a variant of Hiram, also

probably about 125,000 bushels (about 4,400

^j1 Hebrew *Ornan*, a variant of Araunah

⁴The portico at the front of the temple was twenty cubits^a long across the width of the building and twenty cubits^b high.

He overlaid the inside with pure gold. ⁵He paneled the main hall with pine and covered it with fine gold and decorated it with palm tree and chain designs. ⁶He adorned the temple with precious stones. And the gold he used was gold of Parvaim. He overlaid the ceiling beams, doorframes, walls and doors of the temple with gold, and he carved cherubim on the walls.

⁸He built the Most Holy Place, its length corresponding to the width of the temple—twenty cubits long and twenty cubits wide. He overlaid the inside with six hundred talents^c of fine gold. ⁹The gold nails weighed fifty shekels.^d He also overlaid the upper parts with gold.

¹⁰In the Most Holy Place he made a pair of sculptured cherubim and overlaid them with gold. ¹¹The total wingspan of the cherubim was twenty cubits. One wing of the first cherub was five cubits^e long and touched the temple wall, while its other wing, also five cubits long, touched the wing of the other cherub. ¹²Similarly one wing of the second cherub was five cubits long and touched the other temple wall, and its other wing, also five cubits long, touched the wing of the first cherub. ¹³The wings of these cherubim extended twenty cubits. They stood on their feet, facing the main hall.^f

¹⁴He made the curtain of blue, purple and crimson yarn and fine linen, with cherubim worked into it.

¹⁵In the front of the temple he made two pillars, which together were thirty-five cubits^g long, each with a capital on top measuring five cubits. ¹⁶He made interwoven chains^h and put them on top of the pillars. He also made a hundred pomegranates and attached them to the chains. ¹⁷He erected the pillars in the front of the temple, one to the south and one to the north. The one to the south he named Jakinⁱ and the one to the north Boaz.^j

3:14 A Temporary Separation

Just as it had in the tabernacle, a curtain in the temple separated the Holy Place and Most Holy Place. The curtain symbolized the distance between God and people. Even priests were forbidden to go beyond that curtain into the presence of God, except on the Day of Atonement. When Jesus died on the cross, this temple curtain miraculously ripped in two. That event also had symbolic meaning: Christ had opened up the way to God (Hebrews 9:7-12).

The Temple's Furnishings

⁴He made a bronze altar twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide and ten cubits high.^k ⁴He made the Sea of cast metal, circular in shape, measuring ten cubits from rim to rim and five cubits high. It took a line of thirty cubits^l to measure around it. ⁵Below the rim, figures of bulls encircled it—ten to a cubit.^m The bulls were cast in two rows in one piece with the Sea.

⁴The Sea stood on twelve bulls, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south and three facing east. The Sea rested on top of them, and their hindquarters were toward the center. ⁵It was a handbreadthⁿ in thickness, and its rim was like the rim of a cup, like a lily blossom. It held three thousand baths.^o

⁶He then made ten basins for washing and placed five on the south side and five on the north. In them the things to be used for the burnt offerings were rinsed, but the Sea was to be used by the priests for washing.

⁷He made ten gold lampstands according to the specifications for them and placed them in the temple, five on the south side and five on the north.

⁸He made ten tables and placed them in the temple, five on the south side and five on the north. He also made a hundred gold sprinkling bowls.

⁹He made the courtyard of the priests, and the large court and the doors for the court, and overlaid the doors with bronze. ¹⁰He placed the Sea on the south side, at the southeast corner.

¹¹He also made the pots and shovels and sprinkling bowls.

So Hiram finished the work he had undertaken for King Solomon in the temple of God:

¹²the two pillars;

the two bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars;

the two sets of network decorating the two bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars;

¹³the four hundred pomegranates for the two sets of network (two rows of pomegranates for each network, decorating the bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars);

¹⁴the stands with their basins;

¹⁵the Sea and the twelve bulls under it,

¹⁶the pots, shovels, meat forks and all related articles.

All the objects that Hiram-Abi made for King Solomon for the temple of the Lord were of polished bronze. ¹⁷The king had them cast in clay molds in the plain of the Jordan between Succoth and Zarethan.⁴ ¹⁸All these things that Solomon

^a That is, about 30 feet (about 9 meters), also in verses 8, 11 and 13 hundred and twenty. ^b That is, about 23 tons (about 21 metric tons).

^c That is, about 7 1/2 feet (about 2.3 meters), also in verse 15.

^d That is, about 17,500 gallons (about 66 kiloliters). ^e Or possibly made chains in the inner sanctuary the meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain. ^f Jakin probably means in him is strength.

^g That is, about 15 feet (about 4.5 meters) high.

^h That is, about 1 1/2 feet (about 0.5 meter).

ⁱ That is, about 3 inches (about 8 centimeters).

^j Hebrew Zarethan, a variant of Zarethan.

^k Some Septuagint and Syriac manuscripts, Hebrew and a

^l That is, about 1 1/4 pounds (about 0.6 kilogram).

^m Or facing inward.

ⁿ That is, about 52 feet (about 16

^o That is, about 30 feet (about 9 meters) long and

^p That is, about 45 feet (about

^q That is,

made amounted to so much that the weight of the bronze was not determined.

¹⁹Solomon also made all the furnishings that were in God's temple:

the golden altar;

the tables on which was the bread of the Presence;

²⁰the lampstands of pure gold with their lamps, to burn in front of the inner sanctuary as prescribed;

²¹the gold floral work and lamps and tongs (they were solid gold);

²²the pure gold wick trimmers, sprinkling bowls, dishes and censers; and the gold doors of the temple: the inner doors to the Most Holy Place and the doors of the main hall

5 When all the work Solomon had done for the temple of the LORD was finished, he brought in the things his father David had dedicated—the silver and gold and all the furnishings—and he placed them in the treasuries of God's temple.

The Ark Brought to the Temple

²Then Solomon summoned to Jerusalem the elders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes and the chiefs of the Israelite families, to bring up the ark of the LORD's covenant from Zion, the City of David. ³And all the men of Israel came together to the king at the time of the festival in the seventh month

⁴When all the elders of Israel had arrived, the Levites took up the ark, ⁵and they brought up the ark and the Tent of Meeting and all the sacred furnishings in it. The priests, who were Levites, carried them up; ⁶and King Solomon and the entire assembly of Israel that had gathered about him were before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and cattle that they could not be recorded or counted.

⁷The priests then brought the ark of the LORD's covenant to its place in the inner sanctuary of the temple, the Most Holy Place, and put it beneath the wings of the cherubim. ⁸The cherubim spread their wings over the place of the ark and covered the ark and its carrying poles. ⁹These poles were so long that their ends, extending from the ark, could be seen from in front of the inner sanctuary, but not from outside the Holy Place; and they are still there today. ¹⁰There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets that Moses had placed in it at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant with the Israelites after they came out of Egypt.

¹¹The priests then withdrew from the Holy

Place. All the priests who were there had consecrated themselves, regardless of their divisions. ¹²All the Levites who were musicians—Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun and their sons and relatives—stood on the east side of the altar, dressed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps and lyres. They were accompanied by 120 priests sounding trumpets. ¹³The trumpeters and singers joined in unison, as with one voice, to give praise and thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, they raised their voices in praise to the LORD and sang:

"He is good;
his love endures forever."

Then the temple of the LORD was filled with a cloud, ¹⁴and the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the temple of God.

6 Then Solomon said, "The LORD has said that he would dwell in a dark cloud; ²¹I have built a magnificent temple for you, a place for you to dwell forever."

³While the whole assembly of Israel was standing there, the king turned around and blessed them. ⁴Then he said:

"Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who with his hands has fulfilled what he promised with his mouth to my father David. For he said, ⁵'Since the day I brought my people out of Egypt, I have not chosen a city in any tribe of Israel to have a temple built for my Name to be there, nor have I chosen anyone to be the leader over my people Israel. ⁶But now I have chosen Jerusalem for my Name to be there, and I have chosen David to rule my people Israel.'

⁷"My father David had it in his heart to build a temple for the Name of the LORD, the God of Israel. ⁸But the LORD said to my father David, 'Because it was in your heart to build a temple for my Name, you did well to have this in your heart. ⁹Nevertheless, you are not the one to build the temple, but your son, who is your own flesh and blood—he is the one who will build the temple for my Name.'

¹⁰"The LORD has kept the promise he made. I have succeeded David my father and now I sit on the throne of Israel, just as the LORD promised, and I have built the temple for the Name of the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹¹There I have placed the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD that he made with the people of Israel."

Solomon's Prayer of Dedication

¹²Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the whole assembly of Israel and spread out his hands. ¹³Now he had made a bronze platform, five cubits^a long, five cubits wide and three cubits^b high, and had placed it in the center of the outer court. He stood on the platform and then knelt down before the whole

5:10 Proof of the Covenant

Until the invasion by Babylon, the Israelites possessed a visible reminder of God's treaty, or "covenant," with them. It stayed in the most sacred piece of furniture in Israel, the ark. But the ark was lost during the Babylonian captivity—and has never been found.

^a13 That is, about 7 1/2 feet (about 2.3 meters)

^b13 That is, about 4 1/2 feet (about 1.3 meters)

assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven. ¹⁴He said:

"Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven or on earth—you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way. ¹⁵You have kept your promise to your servant David my father, with your mouth you have promised and with your hand you have fulfilled it—as it is today.

¹⁶"Now LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father the promises you made to him when you said, 'You shall never fail to have a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons are careful in all they do to walk before me according to my law, as you have done.' ¹⁷And now, O LORD, God of Israel, let your word that you promised your servant David come true.

¹⁸"But will God really dwell on earth with men? The heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built! ¹⁹Yet give attention to your servant's prayer and his plea for mercy, O LORD my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence. ²⁰May your eyes be open toward this temple day and night, this place of which you said you would put your Name there. May you hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place. ²¹Hear the supplications of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place; and when you hear, forgive.

²²"When a man wrongs his neighbor and is required to take an oath and he comes and swears the oath before your altar in this temple, ²³then hear from heaven and act. Judge between your servants, repaying the guilty by bringing down on his own head what he has done. Declare the innocent not guilty and so establish his innocence.

²⁴"When your people Israel have been defeated by an enemy because they have sinned against you and when they turn back and confess your name, praying and making supplication before you in this temple, ²⁵then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and bring them back to the land you gave to them and their fathers.

²⁶"When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because your people have sinned against you, and when they pray toward this place and confess your name and turn from their sin because you have afflicted them, ²⁷then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel. Teach them the right way to live, and send rain on the land you gave your people for an inheritance.

²⁸"When famine or plague comes to the land, or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers, or when enemies besiege them in any of their cities, whatever disaster or disease may come, ²⁹and when a prayer or plea is made by

any of your people Israel—each one aware of his afflictions and pains, and spreading out his hands toward this temple—³⁰then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive, and deal with each man according to all he does, since you know his heart (for you alone know the hearts of men), ³¹so that they will fear you and walk in your ways all the time they live in the land you gave our fathers.

³²"As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm—when he comes and prays toward this temple, ³³then hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears your Name.

³⁴"When your people go to war against their enemies, wherever you send them, and when they pray to you toward this city you have chosen and the temple I have built for your Name, ³⁵then hear from heaven their prayer and their plea, and uphold their cause.

³⁶"When they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you become angry with them and give them over to the enemy, who takes them captive to a land far away or near; ³⁷and if they have a change of heart in the land where they are held captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captivity and say, 'We have sinned, we have done wrong and acted wickedly'; ³⁸and if they turn back to you with all their heart and soul in the land of their captivity where they were taken, and pray toward the land you gave their fathers, toward the city you have chosen and toward the temple I have built for your Name; ³⁹then from heaven, your dwelling place, hear their prayer and their pleas, and uphold their cause. And forgive your people, who have sinned against you.

⁴⁰"Now, my God, may your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place.

⁴¹"Now arise, O LORD God, and come to your resting place,

you and the ark of your might.

May your priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation,

may your saints rejoice in your goodness.

⁴²O LORD God, do not reject your anointed one.

Remember the great love promised to David your servant."

The Dedication of the Temple

7 When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. ²The priests could not enter the temple of the LORD because the glory of the

LORD filled it. ³When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the LORD above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying,

"He is good;
his love endures forever."

⁴Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD. ⁵And King Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty-two thousand head of cattle and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep and goats. So the king and all the people dedicated the temple of God. ⁶The priests took their positions, as did the Levites with the LORD's musical instruments, which King David had made for praising the LORD and which were used when he gave thanks, saying, "His love endures forever." Opposite the Levites, the priests blew their trumpets, and all the Israelites were standing.

⁷Solomon consecrated the middle part of the courtyard in front of the temple of the LORD, and there he offered burnt offerings and the fat of the fellowship offerings,^a because the bronze altar he had made could not hold the burnt offerings, the grain offerings and the fat portions.

⁸So Solomon observed the festival at that time for seven days, and all Israel with him—a vast assembly, people from Lebo^b Hamath to the Wadi of Egypt. ⁹On the eighth day they held an assembly, for they had celebrated the dedication of the altar for seven days and the festival for seven days more. ¹⁰On the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people to their homes, joyful and glad in heart for the good things the LORD had done for David and Solomon and for his people Israel.

The LORD Appears to Solomon

¹¹When Solomon had finished the temple of the LORD and the royal palace, and had succeeded in carrying out all he had in mind to do in the temple of the LORD and in his own palace, ¹²the LORD appeared to him at night and said:

"I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a temple for sacrifices.

¹³"When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, ¹⁴if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my

face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place. ¹⁶I have chosen and consecrated this temple so that my Name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.

¹⁷"As for you, if you walk before me as David your father did, and do all I command, and observe my decrees and laws, ¹⁸I will establish your royal throne, as I covenanted with David your father when I said, 'You shall never fail to have a man to rule over Israel.'

¹⁹"But if you turn away and forsake the decrees and commands I have given you^c and go off to serve other gods and worship them, ²⁰then I will uproot Israel from my land, which I have given them, and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. I will make it a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples. ²¹And though this temple is now so imposing, all who pass by will be appalled and say, 'Why has the LORD done such a thing to this land and to this temple?' ²²People will answer, 'Because they have forsaken the LORD, the God of their fathers, who brought them out of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, worshiping and serving them—that is why he brought all this disaster on them.'"

Solomon's Other Activities

8 At the end of twenty years, during which Solomon built the temple of the LORD and his own palace, ²Solomon rebuilt the villages that Hiram^d had given him, and settled Israelites in them. ³Solomon then went to Hamath Zobah and captured it. ⁴He also built up Tadmor in the desert and all the store cities he had built in Hamath. ⁵He rebuilt Upper Beth Horon and Lower Beth Horon as fortified cities, with walls and with gates and bars, ⁶as well as Baalath and all his store cities, and all the cities for his chariots and for his horses^e—whatever he desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon and throughout all the territory he ruled.

⁷All the people left from the Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites (these peoples were not Israelites), ⁸that is, their descendants remaining in the land, whom the Israelites had not destroyed—these Solomon conscripted for his slave labor force, as it is to this day. ⁹But Solomon did not make slaves of the Israelites for his work; they were his fighting men, commanders of his captains, and commanders of his chariots and charioteers. ¹⁰They were also King Solomon's chief officials—two hundred and fifty officials supervising the men.

¹¹Solomon brought Pharaoh's daughter up from the City of David to the palace he had built for her, for he said, "My wife must not live in the palace of David king of Israel, because the places the ark of the LORD has entered are holy."

¹²On the altar of the LORD that he had built in

7:3 A High-Water Mark

Solomon's prayer in chapter 6 and God's response in chapter 7 marked a high point in Israel's existence as a nation. United, the Israelites gathered before the gleaming new temple. They saw fire come down from heaven and the glory of the Lord fill the temple. Later, when this building was destroyed, Ezra led a drive to build a new temple. But the dramatic scene of God's glory coming down was never duplicated.

^{a7} Traditionally peace offerings
Hiram, also in verse 18

^{b8} Or from the entrance to

^{c6} Or charioteers

^{d19} The Hebrew is plural

^{e2} Hebrew Hiram, a variant of

front of the portico, Solomon sacrificed burnt offerings to the LORD. According to the daily requirement for offerings commanded by Moses for Sabbaths, New Moons and the three annual feasts—the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles. ¹⁴In keeping with the ordinance of his father David, he appointed the divisions of the priests for their duties, and the Levites to lead the praise and to assist the priests according to each day's requirement. He also appointed the gatekeepers by divisions for the various gates, because this was what David the man of God had ordered. ¹⁵They did not deviate from the king's commands to the priests or to the Levites in any matter, including that of the treasures.

¹⁶All Solomon's work was carried out, from the day the foundation of the temple of the LORD was laid until its completion. So the temple of the LORD was finished.

¹⁷Then Solomon went to Ezion Geber and Elath on the coast of Edom. ¹⁸And Hiram sent him ships commanded by his own officers, men who knew the sea. These, with Solomon's men, sailed to Ophir and brought back four hundred and fifty talents^a of gold, which they delivered to King Solomon.

The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon

9 When the queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's fame, she came to Jerusalem to test him with hard questions. Arriving with a very great caravan—with camels carrying spices, large quantities of gold, and precious stones—she came to Solomon and talked with him about all she had on her mind. ²Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was too hard for him to explain to her. ³When the queen of Sheba saw the wisdom of Solomon, as well as the palace he had built, ⁴the food on his table, the seating of his officials, the attending servants in their robes, the cupbearers in their robes and the burnt offerings he made at^b the temple of the LORD, she was overwhelmed.

⁵She said to the king, "The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true. ⁶But I did not believe what they said until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half the greatness of your wisdom was told me; you have far exceeded the report I heard. ⁷How happy your men must be! How happy your officials, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! ⁸Praise be to the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on

his throne as king to rule for the LORD your God. Because of the love of your God for Israel and his desire to uphold them forever, he has made you king over them, to maintain justice and righteousness."

⁹Then she gave the king 120 talents^c of gold, large quantities of spices, and precious stones. There had never been such spices as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

¹⁰(The men of Hiram and the men of Solomon brought gold from Ophir; they also brought al-gumwood^d and precious stones. ¹¹The king used the al-gumwood to make steps for the temple of the LORD and for the royal palace, and to make harps and lyres for the musicians. Nothing like them had ever been seen in Judah.)

¹²King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired and asked for, he gave her more than she had brought to him. Then she left and returned with her retinue to her own country.

Solomon's Splendor

¹³The weight of the gold that Solomon received yearly was 666 talents,^e ¹⁴not including the revenues brought in by merchants and traders. Also all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the land brought gold and silver to Solomon.

¹⁵King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; six hundred bekas^f of hammered gold went into each shield. ¹⁶He also made three hundred small shields of hammered gold, with three hundred bekas^g of gold in each shield. The king put them in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon.

¹⁷Then the king made a great throne inlaid with ivory and overlaid with pure gold. ¹⁸The throne had six steps, and a footstool of gold was attached to it. On both sides of the seat were armrests, with a lion standing beside each of them. ¹⁹Twelve lions stood on the six steps, one at either end of each step. Nothing like it had ever been made for any other kingdom. ²⁰All King Solomon's goblets were gold, and all the household articles in the Palace of

9:12 An Unfounded Rumor

The Queen of Sheba has mistakenly gone down in legend as one of Solomon's lovers. The king had 700 wives and 300 concubines, but the Queen of Sheba was not among them.

The Queen's personal visit from hundreds of miles away shows Jerusalem's reputation as the sumptuous showpiece of the Middle East. She was probably on a high-level diplomatic mission. Solomon's kingdom represented a huge threat to her land, which previously had held a trade monopoly over the land route through Israel.

Solomon financed his building projects through iron and copper-smelting industries. He traded these products to Arabia and Africa for gold, silver, ivory, and exotic animals. Evidently, he and the queen reached an agreement.

8:11 Inconsistent Ethics

Solomon scrupulously kept Pharaoh's daughter, a Gentile foreigner, apart from the Jewish sacred places. Yet as the book of Kings shows, he eventually allowed his foreign wives to bring in their own idols, which had a disastrous effect on Israel.

^a18 That is, about 17 tons (about 16 metric tons)

^b10 Probably a variant of al-gumwood

^c12 That is, about 3 1/2 kilograms

^d4 Or the ascent by which he went up to

^e13 That is, about 25 tons (about 23 metric tons)

^f16 That is, about 3 3/4 pounds (about 1.7 kilograms)

^g9 That is, about 4 1/2 tons (about 4

^h15 That is, about

the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. Nothing was made of silver, because silver was considered of little value in Solomon's day. ²¹The king had a fleet of trading ships^a manned by Hiram's^b men. Once every three years it returned, carrying gold, silver and ivory, and apes and baboons.

²²King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth. ²³All the kings of the earth sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart. ²⁴Year after year, everyone who came brought a gift—articles of silver and gold, and robes, weapons and spices, and horses and mules.

²⁵Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horses,^c which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem. ²⁶He ruled over all the kings from the River^d to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. ²⁷The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycamore-fig trees in the foothills. ²⁸Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt^e and from all other countries.

Solomon's Death

²⁹As for the other events of Solomon's reign, from beginning to end, are they not written in the records of Nathan the prophet, in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite and in the visions of Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam son of Nebat? ³⁰Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. ³¹Then he rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of David his father. And Rehoboam his son succeeded him as king.

Israel Rebels Against Rehoboam

10 Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all the Israelites had gone there to make him king. ²When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard this (he was in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon), he returned from Egypt. ³So they sent for Jeroboam, and he and all Israel went to Rehoboam and said to him: ⁴"Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you."

⁵Rehoboam answered, "Come back to me in three days." So the people went away.

⁶Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. "How would you advise me to answer these people?" he asked.

They replied, "If you will be kind to these people and please them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants."

⁸But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him. ⁹He asked them, "What is your advice? How should we answer these people who say to me, 'Lighten the yoke your father put on us'?"

¹¹The young men who had grown up with him replied, "Tell the people who have said to you, 'Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but make our yoke lighter'—tell them, 'My little finger is thicker

than my father's waist. ¹¹My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.'"

¹²Three days later Jeroboam and all the people returned to Rehoboam, as the king had said, "Come back to me in three days." ¹³The king answered them harshly. Rejecting the advice of the elders, ¹⁴he followed the advice of the young men and said, "My father made your yoke heavy, I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions." ¹⁵So the king did not listen to the people, for this turn of events was from God, to fulfill the word the Lord had spoken to Jeroboam son of Nebat through Ahijah the Shilonite.

¹⁶When all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, they answered the king:

"What share do we have in David, what part in Jesse's son?

To your tents, O Israel!

Look after your own house, O David!"

So all the Israelites went home. ¹⁷But as for the Israelites who were living in the towns of Judah, Rehoboam still ruled over them.

¹⁸King Rehoboam sent out Adoniram,^f who was in charge of forced labor, but the Israelites stoned him to death. King Rehoboam, however, managed to get into his chariot and escape to Jerusalem. ¹⁹So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

11 When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he mustered the house of Judah and Benjamin—a hundred and eighty thousand fighting men—to make war against Israel and to regain the kingdom for Rehoboam.

²But this word of the Lord came to Shemaiah the man of God: ³"Say to Rehoboam son of Solomon king of Judah and to all the Israelites in Judah and Benjamin, ⁴This is what the Lord says: Do not go up to fight against your brothers. Go home, every one of you, for this is my doing." So they obeyed the words of the Lord and turned back from marching against Jeroboam.

Rehoboam Fortifies Judah

⁵Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem and built up towns for defense in Judah: ⁶Bethlehem, Etam,

10:19 Playing Down the Rebellion

Second Chronicles pays little attention to the rebellion of the ten northern tribes against the two tribes in Judah. As the book of Kings shows, the two kingdoms existed side by side, and the North, Israel, often achieved more power than the South. But Chronicles, written to survivors in the South, virtually ignores the history of the North. In fact, in several places it uses the word *Israel* to refer to the South, Judah.

^a 1 Hebrew *of ships that could go to Tarshish*
Euphrates.

^b 21 Hebrew *Hiram*, a variant of *Hiram*.

^c 25 Or *charioteers*.

^d 26 That is the

^e 28 Or possibly *Muzur*, a region in Cilicia.

^f 18 Hebrew *Hadoram*, a variant of *Adoniram*.

Jekoa, ⁷Beth Zur, Socco, Adullam, ⁸Math, Mare-shah, Ziph, ⁹Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, ¹⁰Zorah, Aijalon and Hebron. These were fortified cities in Judah and Benjamin. ¹¹He strengthened their defenses and put commanders in them, with supplies of food, olive oil and wine. ¹²He put shields of bronze on all the cities, and made them very strong. ¹³So Judah and Benjamin were his strength.

¹⁴The priests and Levites from all their districts throughout Israel sided with him. ¹⁵The Levites even abandoned their pasturelands and property, and came to Judah and Jerusalem because Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them as priests of the LORD. ¹⁶And he appointed his own priests for the high places and for the goat and calf idols he had made. ¹⁷Those from every tribe of Israel who set their hearts on seeking the LORD, the God of Israel, followed the Levites to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices to the LORD, the God of their fathers. ¹⁸They strengthened the kingdom of Judah and supported Rehoboam son of Solomon three years, walking in the ways of David and Solomon during this time.

Rehoboam's Family

¹⁹Rehoboam married Mahalath, who was the daughter of David's son Jerimoth and of Abihail, the daughter of Jesse's son Eliab. ²⁰She bore him sons: Jeush, Shemariah and Zaham. ²¹Then he married Maacah daughter of Absalom, who bore him Abijah, Attai, Ziza and Shelomith. ²²Rehoboam loved Maacah daughter of Absalom more than any of his other wives and concubines. In all, he had eighteen wives and sixty concubines, twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters.

²³Rehoboam appointed Abijah son of Maacah to be the chief prince among his brothers, in order to make him king. ²⁴He acted wisely, dispersing some of his sons throughout the districts of Judah and Benjamin, and to all the fortified cities. He gave them abundant provisions and took many wives for them.

Shishak Attacks Jerusalem

12 After Rehoboam's position as king was established and he had become strong, he and all Israel^a with him abandoned the law of the LORD. ²Because they had been unfaithful to the LORD, Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem in the fifth year of King Rehoboam. ³With twelve hundred chariots and sixty thousand horsemen and the innumerable troops of Libyans, Sukkites and Cushites^b that came with him from Egypt, ⁴he captured the fortified cities of Judah and came as far as Jerusalem.

⁵Then the prophet Shemaiah came to Rehoboam and to the leaders of Judah who had assembled in Jerusalem for fear of Shishak, and he said to them, "This is what the LORD says, 'You have abandoned me; therefore, I now abandon you to Shishak.'"

⁶The leaders of Israel and the king humbled themselves and said, "The LORD is just."

⁷When the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, this word of the LORD came to Shemaiah:

"Since they have humbled themselves, I will not destroy them but will soon give them deliverance. My wrath will not be poured out on Jerusalem through Shishak. ⁸They will, however, become subject to him, so that they may learn the difference between serving me and serving the kings of other lands."

⁹When Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem, he carried off the treasures of the temple of the LORD and the treasures of the royal palace. He took everything, including the gold shields Solomon had made. ¹⁰So King Rehoboam made bronze shields to replace them and assigned these to the commanders of the guard on duty at the entrance to the royal palace. ¹¹Whenever the king went to the LORD's temple, the guards went with him, bearing the shields, and afterward they returned them to the guardroom.

¹²Because Rehoboam humbled himself, the LORD's anger turned from him, and he was not totally destroyed. Indeed, there was some good in Judah.

¹³King Rehoboam established himself firmly in Jerusalem and continued as king. He was forty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel in which to put his Name. His mother's name was Naamah; she was an Ammonite. ¹⁴He did evil because he had not set his heart on seeking the LORD.

¹⁵As for the events of Rehoboam's reign, from beginning to end, are they not written in the records of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the seer that deal with genealogies? There was continual warfare between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. ¹⁶Rehoboam rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David. And Abijah his son succeeded him as king.

Abijah King of Judah

13 In the eighteenth year of the reign of Jeroboam, Abijah became king of Judah, ²and he reigned in Jerusalem three years. His mother's name was Maacah,^c a daughter^d of Uriel of Gibeah.

There was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. ³Abijah went into battle with a force of four hundred thousand able fighting men, and Jeroboam drew up a battle line against him with eight hundred thousand able troops.

⁴Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim, in the hill country of Ephraim, and said, "Jeroboam and all Israel, listen to me! ⁵Don't you know that the LORD, the God of Israel, has given the kingship of Israel to David and his descendants forever by a

13:4 A Brighter Outlook

Typically, Chronicles paints a rosy picture of Judah's kings. The account of Abijah in Kings, for example, tells nothing of this speech and dismisses his reign as wicked (1 Kings 15:1-8).

^{a1} That is, Judah, as frequently in 2 Chronicles manuscripts and Syriac (see also 2 Chron. 11:20 and 1 Kings 15:2), Hebrew *Micaiah*.

^{b3} That is, people from the upper Nile region.

^{c2} Most Septuagint.

^{d2} Or granddaughter.

2 CHRONICLES 13:6

covenant of salt? ⁶Yet Jeroboam son of Nebat, an official of Solomon son of David, rebelled against his master. ⁷Some worthless scoundrels gathered around him and opposed Rehoboam son of Solomon when he was young and indecisive and not strong enough to resist them.

⁸And now you plan to resist the kingdom of the LORD which is in the hands of David's descendants. You are indeed a vast army and have with you the golden calves that Jeroboam made to be your gods. ⁹But didn't you drive out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and make priests of your own as the peoples of other lands do? Whoever comes to consecrate himself with a young bull and seven rams may become a priest of what are not gods.

¹⁰"As for us, the LORD is our God, and we have not forsaken him. The priests who serve the LORD are sons of Aaron, and the Levites assist them. ¹¹Every morning and evening they present burnt offerings and fragrant incense to the LORD. They set out the bread on the ceremonially clean table and light the lamps on the gold lampstand every evening. We are observing the requirements of the LORD our God. But you have forsaken him. ¹²God is with us; he is our leader. His priests with their trumpets will sound the battle cry against you. Men of Israel, do not fight against the LORD, the God of your fathers, for you will not succeed."

¹³Now Jeroboam had sent troops around to the rear, so that while he was in front of Judah the ambush was behind them. ¹⁴Judah turned and saw that they were being attacked at both front and rear. Then they cried out to the LORD. The priests blew their trumpets ¹⁵and the men of Judah raised the battle cry. At the sound of their battle cry, God routed Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. ¹⁶The Israelites fled before Judah, and God delivered them into their hands. ¹⁷Abijah and his men inflicted heavy losses on them, so that there were five hundred thousand casualties among Israel's able men. ¹⁸The men of Israel were subdued on that occasion, and the men of Judah were victorious because they relied on the LORD, the God of their fathers.

¹⁹Abijah pursued Jeroboam and took from him the towns of Bethel, Jeshanah and Ephron, with their surrounding villages. ²⁰Jeroboam did not regain power during the time of Abijah. And the LORD struck him down and he died.

²¹But Abijah grew in strength. He married fourteen wives and had twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters.

²²The other events of Abijah's reign, what he did and what he said, are written in the annotations of the prophet Iddo.

14 And Abijah rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David. Asa his son succeeded him as king, and in his days the country was at peace for ten years.

Asa King of Judah

²Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God. ³He removed the foreign altars

and the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. ⁴He commanded Judah to seek the LORD, the God of their fathers, and to obey his laws and commands. ⁵He removed the high places and incense altars in every town in Judah, and the kingdom was at peace under him. ⁶He built up the fortified cities of Judah, since the land was at peace. No one was at war with him during those years, for the LORD gave him rest.

⁷"Let us build up these towns," he said to Judah, "and put walls around them, with towers, gates and bars. The land is still ours, because we have sought the LORD our God, we sought him and he has given us rest on every side." So they built and prospered.

⁸Asa had an army of three hundred thousand men from Judah, equipped with large shields and with spears, and two hundred and eighty thousand from Benjamin, armed with small shields and with bows. All these were brave fighting men.

⁹Zerah the Cushite marched out against them with a vast army^b and three hundred chariots, and came as far as Mareshah. ¹⁰Asa went out to meet him, and they took up battle positions in the Valley of Zephathah near Mareshah.

¹¹Then Asa called to the LORD his God and said, "LORD, there is no one like you to help the powerless against the mighty. Help us, O LORD our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this vast army. O LORD, you are our God; do not let man prevail against you."

¹²The LORD struck down the Cushites before Asa and Judah. The Cushites fled, ¹³and Asa and his army pursued them as far as Gerar. Such a great number of Cushites fell that they could not recover; they were crushed before the LORD and his forces. The men of Judah carried off a large amount of plunder. ¹⁴They destroyed all the villages around Gerar, for the terror of the LORD had fallen upon them. They plundered all these villages, since there was much booty there. ¹⁵They also attacked the camps of the herdsmen and carried off droves of sheep and goats and camels. Then they returned to Jerusalem.

Asa's Reform

15 The Spirit of God came upon Azariah son of Oded. ²He went out to meet Asa and said to him, "Listen to me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you when you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you. ³For a long time Israel was without the true God, without a priest to teach and without the law. ⁴But in their distress they turned to the LORD, the God of Israel, and sought him, and he was found by them. ⁵In those days it was not safe to travel about, for all the inhabitants of the lands were in great turmoil. ⁶One nation was being crushed by another and one city by another, because God was troubling them with every kind of distress. ⁷But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded."

^a That is, symbols of the goddess Asherah, here and elsewhere in 2 Chronicles
with an army of thousands upon thousands

^b Hebrew with an army of a thousand thousands or

cah from her position as queen mother, because she had made a repulsive Asherah pole. Asa cut the pole down, broke it up and burned it in the Kidron Valley. ¹⁷Although he did not remove the high places from Israel, Asa's heart was fully committed to the LORD all his life. ¹⁸He brought into the temple of God the silver and gold and the articles that he and his father had dedicated.

¹⁹There was no more war until the thirty-fifth year of Asa's reign.

Asa's Last Years

16 In the thirty-sixth year of Asa's reign Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah and fortified Ramah to prevent anyone from leaving or entering the territory of Asa king of Judah.

²Asa then took the silver and gold out of the treasures of the LORD's temple and of his own palace and sent it to Ben-Hadad king of Aram, who was ruling in Damascus. ³"Let there be a treaty between me and you," he said, "as there was between my father and your father. See, I am sending you silver and gold. Now break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel so he will withdraw from me."

⁴Ben-Hadad agreed with King Asa and sent the commanders of his forces against the towns of Israel. They conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel Maime and all the store cities of Naphtali. ⁵When Baasha heard this, he stopped building Ramah and abandoned his work. ⁶Then King Asa brought all the men of Judah, and they carried away from Ramah the stones and timber Baasha had been using. With them he built up Geba and Mizpah.

At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him: "Because you relied on the king of Aram and not on the LORD your God, the army of the king of Aram has escaped from your hand. ⁸Were not the Cushites^a and Libyans a mighty army with great numbers of chariots and horsemen? Yet when you relied on the LORD, he delivered them into your hand. ⁹For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war."

¹⁰Asa was angry with the seer because of this; he was so enraged that he put him in prison. At the

same time Asa brutally oppressed some of the people.

¹¹The events of Asa's reign, from beginning to end, are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. ¹²In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa was afflicted with a disease in his feet. Though his disease was severe, even in his illness he did not seek help from the LORD, but only from the physicians. ¹³Then in the forty-first year of his reign Asa died and rested with his fathers. ¹⁴They buried him in the tomb that he had cut out for himself in the City of David. They laid him on a bier covered with spices and various blended perfumes, and they made a huge fire in his honor.

Jehoshaphat King of Judah

17 Jehoshaphat his son succeeded him as king and strengthened himself against Israel. ²He stationed troops in all the fortified cities of Judah and put garrisons in Judah and in the towns of Ephraim that his father Asa had captured.

³The LORD was with Jehoshaphat because in his early years he walked in the ways his father David had followed. He did not consult the Baals^b but sought the God of his father and followed his commands rather than the practices of Israel. ⁵The LORD established the kingdom under his control; and all Judah brought gifts to Jehoshaphat, so that he had great wealth and honor. ⁶His heart was devoted to the ways of the LORD; furthermore, he removed the high places and the Asherah poles from Judah.

⁷In the third year of his reign he sent his officials Ben-Hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel and Micahiah to teach in the towns of Judah. ⁸With them were certain Levites—Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah and Tob-Adonijah—and the priests Elishama and Jehoram. ⁹They taught throughout Judah, taking with them the Book of the Law of the LORD; they went around to all the towns of Judah and taught the people.

¹⁰The fear of the LORD fell on all the kingdoms of the lands surrounding Judah, so that they did not make war with Jehoshaphat. ¹¹Some Philistines brought Jehoshaphat gifts and silver as tribute, and the Arabs brought him flocks: seven thousand seven hundred rams and seven thousand seven hundred goats.

¹²Jehoshaphat became more and more powerful; he built forts and store cities in Judah¹³ and had large supplies in the towns of Judah. He also kept experienced fighting men in Jerusalem.

¹⁴Their enrollment by families was as follows:

From Judah, commanders of units of 1,000:

15:9 Attracting Converts from the North

For the first 50 years after Jeroboam's rebellion, Israel and Judah fought a civil war. Judah was badly outnumbered, but had one great rallying point: God's temple in the city of Jerusalem. Many of the kings of Israel had built idols on "high places" as alternative worship sites to discourage their citizens from making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. But when a Southern king such as Asa launched a religious revival, members of the Northern tribes would sometimes come over to Jerusalem.

16:12 Bad Medical Advice

King Asa suffered from a serious foot disease, which some scholars think was dropsy. The Bible criticizes his consultations with physicians because in those days "physicians" were pagan healers who used rituals that conflicted with the law of God.

^a4 Also known as Abel Beth Maacah

^b8 That is, people from the upper Nile region

^c8 Or charioteers

Adnah the commander, with 300,000 fighting men.

¹⁵Next, Jehohanan the commander, with 200,000.

¹⁶Next, Amasiah son of Zicri, who volunteered himself for the service of the Lord, with 200,000.

¹⁷From Benjamin

Eliada, a valiant soldier, with 200,000 men armed with bows and shields.

¹⁸Next, Jehozabad, with 180,000 men armed for battle.

¹⁹These were the men who served the king, besides those he stationed in the fortified cities throughout Judah.

Micaiah Prophesies Against Ahab

18 Now Jehoshaphat had great wealth and honor, and he allied himself with Ahab by marriage. ²Some years later he went down to visit Ahab in Samaria. Ahab slaughtered many sheep and cattle for him and the people with him and urged him to attack Ramoth Gilead. ³Ahab king of Israel asked Jehoshaphat king of Judah, "Will you go with me against Ramoth Gilead?"

Jehoshaphat replied, "I am as you are, and my people as your people; we will join you in the war." ⁴But Jehoshaphat also said to the king of Israel, "First seek the counsel of the Lord."

⁵So the king of Israel brought together the prophets—four hundred men—and asked them, "Shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?"

"Go," they answered, "for God will give it into the king's hand."

⁶But Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there not a prophet of the Lord here whom we can inquire of?"

⁷The king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man through whom we can inquire of the Lord, but I hate him because he never prophesies anything good about me, but always bad. He is Micaiah son of Imlah."

"The king should not say that," Jehoshaphat replied.

⁸So the king of Israel called one of his officials and said, "Bring Micaiah son of Imlah at once."

⁹Dressed in their royal robes, the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah were sitting on their thrones at the threshing floor by the entrance

to the gate of Samaria, with all the prophets prophesying before them. ¹⁰Now Zedekiah son of Kenaanah had made iron horns, and he declared, "This is what the Lord says: 'With these you will gore the Arameans until they are destroyed.'"

¹¹All the other prophets were prophesying the same thing: "Attack Ramoth Gilead and be victorious," they said, "for the Lord will give it into the king's hand."

¹²The messenger who had gone to summon Micaiah said to him, "Look, as one man the other prophets are predicting success for the king. Let your word agree with theirs, and speak favorably."

¹³But Micaiah said, "As surely as the Lord lives, I can tell him only what my God says."

¹⁴When he arrived, the king asked him, "Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?"

"Attack and be victorious," he answered, "for they will be given into your hand."

¹⁵The king said to him, "How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?"

¹⁶Then Micaiah answered, "I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd, and the Lord said, 'These people have no master. Let each one go home in peace.'"

¹⁷The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Didn't I tell you that he never prophesies anything good about me, but only bad?"

¹⁸Micaiah continued, "Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing on his right and on his left. ¹⁹And the Lord said, 'Who will lure Ahab king of Israel into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?'"

"One suggested this, and another that. ²⁰Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the Lord and said, 'I will lure him.'"

"By what means?" the Lord asked.

²¹" 'I will go and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,' he said."

" 'You will succeed in luring him,' said the Lord. 'Go and do it.'"

²²"So now the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouths of these prophets of yours. The Lord has decreed disaster for you."

²³Then Zedekiah son of Kenaanah went up and slapped Micaiah in the face. "Which way did the spirit from the Lord go when he went from me to speak to you?" he asked.

²⁴Micaiah replied, "You will find out on the day you go to hide in an inner room."

²⁵The king of Israel then ordered, "Take Micaiah and send him back to Amon the ruler of the city and to Joash the king's son, ²⁶and say, 'This is what the king says: Put this fellow in prison and give him nothing but bread and water until I return safely.'"

²⁷Micaiah declared, "If you ever return safely, the Lord has not spoken through me." Then he added, "Mark my words, all you people!"

18:6 A True or False Prophet?

Looking back from a modern perspective, it is difficult to realize the confusion that surrounded ancient prophets. Which ones were true prophets and which were false? In this case, 400 prophets all insisted God said one thing; only one bold man contradicted them. King Jehoshaphat sensed a falseness in the 400 and insisted on listening to the true prophet. Yet, unaccountably, he failed to heed Micaiah's warning. The decision nearly cost him his life. See Deuteronomy 18:17-22 for advice on distinguishing true prophets from false.

Ahab Killed at Ramoth Gilead

28So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead. 29The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will enter the battle in disguise, but you wear your royal robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle.

30Now the king of Aram had ordered his chariot commanders, "Do not fight with anyone small or great, except the king of Israel." 31When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they thought, "This is the king of Israel." So they turned to attack him, but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him. God drew them away from him, 32for when the chariot commanders saw that he was not the king of Israel, they stopped pursuing him.

33But someone drew his bow at random and hit the king of Israel between the sections of his armor. The king told the chariot driver, "Wheel around and get me out of the fighting. I've been wounded." All day long the battle raged, and the king of Israel propped himself up in his chariot facing the Arameans until evening. Then at sunset he died.

19 When Jehoshaphat king of Judah returned safely to his palace in Jerusalem, Jehu the seer, the son of Hanani, went out to meet him and said to the king, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD? Because of this, the wrath of the LORD is upon you. 3There is, however, some good in you, for you have rid the land of the Asherah poles and have set your heart on seeking God."

Jehoshaphat Appoints Judges

4Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem, and he went out again among the people from Beersheba to the hill country of Ephraim and turned them back to the LORD, the God of their fathers. 5He appointed judges in the land, in each of the fortified cities of Judah. 6He told them, "Consider carefully what you do, because you are not judging for man but for the LORD, who is with you whenever you give a verdict. 7Now let the fear of the LORD be upon you. Judge carefully, for with the LORD our God there is no injustice or partiality or bribery."

8In Jerusalem also, Jehoshaphat appointed some of the Levites, priests and heads of Israelite families to administer the law of the LORD and to settle disputes. And they lived in Jerusalem. 9He gave them these orders: "You must serve faithfully and wholeheartedly in the fear of the LORD. 10In every case that comes before you from your fellow countrymen who live in the cities—whether bloodshed or other concerns of the law, commands, decrees or ordinances—you are to warn them not to sin against the LORD; otherwise his wrath will come on you and your brothers. Do this, and you will not sin."

11Amariah the chief priest will be over you in any matter concerning the LORD, and Zebadiah son of Ishmael, the leader of the tribe of Judah, will be over you in any matter concerning the king, and

the Levites will serve as officials before you. Act with courage, and may the LORD be with those who do well."

Jehoshaphat Defeats Moab and Ammon

20 After this, the Moabites and Ammonites with some of the Meunites¹ came to make war on Jehoshaphat.

2Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, "A vast army is coming against you from Edom,² from the other side of the Sea." It is already in Hazazon Tamar³ (that is, En Gedi). 3Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the LORD, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. 4The people of Judah came together to seek help from the LORD; indeed, they came from every town in Judah to seek him.

5Then Jehoshaphat stood up in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem at the temple of the LORD in the front of the new courtyard⁴ and said:

"O LORD, God of our fathers, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you. 7O our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? 8They have lived in it and have built in it a sanctuary for your Name, saying, 9'If calamity comes upon us, whether the sword of judgment, or plague or famine, we will stand in your presence before this temple that bears your Name and will cry out to you in our distress, and you will hear us and save us.'

10"But now here are men from Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, whose territory you would not allow Israel to invade when they came from Egypt; so they turned away from them and did not destroy them. 11See how they are repaying us by coming to drive us out of the possession you gave us as an inheritance. 12O our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you."

13All the men of Judah, with their wives and children and little ones, stood there before the LORD.

14Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite and descendant of Asaph, as he stood in the assembly.

20:6 A Model Prayer

Second Chronicles contains two great prayers: Solomon's in chapter 6 and King Jehoshaphat's here. Commentators often point to this as a model prayer. Jehoshaphat began with adoration of God, reminded him of his promises, set forth a problem, and asked for help. Confident, Jehoshaphat thanked God for the answer even before it came.

¹ Or and make alliances with. ² Some Septuagint manuscripts. Hebrew Ammonites. ³ Some Septuagint and Vulgate Aram.

⁴ That is, the Dead Sea.

² One Hebrew manuscript, most Hebrew

¹⁵He said: "Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the LORD says to you. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's. ¹⁶Tomorrow march down against them. They will be climbing up by the Pass of Ziz and you will find them at the end of the gorge in the Desert of Jeruel. ¹⁷You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the LORD will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the LORD will be with you."

¹⁸Jehoshaphat bowed with his face to the ground, and all the people of Judah and Jerusalem fell down in worship before the LORD. ¹⁹Then some Levites from the Kohathites and Korahites stood up and praised the LORD, the God of Israel, with very loud voice.

²⁰Early in the morning they left for the Desert of Tekoa. As they set out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me, Judah and people of Jerusalem! Have faith in the LORD your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful." ²¹After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the LORD and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying:

"Give thanks to the LORD,
for his love endures forever."

²²As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated. ²³The men of Ammon and Moab rose up against the men from Mount Seir to destroy and annihilate them. After they finished slaughtering the men from Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

²⁴When the men of Judah came to the place that overlooks the desert and looked toward the vast army, they saw only dead bodies lying on the ground; no one had escaped. ²⁵So Jehoshaphat and his men went to carry off their plunder, and they found among them a great amount of equipment and clothing^a and also articles of value—more than they could take away. There was so much plunder that it took three days to collect it. ²⁶On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Beracah, where they praised the LORD. This is why it is called the Valley of Beracah^b to this day.

²⁷Then, led by Jehoshaphat, all the men of Judah and Jerusalem returned joyfully to Jerusalem, for the LORD had given them cause to rejoice over their enemies. ²⁸They entered Jerusalem and went to the temple of the LORD with harps and lutes and trumpets.

²⁹The fear of God came upon all the kingdoms of the countries when they heard how the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel. ³⁰And the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at peace, for his God had given him rest on every side.

The End of Jehoshaphat's Reign

³¹So Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah. He was thirty-five years old when he became king of Judah, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-five years. His mother's name was Azubah daughter of Shilhi. ³²He walked in the ways of his father Asa and did not stray from them; he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. ³³The high places, however, were not removed, and the people still had not set their hearts on the God of their fathers.

³⁴The other events of Jehoshaphat's reign, from beginning to end, are written in the annals of Jehu son of Hanani, which are recorded in the book of the kings of Israel.

³⁵Later, Jehoshaphat king of Judah made an alliance with Ahaziah king of Israel, who was guilty of wickedness. ³⁶He agreed with him to construct a fleet of trading ships.^c After these were built at Ezion Geber, ³⁷Ehezzer son of Dodavahu of Maresah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, "Because you have made an alliance with Ahaziah, the LORD will destroy what you have made." The ships were wrecked and were not able to set sail to trade.^d

21 Then Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers and was buried with them in the City of David. And Jehoram his son succeeded him as king. ²Jehoram's brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat, were Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azariahu, Michael and Shephatiah. All these were sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel.^e ³Their father had given them many gifts of silver and gold and articles of value, as well as fortified cities in Judah, but he had given the kingdom to Jehoram because he was his firstborn son.

Jehoram King of Judah

⁴When Jehoram established himself firmly over his father's kingdom, he put all his brothers to the sword along with some of the princes of Israel. ⁵Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years. ⁶He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done, for he married a daughter of Ahab. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD. ⁷Nevertheless, because of the covenant the LORD had made with David, the LORD was not willing to destroy the house of David. He had promised to maintain a lamp for him and his descendants forever.

⁸In the time of Jehoram, Edom rebelled against Judah and set up its own king. ⁹So Jehoram went there with his officers and all his chariots. The Edomites surrounded him and his chariot commanders, but he rose up and broke through by night. ¹⁰To this day Edom has been in rebellion against Judah.

Libnah revolted at the same time, because Jehoram had forsaken the LORD, the God of his fathers. ¹¹He had also built high places on the hills of Judah and had caused the people of Jerusalem to prostitute themselves and had led Judah astray.

^a21 Or him with the splendor of means praise

^b26 Hebrew of ships that could go to Tarshish

^c25 Some Hebrew manuscripts and Vulgate, most Hebrew manuscripts corrupt

^d37 Hebrew sail for Tarshish

^e26 Beracah

^f2 That is, Judah, as frequently in

12Jehoram received a letter from Elijah the prophet, which said:

"This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: 'You have not walked in the ways of your father Jehoshaphat or of Asa king of Judah. 13But you have walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and you have led Judah and the people of Jerusalem to prostitute themselves, just as the house of Ahab did. You have also murdered your own brothers, members of your father's house, men who were better than you. 14So now the LORD is about to strike your people, your sons, your wives and everything that is yours, with a heavy blow. 15You yourself will be very ill with a lingering disease of the bowels, until the disease causes your bowels to come out.'"

16The LORD aroused against Jehoram the hostility of the Philistines and of the Arabs who lived near the Cushites. 17They attacked Judah, invaded it and carried off all the goods found in the king's palace, together with his sons and wives. Not a son was left to him except Ahaziah,^a the youngest.

18After all this, the LORD afflicted Jehoram with an incurable disease of the bowels. 19In the course of time, at the end of the second year, his bowels came out because of the disease, and he died in great pain. His people made no fire in his honor, as they had for his fathers.

20Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years. He passed away, to no one's regret, and was buried in the City of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.

Ahaziah King of Judah

22 The people of Jerusalem made Ahaziah, Jehoram's youngest son, king in his place, since the raiders, who came with the Arabs into the camp, had killed all the older sons. So Ahaziah son of Jehoram king of Judah began to reign.

2Ahaziah was twenty-two^b years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem one year. His mother's name was Athaliah, a granddaughter of Omri.

3He too walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother encouraged him in doing wrong. 4He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, as the house of Ahab had done, for after his father's death they became his advisers, to his undoing. 5He also followed their counsel when he went with Joram^c son of Ahab king of Israel to war against Hazael king of Aram at Ramoth Gilead. The Arameans wounded Joram; 6so he returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds they had inflicted on him at Ramoth^d in his battle with Hazael king of Aram.

Then Ahaziah^e son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to Jezreel to see Joram son of Ahab because he had been wounded.

7Through Ahaziah's visit to Joram, God brought about Ahaziah's downfall. When Ahaziah arrived, he went out with Joram to meet Jehu son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to destroy the house of Ahab. 8While Jehu was executing judgment on the house of Ahab, he found the princes of Judah and the sons of Ahaziah's relatives, who had been attending Ahaziah, and he killed them. 9He then went in search of Ahaziah, and his men captured him while he was hiding in Samaria. He was brought to Jehu and put to death. They buried him, for they said, "He was a son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart." So there was no one in the house of Ahaziah powerful enough to retain the kingdom.

Athaliah and Joash

10When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she proceeded to destroy the whole royal family of the house of Judah. 11But Jehosheba,^f the daughter of King Jehoram, took Joash son of Ahaziah and stole him away from among the royal princes who were about to be murdered and put him and his nurse in a bedroom. Because Jehosheba,^f the daughter of King Jehoram and wife of the priest Jehoiada, was Ahaziah's sister, she hid the child from Athaliah so she could not kill him. 12He remained hidden with them at the temple of God for six years while Athaliah ruled the land.

23 In the seventh year Jehoiada showed his strength. He made a covenant with the commanders of units of a hundred: Azariah son of Jeroham, Ishmael son of Jehohanan, Azariah son of Obed, Maaseiah son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat son of Zicri. 2They went throughout Judah and gathered the Levites and the heads of Israelite families from all the towns. When they came to Jerusalem, 3the whole assembly made a covenant with the king at the temple of God.

Jehoiada said to them, "The king's son shall reign, as the LORD promised concerning the descendants of David. 4Now this is what you are to do: A third of you priests and Levites who are going on duty on the Sabbath are to keep watch at the doors, 5a third of you at the royal palace and a third at the Foundation Gate, and all the other men are to be in the courtyards of the temple of the LORD. 6No one is to enter the temple of the LORD except the priests and Levites on duty; they may enter because they are consecrated, but all the

23:4 The Priests Take up Arms

Athaliah, daughter of Jezebel, introduced Baal worship to Judah and very nearly destroyed the entire royal line of David. Conditions in Judah got so bad that a priest, Jehoiada, took the extraordinary step of arming the Levites for a palace coup. They placed the rightful heir, Joash, on the throne.

^a17 Hebrew *Jehoshaz*, a variant of *Ahaziah*.

^b Hebrew *Jehoram*, a variant of *Joram*, also in verses 6 and 7.

^c Hebrew *Ramah*, a variant of *Ramoth*.

^d Some Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac (see also 2 Kings 8:26) Hebrew *Arty-tav*.

^e Some Septuagint manuscripts, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac (see also 2 Kings 8:29) most Hebrew manuscripts *Azariah*.

^f Hebrew *Jehosheba*.

⁶ Some Hebrew

¹¹ Hebrew *Jehosheba*, a

other men are to guard what the Lord has assigned to them. The Levites are to station themselves at the door of the temple, each man with his weapon at his hand. Anyone who enters the temple must be put to death. Stay close to the king wherever he goes."

Jehoiada and all the men of Judah did just as Jehoiada the priest ordered. Each one took his men—those who were going on duty on the Sabbath and those who were going off duty—for Jehoiada the priest had not released any of the divisions. Then he gave the commanders of units of a hundred the spears and the large and small shields that had belonged to King David and that were in the temple of God. He stationed all the men, each with his weapon in his hand, around the king—near the altar and the temple, from the south side to the north side of the temple.

Jehoiada and his sons brought out the king's son and put the crown on him; they presented him with a copy of the covenant and proclaimed him king. They anointed him and shouted, "Long live the king!"

When Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and cheering the king, she went to them at the temple of the Lord. She looked, and there was the king standing by his pillar at the entrance. The officers and the trumpeters were beside the king, and all the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets, and singers with musical instruments were leading the praises. Then Athaliah tore her robes and shouted, "Treason! Treason!"

Jehoiada the priest sent out the commanders of units of a hundred, who were in charge of the troops, and said to them, "Bring her out between the ranks and put to the sword anyone who follows her." For the priest had said, "Do not put her to death at the temple of the Lord." So they seized her as she reached the entrance of the Horse Gate on the palace grounds, and there they put her to death.

Jehoiada then made a covenant that he and the people and the king would be the Lord's people.

All the people went to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They smashed the altars and idols and killed Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altars.

Then Jehoiada placed the oversight of the temple of the Lord in the hands of the priests, who were Levites, to whom David had made assignments in the temple, to present the burnt offerings of the Lord as written in the Law of Moses, with rejoicing and singing, as David had ordered. He also stationed doorkeepers at the gates of the Lord's temple so that no one who was in any way unclean might enter.

He took with him the commanders of hundreds, the nobles, the rulers of the people and all the people of the land and brought the king down from the temple of the Lord. They went into the palace through the upper gate and seated the king on the royal throne, and all the people of the land

rejoiced. And the city was quiet, because Athaliah had been slain with the sword.

Joash Repairs the Temple

24 Joash was seven years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem forty years. His mother's name was Zibiah; she was from Beersheba. Joash did what was right in the eyes of the Lord all the years of Jehoiada the priest. Jehoiada chose two wives for him, and he had sons and daughters.

Some time later Joash decided to restore the temple of the Lord. He called together the priests and Levites and said to them, "Go to the towns of Judah and collect the money due annually from all Israel, to repair the temple of your God. Do it now. But the Levites did not act at once."

Therefore the king summoned Jehoiada the chief priest and said to him, "Why haven't you required the Levites to bring in from Judah and Jerusalem the tax imposed by Moses the servant of the Lord and by the assembly of Israel for the Tent of the Testimony?"

Now the sons of that wicked woman Athaliah had broken into the temple of God and had used even its sacred objects for the Baals.

At the king's command, a chest was made and placed outside, at the gate of the temple of the Lord. A proclamation was then issued in Judah and Jerusalem that they should bring to the Lord the tax that Moses the servant of God had required of Israel in the desert. All the officials and all the people brought their contributions gladly, dropping them into the chest until it was full.

Whenever the chest was brought in by the Levites to the king's officials and they saw that there was a large amount of money, the royal secretary and the officer of the chief priest would come and empty the chest and carry it back to its place. They did this regularly and collected a great amount of money.

The king and Jehoiada gave it to the men who carried out the work required for the temple of the Lord. They hired masons and carpenters to restore the Lord's temple, and also workers in iron and bronze to repair the temple.

The men in charge of the work were diligent, and the repairs progressed under them. They rebuilt the temple of God according to its original design and reinforced it. When they had finished, they brought the rest of the money to the king and Jehoiada, and with it were made articles for the Lord's temple, articles for the service and for the burnt offerings, and also dishes and other objects of gold and silver. As long as Jehoiada lived, burnt offerings were presented continually in the temple of the Lord.

Now Jehoiada was old and full of years, and he died at the age of a hundred and thirty. He was buried with the kings in the City of David, because of the good he had done in Israel for God and his temple.

The Wickedness of Joash

After the death of Jehoiada the officials of

24:17-24:24 Joash's reign as king of Judah (see 2 Kings 11:17).

24:25-24:26 Joash's death and burial.

24:27-24:28 Joash's wickedness and the people's sin.

Judah came and paid homage to the king, and he listened to them. ¹⁸They abandoned the temple of the LORD, the God of their fathers, and worshiped Asherah poles and idols. Because of their guilt, God's anger came upon Judah and Jerusalem. ¹⁹Although the LORD sent prophets to the people to bring them back to him, and though they testified against them, they would not listen.

²⁰Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest. He stood before the people and said, "This is what God says: 'Why do you disobey the LORD's commands? You will not prosper. Because you have forsaken the LORD, he has forsaken you.'"

²¹But they plotted against him, and by order of the king they stoned him to death in the courtyard of the LORD's temple. ²²King Joash did not remember the kindness Zechariah's father Jehoiada had shown him but killed his son, who said as he lay dying, "May the LORD see this and call you to account."

²³At the turn of the year,^a the army of Aram marched against Joash; it invaded Judah and Jerusalem and killed all the leaders of the people. They sent all the plunder to their king in Damascus. ²⁴Although the Aramean army had come with only a few men, the LORD delivered into their

hands a much larger army. Because Judah had forsaken the LORD, the God of their fathers, judgment was executed on Joash. ²⁵When the Arameans withdrew, they left Joash severely wounded. His officials conspired against him for murdering the son of Jehoiada the priest, and they killed him in his bed. So he died and was buried in the City of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.

²⁶Those who conspired against him were Zabad,^b son of Shimeath an Ammonite woman, and Jehozabad, son of Shimrith,^c a Moabite woman. ²⁷The account of his sons, the many prophecies about him, and the record of the restoration of the temple of God are written in the anno-

24:21 An Infamous Murder

Joash showed promise in his early years as king. But, like many other kings, he could not tolerate the damning words of one of God's prophets. The murder carried out on his order brought in enemy armies, inspired a conspiracy against Joash, and destroyed his reputation forever. Jesus may have been speaking of this incident when he alluded to a murder hundreds of years later (Luke 11:51; Matthew 23:35).

^a23 Probably in the spring

^b26 A variant of Jozabad

^c26 A variant of Shomer

INSIGHT

The Great Reformers

Profiles in courage: the heroic kings of Judah

"The LORD is with you when you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you." 15:2

In 1954 Senator John F. Kennedy knew he would spend at least six months flat on his back. Surgeons were about to begin work on him to correct an old war injury. How could he best spend his time?

Kennedy decided to use those "idle" hours to research the most courageous individuals in American history. The idea for a book was born. *Profiles in Courage* went on to win the Pulitzer Prize and become a bestseller. Kennedy's study of courageous people inspired the young senator to model his own life after them.

Courage in Judah

The book of 2 Chronicles can be seen as a kind of "profiles in courage" for the nation of Judah. The vast majority of kings flunked the courage test. But a few exceptions did stand out, and 2 Chronicles dwells on them.

This book records a form of courage different from what John Kennedy had in mind. Judah was drifting further and further away from the worship of the true God. It took great courage to fight against that trend and call for a return to the law of Moses. Therefore these kings excelled not so much because of military or political strength, but because of their faithfulness to God. All the great reformers described here took over in difficult times. They helped stop, at least temporarily, their nation's tragic slide away from God.

Asa: Cleaning Up the Land (chapters 14-16)

Asa inherited a country full of crime and anarchy. He led a wildfire revival, with the whole nation uniting behind him in a huge celebration in Jerusalem. Yet Asa became cocky in his later years. He jailed a prophet of God and lived out his last days plagued by war and by disease. He did much good, but fell short of the kind of courage that endures a national crisis.

tations on the book of the kings. And Amaziah his son succeeded him as king.

Amaziah King of Judah

25 Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. His mother's name was Jehoaddin^a; she was from Jerusalem. ²He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, but not wholeheartedly. ³After the kingdom was firmly in his control, he executed the officials who had murdered his father the king. ⁴Yet he did not put their sons to death, but acted in accordance with what is written in the Law, in the Book of Moses, where the LORD commanded: "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sins."^b

⁵Amaziah called the people of Judah together and assigned them according to their families to commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds for all Judah and Benjamin. He then mustered those twenty years old or more and found that there were three hundred thousand men ready for military service, able to handle the spear and shield. ⁶He also hired a hundred thousand fighting men from Israel for a hundred talents^c of silver.

^a Hebrew Jehoaddin, a variant of Jehoaddin

^b Deut. 24:16

⁷But a man of God came to him and said, "O king, these troops from Israel must not march with you, for the LORD is not with Israel—not with any of the people of Ephraim.⁸ Even if you go and fight courageously in battle, God will overthrow you before the enemy, for God has the power to help or to overthrow."

⁹Amaziah asked the man of God, "But what about the hundred talents I paid for these Israelite troops?"

The man of God replied, "The LORD can give you much more than that."

¹⁰So Amaziah dismissed the troops who had come to him from Ephraim and sent them home. They were furious with Judah and left for home in a great rage.

¹¹Amaziah then marshaled his strength and led his army to the Valley of Salt, where he killed ten thousand men of Seir. ¹²The army of Judah also captured ten thousand men alive, took them to the top of a cliff and threw them down so that all were dashed to pieces.

¹³Meanwhile the troops that Amaziah had sent back and had not allowed to take part in the war raided Judean towns from Samaria to Beth Horon. They killed three thousand people and carried off great quantities of plunder.

^c That is, about 3 3/4 tons (about 3.4 metric tons); also in verse 9

Jehoshaphat: The Organizer (chapters 17-20)

Where Asa inspired the nation, Jehoshaphat organized it. He had an outstanding domestic policy: he educated his citizens in the Book of the Law and built up a national court system and large army. Curiously, Jehoshaphat's wise judgment failed to carry over into foreign policy, for he made foolish alliances with neighboring Israel's very worst king, Ahab.

Joash: Refurbishing the Temple (chapters 23-24)

Joash stepped onto the throne as a boy of seven. He reigned 40 years and accomplished much good. Second Chronicles focuses mainly on his repairs of the temple, which he tried to restore to former glory.

Jehoiada: Strength behind the Throne (chapters 23-24)

King Joash hardly deserves a compliment without the mention of a priest named Jehoiada. He hid the boy Joash from a murderous queen and led the dramatic revolt against her. When he died at a very old age, the nation gave him the extraordinary honor of a burial place alongside kings. After Jehoiada's death, everything went downhill. The boy king who had shown such promise murdered Jehoiada's son, a deed that went down as one of the great crimes of Israelite history. It became clear that the real strength of the kingdom had come from the old priest, not the young king.

Hezekiah: A Day to Remember (chapters 29-32)

Second Chronicles gives more space to the reign of Hezekiah than to that of any other reformer. He sponsored a great religious festival, an idea that first met with scorn and ridicule. But the nation did come together in a remarkable scene of happiness and unity. "There was great joy in Jerusalem," the Bible says, "for since the days of Solomon son of David king of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem" (30:26).

Josiah: The Complete Reformer (chapters 34-35)

Josiah was perhaps the most reform-conscious of all Judah's kings. When the Book of the Law (probably Deuteronomy) was discovered, Josiah realized just how far his kingdom had strayed from God's ideal. He tore his robes and wept, and led Judah back toward God. A foolish military campaign brought about Josiah's death and ruined the chances for permanent change in Judah. Known as "the good king Josiah," he was mourned by the whole nation. The prophet Jeremiah composed songs, or laments, in his memory.

Life Questions These kings demonstrate that one person's faith can affect a great many others. Think of strong leaders you know up close. What makes them effective at inspiring and motivating others?

14When Amaziah returned from slaughtering the Edomites, he brought back the gods of the people of Seir. He set them up as his own gods, bowed down to them and burned sacrifices to them. 15The anger of the LORD burned against Amaziah, and he sent a prophet to him, who said, "Why do you consult this people's gods, which could not save their own people from your hand?"

16While he was still speaking, the king said to him, "Have we appointed you an adviser to the king? Stop! Why be struck down?"

So the prophet stopped but said, "I know that God has determined to destroy you, because you have done this and have not listened to my counsel."

17After Amaziah king of Judah consulted his advisers, he sent this challenge to Jehoash^a son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel: "Come, meet me face to face."

18But Jehoash king of Israel replied to Amaziah king of Judah: "A thistle in Lebanon sent a message to a cedar in Lebanon, 'Give your daughter to my son in marriage.' Then a wild beast in Lebanon came along and trampled the thistle underfoot. 19You say to yourself that you have defeated Edom, and now you are arrogant and proud. But stay at home! Why ask for trouble and cause your own downfall and that of Judah also?"

20Amaziah, however, would not listen, for God so worked that he might hand them over to Jehoash, because they sought the gods of Edom. 21So Jehoash king of Israel attacked. He and Amaziah king of Judah faced each other at Beth Shemesh in Judah. 22Judah was routed by Israel, and every man fled to his home. 23Jehoash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Ahaziah,^b at Beth Shemesh. Then Jehoash brought him to Jerusalem and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate—a section about six hundred feet long. 24He took all the gold and silver and all the articles found in the temple of God that had been in the care of Obed-Edom, together with the palace treasures and the hostages, and returned to Samaria.

25Amaziah son of Joash king of Judah lived for fifteen years after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel. 26As for the other events of Amaziah's reign, from beginning to end, are they not written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel? 27From the time that Amaziah turned away from following the LORD, they conspired against him in Jerusalem and he fled to Lachish, but they sent men after him to Lachish and killed him there. 28He was brought back by horse and was buried with his fathers in the City of Judah.

Uzziah King of Judah

26 Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah,^d who was sixteen years old, and made him king in place of his father Amaziah. 2He was the one who rebuilt Elath and restored it to Judah after Amaziah rested with his fathers.

Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-two years. His mother's name was Jecoliah; she was from Jerusalem. 4He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Amaziah had done. 5He sought God during the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God. As long as he sought the LORD, God gave him success.

6He went to war against the Philistines and broke down the walls of Gath, Jabneh and Ashdod. He then rebuilt towns near Ashdod and elsewhere among the Philistines. 7God helped him against the Philistines and against the Arabs who lived in Gur Baal and against the Meunites. 8The Ammonites brought tribute to Uzziah, and his fame spread as far as the border of Egypt, because he had become very powerful.

9Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate and at the angle of the wall, and he fortified them. 10He also built towers in the desert and dug many cisterns, because he had much livestock in the foothills and in the plain. He had people working his fields and vineyards in the hills and in the fertile lands, for he loved the soil.

11Uzziah had a well-trained army, ready to go out by divisions according to their numbers as mustered by Jeiel the secretary and Maaseiah the officer under the direction of Hananiah, one of the royal officials. 12The total number of family leaders over the fighting men was 2,600. 13Under their command was an army of 307,500 men trained for war, a powerful force to support the king against his enemies. 14Uzziah provided shields, spears, helmets, coats of armor, bows and slingstones for the entire army. 15In Jerusalem he made machines designed by skillful men for use on the towers and on the corner defenses to shoot arrows and hurl large stones. His fame spread far and wide, for he was greatly helped until he became powerful.

16But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the LORD his God, and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. 17Azariah the priest with eighty other courageous priests of the LORD followed him in. 18They confronted him and said, "It is not right for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD. That is for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who have been consecrated to burn incense. Leave the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful; and you will not be honored by the LORD God."

26:16 A King's Pride

Archaeological discoveries have verified the prosperity of Judah during Uzziah's reign. However, like many of Judah's kings, he fell victim to the sin of pride. He usurped the role of the priests and suffered ever after from a contagious skin disease.

^a17 Hebrew *Joash*, a variant of *Jehoash*, also in verses 18, 21, 23 and 25
^b21 Also called *Azariah*
^c23 Hebrew manuscripts *vision*

^d23 Hebrew *Jehoahaz*, a variant of *Ahaziah*
^e5 Many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint and Syriac; other

¹⁹Uzziah, who had a censer in his hand ready to burn incense, became angry. While he was raging at the priests in their presence before the incense altar in the LORD's temple, leprosy^a broke out on his forehead. ²⁰When Azariah the chief priest and all the other priests looked at him, they saw that he had leprosy on his forehead, so they hurried him out. Indeed, he himself was eager to leave, because the LORD had afflicted him.

²¹King Uzziah had leprosy until the day he died. He lived in a separate house^b, leprous, and excluded from the temple of the LORD. Jotham his son had charge of the palace and governed the people of the land.

²²The other events of Uzziah's reign, from beginning to end, are recorded by the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. ²³Uzziah rested with his fathers and was buried near them in a field for burial that belonged to the kings, for people said, "He had leprosy." And Jotham his son succeeded him as king.

Jotham King of Judah

27 Jotham was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. His mother's name was Jerusha daughter of Zadok. ²He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Uzziah had done, but unlike him he did not enter the temple of the LORD. The people, however, continued their corrupt practices. ³Jotham rebuilt the Upper Gate of the temple of the LORD and did extensive work on the wall at the hill of Ophel. ⁴He built towns in the Judean hills and forts and towers in the wooded areas.

⁵Jotham made war on the king of the Ammonites and conquered them. That year the Ammonites paid him a hundred talents^c of silver, ten thousand cors^d of wheat and ten thousand cors of barley. The Ammonites brought him the same amount also in the second and third years.

⁶Jotham grew powerful because he walked steadfastly before the LORD his God.

⁷The other events in Jotham's reign, including all his wars and the other things he did, are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. ⁸He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. ⁹Jotham rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David. And Ahaz his son succeeded him as king.

Ahaz King of Judah

28 Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. Unlike David his father, he did not do what was right in the eyes of the LORD. ²He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and also made cast idols for worshiping the Baals. ³He burned sacrifices in the Valley of Ben Hinnom and sacrificed his sons in the fire, following the detestable ways of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. ⁴He offered sacrifices and burned in-

cense at the high places, on the hilltops and under every spreading tree.

⁵Therefore the LORD his God handed him over to the king of Aram. The Arameans defeated him and took many of his people as prisoners and brought them to Damascus.

He was also given into the hands of the king of Israel, who inflicted heavy casualties on him. ⁶In one day Pekah son of Remaliah killed a hundred and twenty thousand soldiers in Judah—because Judah had forsaken the LORD, the God of their fathers. ⁷Zicri, an Ephraimite warrior, killed Maaseiah the king's son, Azrikam the officer in charge of the palace, and Elkanah, second to the king. ⁸The Israelites took captive from their kinsmen two hundred thousand wives, sons and daughters. They also took a great deal of plunder, which they carried back to Samaria.

⁹But a prophet of the LORD named Oded was there, and he went out to meet the army when it returned to Samaria. He said to them, "Because the LORD, the God of your fathers, was angry with Judah, he gave them into your hand. But you have slaughtered them in a rage that reaches to heaven. ¹⁰And now you intend to make the men and women of Judah and Jerusalem your slaves. But aren't you also guilty of sins against the LORD your God? ¹¹Now listen to me! Send back your fellow countrymen you have taken as prisoners, for the LORD's fierce anger rests on you."

¹²Then some of the leaders in Ephraim—Azariah son of Jehohanan, Berehiah son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah son of Shallum, and Amasa son of Hadlai—confronted those who were arriving from the war. ¹³"You must not bring those prisoners here," they said, "or we will be guilty before the LORD. Do you intend to add to our sin and guilt? For our guilt is already great, and his fierce anger rests on Israel."

¹⁴So the soldiers gave up the prisoners and plunder in the presence of the officials and all the assembly. ¹⁵The men designated by name took the

28:9 Limits of a Just War

Advocates of a "just war" theory sometimes cite the fascinating story in this chapter. God sanctioned Israel's attack on Judah, but the invaders from the North went too far. They slaughtered many civilians and carried away others as captives. A prophet rebuked Israel's army for their crimes committed "in a rage that reaches to heaven." The Israelites had fought a war with a just end—carrying out God's punishment—but used cruel and unjust means in waging it.

The prophet convinced the Israelites to give up plunder and prisoners and make restitution. They fed the prisoners from Judah, gave them clothes, sandals, and medicines, and put them on donkeys to return home. This scene is one of the few in 2 Chronicles that shows the Northern Kingdom in a favorable light.

^a19 The Hebrew word was used for various diseases affecting the skin—not necessarily leprosy, also in verses 20, 21 and 23

^b21 Or in a house where he was relieved of responsibilities
about 62,000 bushels (about 2,200 kiloliters)

^c5 That is, about 3 3/4 tons (about 3 4 metric tons)

^d5 That is, probably

prisoners and from the plunder they clothed all who were naked. They provided them with clothes and sandals, food and drink and healing balm. All those who were weak they put on donkeys, so they took them back to their fellow countrymen at Jerusalem, the City of Peace, and returned to Jerusalem.

At that time King Ahaz sent to the king of Assyria for help. The Ishmelite had again come and attacked Judah and carried away prisoners, so the Philistines had ruled towns in the south and in the Negev of Judah. They captured the occupied Beth Shemesh, Ajalon and Gederah as well as Socoh, Timnah and Gimzo, with all the surrounding villages. The Lord had humiliated Judah because of Ahaz king of Israel,^a for he had committed wickedness in Judah and had been unfaithful to the Lord. Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came to him, but he gave him nothing. Instead of help, Ahaz took some of the vessels from the temple of the Lord and from the king's house and from the princes and presented them to the king of Assyria, but that did not help him.

At this time of trouble King Ahaz became even more unfaithful to the Lord. He offered sacrifices to the gods of Damascus, who had defeated Israel, he thought. "Since the gods of the kings of Assyria have helped them, I will sacrifice to them so they will help me." But they were his downfall and the downfall of all Israel.

Ahaz gathered together the furnishings from the temple of God and took them away.^d He shut the doors of the Lord's temple and set up altars at every street corner in Jerusalem. In every town in Judah he built high places to burn sacrifices to other gods and provoked the Lord, the God of his fathers, to anger.

The other events of his reign and all his ways, from beginning to end, are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. Ahaz rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of Jerusalem, but he was not placed in the tombs of the kings of Israel. And Hezekiah his son succeeded him as king.

Hezekiah Purifies the Temple

29 Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. His mother's name was Abijah daughter of Zechariah. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father David had done.

In the first month of the first year of his reign, he opened the doors of the temple of the Lord and repaired them. He brought in the priests and the Levites, assembled them in the square on the east side and said: "Listen to me, Levites! Consecrate yourselves now and consecrate the temple of the Lord, the God of your fathers. Remove all defilement from the sanctuary. Our fathers were unfaithful; they did evil in the eyes of the Lord our God and forsook him. They turned their faces away from the Lord's dwelling place and turned

their backs on him. They ate and drank the bread of the portion and put out the lamps. They did not turn around or present any burnt offerings at the sanctuary to the God of Israel. Therefore the anger of the Lord has fallen on Judah and Jerusalem, he has made them an object of dread and horror and scorn, as you can see with your own eyes. This is why our fathers have fallen by the sword and why our sons and daughters and our wives are in captivity. Now I intend to make a covenant with the Lord, the God of Israel, so that his fierce anger will turn away from us. My sons, do not be negligent now, for the Lord has chosen you to stand before him and serve him, to minister before him and to burn incense."

Then these Levites set to work

from the Kohathites,

Mahath son of Amasai and Joel son of Azariah,

from the Merarites,

Kish son of Abdi and Azariah son of Jehallelel;

from the Gershonites,

Joah son of Zimmah and Eden son of Joah;

from the descendants of Elizaphan,

Shumri and Jeiel;

from the descendants of Asaph,

Zechariah and Mattaniah;

from the descendants of Heman,

Jehiel and Shimei;

from the descendants of Jeduthun,

Shemaiah and Uzziel.

When they had assembled their brothers and consecrated themselves, they went in to purify the temple of the Lord, as the king had ordered, following the word of the Lord. The priests went into the sanctuary of the Lord to purify it. They brought out to the courtyard of the Lord's temple everything unclean that they found in the temple of the Lord. The Levites took it and carried it out to the Kidron Valley. They began the consecration on the first day of the first month, and by the eighth day of the month they reached the portico of the Lord. For eight more days they consecrated the temple of the Lord itself, finishing on the sixteenth day of the first month.

Then they went in to King Hezekiah and reported: "We have purified the entire temple of the Lord, the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the table for setting out the consecrated bread, with all its articles. We have prepared and consecrated all the articles that King Ahaz removed in his unfaithfulness while he was king. They are now in front of the Lord's altar."

Early the next morning King Hezekiah gathered the city officials together and went up to the temple of the Lord. They brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven male lambs and seven male goats as a sin offering for the kingdom, for the sanctuary and for Judah. The king commanded the priests, the descendants of Aaron, to offer these on the altar of the Lord. So they slaughtered the bulls, and the priests took the blood and sprinkled

^a One Hebrew manuscript, Septuagint and Vulgate (see also 2 Kings 16:7), most Hebrew manuscripts kings frequently in 2 Chronicles

^d Hebrew Tiglath Pileser a variant of Tiglath-Pileser

^e Or and cut them up

^f That is Judah as

it on the altar, next they slaughtered the rams and sprinkled their blood on the altar; then they slaughtered the lambs and sprinkled their blood on the altar. The goats for the sin offering were brought before the king and the assembly, and they laid their hands on them. ²⁴The priests then slaughtered the goats and presented their blood on the altar for a sin offering to atone for all Israel, because the king had ordered the burnt offering and the sin offering for all Israel.

²⁵He stationed the Levites in the temple of the LORD with cymbals, harps and lyres in the way prescribed by David and Gad the king's seer and Nathan the prophet, this was commanded by the LORD through his prophets. ²⁶So the Levites stood ready with David's instruments, and the priests with their trumpets.

²⁷Hezekiah gave the order to sacrifice the burnt offering on the altar. As the offering began, singing to the LORD began also, accompanied by trumpets and the instruments of David king of Israel. ²⁸The whole assembly bowed in worship, while the singers sang and the trumpeters played. All this continued until the sacrifice of the burnt offering was completed.

²⁹When the offerings were finished, the king and everyone present with him knelt down and worshiped. ³⁰King Hezekiah and his officials ordered the Levites to praise the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with gladness and bowed their heads and worshiped.

³¹Then Hezekiah said, "You have now dedicated yourselves to the LORD. Come and bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the temple of the LORD." So the assembly brought sacrifices and thank offerings, and all whose hearts were willing brought burnt offerings.

³²The number of burnt offerings the assembly brought was seventy bulls, a hundred rams and two hundred male lambs—all of them for burnt offerings to the LORD. ³³The animals consecrated as sacrifices amounted to six hundred bulls and three thousand sheep and goats. ³⁴The priests, however, were too few to skin all the burnt offerings; so their kinsmen the Levites helped them until the task was finished and until other priests had been consecrated, for the Levites had been more conscientious in consecrating themselves than the priests had been. ³⁵There were burnt offerings in abundance, together with the fat of the fellowship offerings^a and the drink offerings that accompanied the burnt offerings.

So the service of the temple of the LORD was reestablished. ³⁶Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced at what God had brought about for his people, because it was done so quickly.

Hezekiah Celebrates the Passover

30 Hezekiah sent word to all Israel and Judah and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, inviting them to come to the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem and celebrate the Passover to the LORD, the God of Israel. ²The king and his

officials and the whole assembly in Jerusalem decided to celebrate the Passover in the second month. ³They had not been able to celebrate it at the regular time because not enough priests had consecrated themselves and the people had not assembled in Jerusalem. ⁴The plan seemed right both to the king and to the whole assembly. ⁵They decided to send a proclamation throughout Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, calling the people to come to Jerusalem and celebrate the Passover to the LORD, the God of Israel. It had not been celebrated in large numbers according to what was written.

⁶At the king's command, couriers went throughout Israel and Judah, with letters from the king and from his officials, which read:

"People of Israel, return to the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, that he may return to you who are left, who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria. ⁷Do not be like your fathers and brothers, who were unfaithful to the LORD, the God of their fathers, so that he made them an object of horror, as you see. ⁸Do not be stiff-necked, as your fathers were, submit to the LORD. Come to the sanctuary, which he has consecrated forever. Serve the LORD your God, so that his fierce anger will turn away from you. ⁹If you return to the LORD, then your brothers and your children will be shown compassion by their captors and will come back to this land, for the LORD your God is gracious and compassionate. He will not turn his face from you if you return to him."

¹⁰The couriers went from town to town in Ephraim and Manasseh, as far as Zebulun, but the people scorned and ridiculed them. ¹¹Nevertheless, some men of Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun humbled themselves and went to Jerusalem. ¹²Also in Judah the hand of God was on the people to give them unity of mind to carry out what the king and his officials had ordered, following the word of the LORD.

¹³A very large crowd of people assembled in Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month. ¹⁴They removed the altars in Jerusalem and cleared away the incense altars and threw them into the Kidron Valley.

¹⁵They slaughtered the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the second month. The priests and the Levites were ashamed and consecrated themselves and brought burnt offerings to the temple of the LORD. ¹⁶Then they took up their regular positions as prescribed in the Law of Moses the man of God. The priests sprinkled the blood handed to them by the Levites. ¹⁷Since many in the crowd had not consecrated themselves, the Levites had to kill the Passover lambs for all those who were not ceremonially clean and could not consecrate their lambs to the LORD. ¹⁸Although most of the many people who came from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun had not purified themselves, yet they ate the Passover, contrary to what was written. But Hezekiah

^a35 Traditionally *peace offerings*

2 CHRONICLES 30:19

prayed for them, saying, "May the LORD, who is good, pardon everyone ¹⁹who sets his heart on seeking God—the LORD, the God of his fathers—even if he is not clean according to the rules of the sanctuary." ²⁰And the LORD heard Hezekiah and healed the people.

²¹The Israelites who were present in Jerusalem celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days with great rejoicing, while the Levites and priests sang to the LORD every day, accompanied by the LORD's instruments of praise.^a

²²Hezekiah spoke encouragingly to all the Levites who showed good understanding of the service of the LORD. For the seven days they ate their assigned portion and offered fellowship offerings^b and praised the LORD, the God of their fathers.

²³The whole assembly then agreed to celebrate the festival seven more days; so for another seven days they celebrated joyfully. ²⁴Hezekiah king of Judah provided a thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep and goats for the assembly, and the officials provided them with a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep and goats. A great number of priests consecrated themselves. ²⁵The entire assembly of Judah rejoiced, along with the priests and Levites and all who had assembled from Israel, including the aliens who had come from Israel and those who lived in Judah. ²⁶There was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the days of Solomon son of David king of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem. ²⁷The priests and the Levites stood to bless the people, and God heard them, for their prayer reached heaven, his holy dwelling place.

31 When all this had ended, the Israelites who were there went out to the towns of Judah, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. They destroyed the high places and the altars throughout Judah and Benjamin and in Ephraim and Manasseh. After they had destroyed all of them, the Israelites returned to their own towns and to their own property.

Contributions for Worship

¹Hezekiah assigned the priests and Levites to divisions—each of them according to their duties as priests or Levites—to offer burnt offerings and fellowship offerings,^c to minister, to give thanks and to sing praises at the gates of the LORD's dwelling. ²The king contributed from his own possessions for the morning and evening burnt offerings and for the burnt offerings on the Sabbaths, New Moons and appointed feasts as written in the Law of the LORD. ³He ordered the people living in Jerusalem to give the portion due the priests and Levites so they could devote themselves to the Law of the LORD. ⁴As soon as the order went out, the Israelites generously gave the firstfruits of their grain, new wine, oil and honey and all that the fields produced. They brought a great amount, a tithe of everything. ⁵The men of Israel and Judah who lived in the towns of Judah also brought a tithe of their herds and flocks and a tithe of the

holy things dedicated to the LORD their God, and they piled them in heaps. ⁷They began doing this in the third month and finished in the seventh month. ⁸When Hezekiah and his officials came and saw the heaps, they praised the LORD and blessed his people Israel.

⁹Hezekiah asked the priests and Levites about the heaps, ¹⁰and Azariah the chief priest, from the family of Zadok, answered, "Since the people began to bring their contributions to the temple of the LORD, we have had enough to eat and plenty to spare, because the LORD has blessed his people, and this great amount is left over."

¹¹Hezekiah gave orders to prepare storerooms in the temple of the LORD, and this was done. ¹²Then they faithfully brought in the contributions, tithes and dedicated gifts. Conaniah, a Levite, was in charge of these things, and his brother Shimei was next in rank. ¹³Jehiel, Azariah, Nahath, Asahel, Jeremoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismakiah, Mahath and Benaiah were supervisors under Conaniah and Shimei his brother, by appointment of King Hezekiah and Azariah the official in charge of the temple of God.

¹⁴Kore son of Imnah the Levite, keeper of the East Gate, was in charge of the freewill offerings given to God, distributing the contributions made to the LORD and also the consecrated gifts. ¹⁵Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah and Shecaniah assisted him faithfully in the towns of the priests, distributing to their fellow priests according to their divisions, old and young alike.

¹⁶In addition, they distributed to the males three years old or more whose names were in the genealogical records—all who would enter the temple of the LORD to perform the daily duties of their various tasks, according to their responsibilities and their divisions. ¹⁷And they distributed to the priests enrolled by their families in the genealogical records and likewise to the Levites twenty years old or more, according to their responsibilities and their divisions. ¹⁸They included all the little ones, the wives, and the sons and daughters of the whole community listed in these genealogical records. For they were faithful in consecrating themselves.

¹⁹As for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who lived on the farm lands around their towns or in any other towns, men were designated by name to distribute portions to every male among them and to all who were recorded in the genealogies of the Levites.

²⁰This is what Hezekiah did throughout Judah, doing what was good and right and faithful before the LORD his God. ²¹In everything that he undertook in the service of God's temple and in obedience to the law and the commands, he sought his God and worked wholeheartedly. And so he prospered.

Sennacherib Threatens Jerusalem

32 After all that Hezekiah had so faithfully done, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah. He laid siege to the fortified cities,

^a21. Or priests praised the LORD every day with resounding instruments belonging to the LORD.

^b22.2 Traditionally peace offerings.

thinking to conquer them for himself. ²When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and that he intended to make war on Jerusalem, he consulted with his officials and military staff about blocking off the water from the springs outside the city, and they helped him. ⁴A large force of men assembled, and they blocked all the springs and the stream that flowed through the land. "Why should the king^a of Assyria come and find plenty of water?" they said. ⁵Then he worked hard repairing all the broken sections of the wall and building towers on it. He built another wall outside that one and reinforced the supporting terraces^b of the City of David. He also made large numbers of weapons and shields.

⁶He appointed military officers over the people and assembled them before him in the square at the city gate and encouraged them with these words. ⁷"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. ⁸With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles." And the people gained confidence from what Hezekiah the king of Judah said.

⁹Later, when Sennacherib king of Assyria and all his forces were laying siege to Lachish, he sent his officers to Jerusalem with this message for Hezekiah king of Judah and for all the people of Judah who were there:

¹⁰"This is what Sennacherib king of Assyria says: On what are you basing your confidence, that you remain in Jerusalem under siege? ¹¹When Hezekiah says, 'The LORD our God will save us from the hand of the king of Assyria,' he is misleading you, to let you die of hunger and thirst. ¹²Did not Hezekiah himself remove this god's high places and altars, saying to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You must worship before one altar and burn sacrifices on it'?

¹³"Do you not know what I and my fathers have done to all the peoples of the other lands? Were the gods of those nations ever able to deliver their land from my hand? ¹⁴Who of all the gods of these nations that my fathers destroyed has been able to save his people from me? How then can your god deliver you from my hand? ¹⁵Now do not let Hezekiah deceive you and mislead you like this. Do not believe him, for no god of any nation or kingdom has been able to deliver his people from my hand or the hand of my fathers. How much less will your god deliver you from my hand!"

¹⁶Sennacherib's officers spoke further against the LORD God and against his servant Hezekiah. ¹⁷The king also wrote letters insulting the LORD, the God of Israel, and saying this against him: "Just as the gods of the peoples of the other lands did not rescue their people from my hand, so the god of Hezekiah will not rescue his people from my hand." ¹⁸Then they called out in Hebrew to the

people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, to terrify them and make them afraid in order to capture the city. ¹⁹They spoke about the God of Jerusalem as they did about the gods of the other peoples of the world—the work of men's hands.

²⁰King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz cried out in prayer to heaven about this. ²¹And the LORD sent an angel, who annihilated all the fighting men and the leaders and officers in the camp of the Assyrian king. So he withdrew to his own land in disgrace. And when he went into the temple of his god, some of his sons cut him down with the sword.

²²So the LORD saved Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib king of Assyria and from the hand of all others. He took care of them on every side. ²³Many brought offerings to Jerusalem for the LORD and valuable gifts for Hezekiah king of Judah. From then on he was highly regarded by all the nations.

Hezekiah's Pride, Success and Death

²⁴In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. He prayed to the LORD, who answered him and gave him a miraculous sign. ²⁵But Hezekiah's heart was proud and he did not respond to the kindness shown him; therefore the LORD's wrath was on him and on Judah and Jerusalem. ²⁶Then Hezekiah repented of the pride of his heart, as did the people of Jerusalem; therefore the LORD's wrath did not come upon them during the days of Hezekiah.

²⁷Hezekiah had very great riches and honor, and he made treasuries for his silver and gold and for his precious stones, spices, shields and all kinds of valuables. ²⁸He also made buildings to store the harvest of grain, new wine and oil; and he made stalls for various kinds of cattle, and pens for the flocks. ²⁹He built villages and acquired great numbers of flocks and herds, for God had given him very great riches.

³⁰It was Hezekiah who blocked the upper outlet of the Gihon spring and channeled the water down to the west side of the City of David. He succeeded in everything he undertook. ³¹But when envoys were sent by the rulers of Babylon to ask him about the miraculous sign that had occurred in the land, God left him to test him and to know everything that was in his heart.

³²The other events of Hezekiah's reign and his acts of devotion are written in the vision of the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. ³³Hezekiah rested with his fathers and was buried on the hill where the tombs of David's descendants are. All Judah and the people of Jerusalem honored him when he died. And Manasseh his son succeeded him as king.

Manasseh King of Judah

33 Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. ²He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, following the detestable practices of the na-

^a4 Hebrew, Septuagint and Syriac king

^b5 Or the Millo

^c22 Hebrew; Septuagint and Vulgate He gave them rest

2000 The LORD had driven out before the Israelites
the high places his father Hazelekiah had
built. He also erected altars to the Baals and
Asherah poles. He bowed down to all the
armies of heaven and shaped them. He built altars
to the LORD, of which the LORD had
said, "The LORD will remain in Jerusalem for
ever." 21 In the eighth year of the LORD, he
sent his hosts. He sacrificed his
sons in the Valley of Ben Hinnom,
with henna, with hyacinth, and
with saffron. He did much
evil in the eyes of the LORD, provoking him to
anger.

22 When he had made and put
all these things, the LORD had said to David
his son, "I will build a temple for me in this temple and in
Jerusalem, and I will choose out of all the tribes
of Israel a tribe to be my Name forever. I will not
drive them out of the land, but they will be
there forever. I will command them con-
fessing their sins and ordinances given
to them by the LORD. Manasseh led Judah and the
people of Jerusalem so that they did more
evil in the eyes of the LORD than all the kings who
were before him.

23 The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people,
saying, "I will bring you back to the land. So the LORD brought
back Manasseh and his army commanders of the king of
Assyria. Manasseh was prisoner, put a hook
in his nose, and bound him with bronze shackles and
chains. In his distress he sought the
face of the LORD his God and humbled himself
before the LORD his God. 24 And when
he prayed to him, the LORD was moved by his
prayer and listened to his plea; so he brought
him back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then
Manasseh knew that the LORD is God.

25 Afterward he rebuilt the outer wall of the City
of David west of the Gihon spring in the valley, as
far as the entrance of the Fish Gate and encircling
the hill of Ophel, he also made it much higher. He
stationed military commanders in all the fortified
places of Judah.

26 He got rid of the foreign gods and removed the
high places from the temple of the LORD, as well as all
the altars he had built on the temple hill and in
Jerusalem, and he threw them out of the city.

33:13 A Tardy Change of Mind

Unlike the other history books, Chronicles records
great moments of faith, even when they have no
lasting consequences for the nation as a whole.
Second Chronicles characteristically adds a new
perspective on the reign of Manasseh, one of
Judah's worst kings. While acknowledging his
weaknesses, it adds this account of his amazing
turnabout late in life. This brief episode gave an
object lesson to the nation on what happens when
even a wicked king repents.

21 Then he restored the altar of the LORD and sacri-
ficed fellowship offerings¹⁶ and thank offerings on
it and told Judah to serve the LORD the God of
Israel. 22 The people, however, continued to sacri-
fice at the high places, but only to the LORD their
God.

23 The other events of Manasseh's reign, includ-
ing his prayer to his God and the words the seers
spoke to him in the name of the LORD the God of
Israel, are written in the annals of the kings of
Israel. 24 His prayer and how God was moved by
his entreaty, as well as all his sins and unfaithful-
ness, and the sites where he built high places and
set up Asherah poles and idols before he humbled
himself, all are written in the records of the
seers. 25 Manasseh rested with his fathers and
was buried in his palace. And Amon his son suc-
ceeded him as king.

Amon King of Judah

21 Amon was twenty-two years old when he
became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem two
years. 22 He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, as his
father Manasseh had done. Amon worshiped and
offered sacrifices to all the idols Manasseh had
made. 23 But unlike his father Manasseh, he did not
humble himself before the LORD. Amon increased
his guilt.

24 Amon's officials conspired against him and as-
sassinated him in his palace. 25 Then the people of
the land killed all who had plotted against King
Amon, and they made Josiah his son king in his
place.

Josiah's Reforms

34 Josiah was eight years old when he became
king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one
years. 2 He did what was right in the eyes of the
LORD and walked in the ways of his father David,
not turning aside to the right or to the left.

3 In the eighth year of his reign, while he was still
young, he began to seek the God of his father
David. In his twelfth year he began to purge Judah
and Jerusalem of high places, Asherah poles,
carved idols and cast images. 4 Under his direction
the altars of the Baals were torn down; he cut to
pieces the incense altars that were above them,
and smashed the Asherah poles, the idols and the
images. These he broke to pieces and scattered
over the graves of those who had sacrificed to
them. 5 He burned the bones of the priests on their
altars, and so he purged Judah and Jerusalem. 6 In
the towns of Manasseh, Ephraim and Simeon, as
far as Naphtali, and in the ruins around them, 7 he
tore down the altars and the Asherah poles and
crushed the idols to powder and cut to pieces all
the incense altars throughout Israel. Then he went
back to Jerusalem.

8 In the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, to puri-
fy the land and the temple, he sent Shaphan son of
Azaliah and Maaseiah the ruler of the city, with
Joah son of Joahaz, the recorder, to repair the tem-
ple of the LORD his God.

9 They went to Hilkiah the high priest and gave

¹⁶ Or He made his sons pass through

¹⁷ 16 Traditionally peace offerings

¹⁸ That is, Judah, as frequently in 2 Chron.

¹⁹ One Hebrew manuscript and Septuagint, most Hebrew manuscripts of Hozai

him the money that had been brought into the temple of God, which the Levites who were the doorkeepers had collected from the people of Manasseh, Ephraim and the entire remnant of Israel and from all the people of Judah and Benjamin and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ¹⁰Then they entrusted it to the men appointed to supervise the work on the Lord's temple. These men paid the workers who repaired and restored the temple. ¹¹They also gave money to the carpenters and builders to purchase dressed stone, and timber for joists and beams for the buildings that the kings of Judah had allowed to fall into ruin.

¹²The men did the work faithfully. Over them to direct them were Jahath and Obadiah, Levites descended from Merari, and Zechariah and Meshullam, descended from Kohath. The Levites—all who were skilled in playing musical instruments—¹³had charge of the laborers and supervised all the workers from job to job. Some of the Levites were secretaries, scribes and doorkeepers.

The Book of the Law Found

¹⁴While they were bringing out the money that had been taken into the temple of the Lord, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the Lord that had been given through Moses. ¹⁵Hilkiah said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the temple of the Lord." He gave it to Shaphan.

¹⁶Then Shaphan took the book to the king and reported to him: "Your officials are doing everything that has been committed to them. ¹⁷They have paid out the money that was in the temple of the Lord and have entrusted it to the supervisors and workers." ¹⁸Then Shaphan the secretary informed the king, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king.

¹⁹When the king heard the words of the Law, he tore his robes. ²⁰He gave these orders to Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah,^a Shaphan the secretary and Asaiah the king's attendant: ²¹"Go and inquire of the Lord for me and for the remnant in Israel and Judah about what is written in this book that has been found. Great is the Lord's anger that is poured out on us because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written in this book."

²²Hilkiah and those the king had sent with him^b went to speak to the prophetess Huldah, who was the wife of Shallum son of Tokhath,^c the son of Hasrah,^d keeper of the wardrobe. She lived in Jerusalem, in the Second District.

²³She said to them, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Tell the man who sent you to me, ²⁴'This is what the Lord says: I am going to bring disaster on this place and its people—all the curses written in the book that has been read in the presence of the king of Judah. ²⁵Because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods and provoked me to anger by all that their hands have made,^e my anger will be poured out on this place

and will not be quenched.' ²⁶Tell the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the Lord, 'This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says concerning the words you heard: ²⁷Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before God when you heard what he spoke against this place and its people, and because you humbled yourself before me and tore your robes and wept in my presence, I have heard you, declares the Lord. ²⁸Now I will gather you to your fathers, and you will be buried in peace. Your eyes will not see all the disaster I am going to bring on this place and on those who live here.'"

So they took her answer back to the king.

²⁹Then the king called together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. ³⁰He went up to the temple of the Lord with the men of Judah, the people of Jerusalem, the priests and the Levites—all the people from the least to the greatest. He read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant, which had been found in the temple of the Lord. ³¹The king stood by his pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the Lord—to follow the Lord and keep his commands, regulations and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, and to obey the words of the covenant written in this book.

³²Then he had everyone in Jerusalem and Benjamin pledge themselves to it; the people of Jerusalem did this in accordance with the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.

³³Josiah removed all the detestable idols from all the territory belonging to the Israelites, and he had all who were present in Israel serve the Lord their God. As long as he lived, they did not fail to follow the Lord, the God of their fathers.

Josiah Celebrates the Passover

35 Josiah celebrated the Passover to the Lord in Jerusalem, and the Passover lamb was slaughtered on the fourteenth day of the first month. ²He appointed the priests to their duties and encouraged them in the service of the Lord's temple. ³He said to the Levites, who instructed all Israel and who had been consecrated to the Lord: "Put the sacred ark in the temple that Solomon son of David king of Israel built. It is not to be carried about on your shoulders. Now serve the Lord your God and his people Israel. ⁴Prepare yourselves by families in your divisions, according to the directions written by David king of Israel and by his son Solomon.

⁵"Stand in the holy place with a group of Levites for each subdivision of the families of your fellow countrymen, the lay people. ⁶Slaughter the Passover lambs, consecrate yourselves and prepare [the lambs] for your fellow countrymen, doing what the Lord commanded through Moses."

⁷Josiah provided for all the lay people who were there a total of thirty thousand sheep and goats for the Passover offerings, and also three thousand cattle—all from the king's own possessions.

⁸His officials also contributed voluntarily to the people and the priests and Levites. Hilkiah, Zech-

^a20 Also called Achior son of Micah sent with him

^c22 Also called Tikvah

^b22 One Hebrew manuscript, Vulgate and Syriac, most Hebrew manuscripts do not have had

^d22 Also called Harhas

^e25 Or by everything they have done

articles of value from the temple of the LORD, and he made Jehoiachin's uncle,^a Zedekiah, king over Judah and Jerusalem.

Zedekiah King of Judah

¹¹Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. ¹²He did evil in the eyes of the LORD his God and did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke the word of the LORD. ¹³He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him take an oath in God's name. He became stiff-necked and hardened his heart and would not turn to the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹⁴Furthermore, all the leaders of the priests and the people became more and more unfaithful, following all the detestable practices of the nations and defiling the temple of the LORD, which he had consecrated in Jerusalem.

The Fall of Jerusalem

¹⁵The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. ¹⁶But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. ¹⁷He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians,^b who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and spared neither young man nor young woman, old man or aged. God handed all of them over to Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁸He carried to Babylon all the articles from the temple of God, both large and small, and the treasures of the LORD's temple and the treasures of the king and

his officials. ¹⁹They set fire to God's temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem; they burned all the palaces and destroyed everything of value there.

²⁰He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power. ²¹The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah.

²²In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing:

²³"This is what Cyrus king of Persia says:

"The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Anyone of his people among you—may the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up."

36:19 Between the Temples

For about 70 years the Jews had no temple. The first local synagogues probably developed during this time, as gathering places where Jews could hear readings from the Old Testament and pray. The last few verses of Chronicles hint that a more hopeful time is coming when the temple will be rebuilt. These verses are repeated at the beginning of Ezra. Most scholars believe Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah were originally connected in one book.

^a10 Hebrew brother, that is, relative (see 2 Kings 24:17)

^b17 Or Chaldeans

EZRA

INTRODUCTION

Beginning Again

For the exiles from Babylon, news almost too good to be true

Many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud . . . while many others shouted for joy. 3:12

Ezra begins with exiles returning to a ruined city—a brush-covered ghost town burned and pillaged nearly 50 years before by an overpowering Babylonian army. Would Jerusalem now have a new beginning?

Psalm 126 captures the returning exiles' feelings: "We were like men who dreamed. Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy." The Persian Empire had conquered mighty Babylon and, under the emperor Cyrus, offered all Jews a chance to return to their land. It was too good to believe.

A New Start with God

One poet in exile had written, "If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill" (Psalm 137:5). These returned exiles were the minority who, decades afterwards, had not forgotten. They treasured their spiritual heritage more than the houses and businesses they had built in Babylon. They wanted to live and worship in the place God had given his people. Any sacrifice was worth this opportunity. Their first impulse when they arrived was to rebuild the temple, God's home.

The tolerant Persians (whose official policy was to encourage the local religion in every area they governed) had even brought out the silver and gold temple articles, carefully preserved in a Babylonian temple as though waiting on God's timing. When the returned exiles laid the foundation to the new temple, the sound of their shouting (and noisy weeping) could be heard from far away (3:13). The temple, after all, was the place where they would meet God. It symbolized a new start with him.

The Problems of Beginning Again

God had opened the way, but the exiles needed determination to follow it. The book of Ezra divides into three parts, each one dealing with an obstacle that arose. The first part tells how, immediately after the return of the exiles, their neighbors in the surrounding countryside became hostile. After their bogus offer of "help" was turned down, these neighbors began a campaign of opposition. They managed to stop further progress on the temple.

It lay in ruins for nearly 20 more years, until the prophets Haggai and Zechariah (whose messages are recorded in the books named after them) again stirred up interest in building. This "second push" is described in chapters 5 and 6. When opposition arose this time, the Israelites managed to push through—again with the assistance of a Persian king.

Another problem preoccupies the final four chapters. Ezra, the man after whom this book is named, actually arrived in Jerusalem during this period, 80 years after the first party. The temple had by then been up for half a century. But the "new beginning" stood in severe jeopardy again. The Israelites had begun to mingle (and compromise their faith) with the hostile people around them. Ezra's leadership, which came from deep biblical faith and genuine sorrow over sin, forced a radical, painful solution.

Ezra Leads Up to Jesus

The book of Ezra introduces an entirely new period in Israel's history—a period in which they became more like a church than a nation. Israelites before the exile had given much of their energy to fighting enemy armies. Now they focused on fighting sin and spiritual compromise.

The minority who returned could build a temple only with the permission of a foreign government in Persia. They had lost political independence, yet they clung to their religion,

especially to the Old Testament Scriptures and temple worship. They feared repeating the mistakes that had sent them into exile. True, they did flirt with spiritual compromise. Yet when God's prophets spoke, people responded.

As those who had chosen a ruined Jerusalem over a prosperous Babylon, the returned Jews looked to God instead of to government for help. Still they dreamed, more than ever, of the powerful Messiah the prophets promised. This dream, and their strong determination to obey the law of God, continued right up until the time of Jesus, about 450 years after Ezra's last words.

How to Read Ezra

The book of Ezra describes several highly emotional events. Yet it reads like a historical report, citing official documents, letters, and lists written over an 80-year span. You are often left to imagine for yourself the feelings of the returning exiles. The book can, therefore, seem confusing and dry unless you take time to imagine how the scenes must have looked and to reflect on how people must have felt.

The three distinct periods Ezra deals with all have the same theme: a new beginning for God's people. In each situation God gave opportunity and the outside world threatened it. God's people drifted back and forth in their response. Carefully take note of the 'messages' from both God and the world, and how the Israelites responded. Examine Ezra's model, as an unwavering man of the law as well as of deep personal faith.

To understand how Ezra fits into Israel's long-term pattern of response to God and the world, read some historical background. Articles on "Ezra," "Haggai" or "Israel: History or" in a Bible dictionary may offer the best summary. The short book of Haggai zeroes in on the crucial months described in Ezra 5:1-2 and makes a valuable companion to any study of Ezra.

PLANS FOR READING EZRA

PLAN 1: An Overview of Ezra in 1 Day

Day 1. Read the Introduction to Ezra and chapter 3 for the emotional story of how the returned exiles laid the foundation for the new temple.

PLAN 2: All of Ezra in 9 Days

☐ 1-2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Cyrus Helps the Exiles to Return

1 In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing:

2 "This is what Cyrus king of Persia says:

"The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at

Jerusalem in Judah. 3 Anyone of his people among you—may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem. 4 And the people of any place where survivors may now be living are to provide him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of God in Jerusalem."

5 Then the family heads of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and Levites—everyone whose heart God had moved—prepared to go up and build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem. 6 All their neighbors assisted them with articles of silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with valuable gifts, in addition to all the freewill offerings. 7 Moreover, King Cyrus brought out the articles belonging to the temple of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and had placed in the temple of his god. 8 Cyrus king of Persia had them brought by Mithredath the treasurer, who counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah.

1:1 Prediction Fulfilled

The fulfilled prophecy was probably Jeremiah 29:10, God's promise to bring Israel back to Jerusalem after 70 years. Additionally, Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1,13 had named Cyrus of Persia as God's agent to see Jerusalem and the temple rebuilt. This is not evidence that Cyrus worshiped Israel's God. He had a policy of religious toleration and contributed to the rebuilding of several nations' temples.

¶This was the inventory:

gold dishes	30
silver dishes	1,000
silver pans ¹	29
¹⁰ gold bowls	30
matching silver bowls	410
other articles	1,000

¹¹In all, there were 5,400 articles of gold and of silver. Sheshbazzar brought all these along when the exiles came up from Babylon to Jerusalem.

The List of the Exiles Who Returned

2 Now these are the people of the province who came up from the captivity of the exiles, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had taken captive to Babylon (they returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his own town, ²in company with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum and Baanah):

The list of the men of the people of Israel:

³ the descendants of Parosh	2,172
⁴ of Shephatah	372
⁵ of Arah	775
⁶ of Pahath-Moab (through the line of Jeshua and Joab)	2,812
⁷ of Elam	1,254
⁸ of Zattu	945
⁹ of Zaccai	760
¹⁰ of Bani	642
¹¹ of Bebai	623
¹² of Azgad	1,222
¹³ of Adonikam	666
¹⁴ of Bigvai	2,056
¹⁵ of Adin	454
¹⁶ of Ater (through Hezekiah)	98
¹⁷ of Bezai	323
¹⁸ of Jorah	112
¹⁹ of Hashum	223
²⁰ of Gibbar	95
²¹ the men of Bethlehem	123
²² of Netophah	56
²³ of Anathoth	128
²⁴ of Azmaveth	42
²⁵ of Kiriath Jearim, [†] Kephirah and Beeroth	743
²⁶ of Ramah and Geba	621

2:1 A People Preserved

Lists of names, whether in the Bible or the telephone book, make dull reading. But the way these names are grouped reveals God's care for the people of Israel. They had not lost track of their Israelite identity during two generations in Babylon. They knew their family record, and they could place themselves according to Israelite families, Israelite towns, and Israelite religious duties in the temple. Like the temple articles, carefully stored in readiness (1:7), these were a people preserved to serve God again.

¹ The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

the descendants of Jedaiah (through the line of Jeshua)	112
² of Immer	213
³ of Pashhur	126
⁴ of Bani	114
⁵ of Sallai	121
⁶ of the Levites	75
⁷ of the singers	145
⁸ of the gatekeepers of the temple	139

*The priests

the descendants of Jedaiah (through the line of Jeshua)	973
¹ of Immer	1,032
² of Pashhur	1,247
³ of Bani	1,017

*The Levites

the descendants of Jeshua and Kadmiel (through the line of Hodaviah)	74
--	----

†The singers

the descendants of Asaph	128
--------------------------	-----

‡The gatekeepers of the temple

the descendants of	
Shallum, Ater, Talmon	
Akkut, Hantai and Shobai	139

§The temple servants

the descendants of	
Ziha, Hasapha, Tabbaoth	
⁴ Keros, Naha, Padon	
⁵ Lebanah, Hagabah, Akkub,	
⁶ Hagab, Shimei, Hanan,	
⁷ Gaddei, Gahar, Reiah,	
⁸ Rezin, Nekoda, Gazzam,	
⁹ Lizza, Paseah, Besai,	
¹⁰ Asnah, Meunim, Nephussim,	
¹¹ Bakbuk, Hakupha, Harhur,	
¹² Baziuth, Mehida, Harsha,	
¹³ Barkos, Siara, Temah,	
¹⁴ Neziah and the pha	

§§The descendants of the servants of Solomon

the descendants of	
Sotai, Hassaphereth, Peruda,	
² Jaala, Darkon, Gidai,	
³ Shephatiah, Hattai,	
Pokereth, Hazzetani and Ami	

§§§The temple servants and the descendants of the servants of Solomon

¶The following came up from the towns of Tel Melah, Tel Harai, Kerab, Adullam, Immer, but they could not show that their families were descended from Israel.

¶¶The descendants of

Jedaiah, Jedaiah and Nekoda	602
-----------------------------	-----

¶¶¶And from among the priests

The descendants of

See Septuagint, verses 1-10. The Hebrew text is uncertain.

... and they also had 200 men and women who had been in the house of the Lord, and they were all of the Levites.

... and they also had 200 men and women who had been in the house of the Lord, and they were all of the Levites.

... and they also had 200 men and women who had been in the house of the Lord, and they were all of the Levites.

Rebuilding the Altar

When the seventh month came and the Israelites had worked in their houses, the people assembled as one man in Jerusalem. Then Jeshua son of Jozababed and his fellow priests and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and his associates began to build the altar of the Lord of Israel to sacrifice burnt offerings in accordance with what is written in the Law of the Lord. Despite their opposition, the people around them, they built the altar on its foundation and sacrificed burnt offerings on it to the Lord, both the morning and evening sacrifices. Then in accordance with what is written, they celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles with the required number of burnt offerings prescribed for each day. After that, they presented the regular burnt offerings, the New Moon sacrifices and the sacrifices for all the appointed sacred seasons to the Lord, as well as those brought as offerings to the Lord. In the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the Lord, though the foundation of the temple had not yet been laid.

Rebuilding the Temple

Then they gave money to the masons and car-

penters and gave food and drink and oil to the priests of Judah and Levi, so that they would bring sacrifices by the hand of the priests to the Lord, as ordered by the king of Persia.

At the second month of the second year after they arrived at the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Jeshua son of Jozababed and the rest of their brethren (the priests and the Levites) and all who had returned from the captivity to Jerusalem began the work, appointing 100 men, seventy each of age and older to supervise the building of the house of the Lord. Jeshua and his sons and brothers and Kadmiel and his sons (the sons of Jedaias) and the sons of Henadab and their sons and brothers—all Levites—joined together in supervising those working on the house of the Lord.

When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests in their vestments and with trumpets, and the Levites (the sons of Asaph) with cymbals took their places to praise the Lord, as prescribed by David king of Israel. With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the Lord.

He is good,
his love to Israel endures forever."

And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others shouted for joy. No one could distinguish the sound of the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping, because the people made so much noise. And the sound was heard far away.

Opposition to the Rebuilding

When the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the exiles were building a temple for the Lord, the God of Israel, they came to Zerubbabel and to the heads of the families and said, "Let us help you build because, like you, we seek your God and have been sacrificing to him since the time of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here."

But Zerubbabel, Jeshua and the rest of the heads of the families of Israel answered, "You have no part with us in building a temple to our God. We alone will build it for the Lord, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia, commanded us."

Then the peoples around them set out to discourage the people of Judah and make them afraid to go on building. They hired counselors to work against them and frustrate their plans during the entire reign of Cyrus king of Persia and down to the reign of Darius king of Persia.

Later Opposition Under Xerxes and Artaxerxes

At the beginning of the reign of Xerxes, they

203 The Need for Guidance

The Urim and Thummim were something that the priests in the Old Testament used to determine God's will. Until the Urim and Thummim could be used, the families whose records were lost (verse 2) had no way to establish themselves as genuine priests.

203 The Urim and Thummim were something that the priests in the Old Testament used to determine God's will.

204 This is about 3 hours (about 2.4 metric tons).

205 Hebrew Yehudah.

206 Or and troubled them so they built.

207 Hebrew Artaxerxes, a variant of Xerxes' name.

subjected an accusation against the people of Judah and Jerusalem.

And in the days of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Rehum, Mithredath, Tabeel and the rest of his associates wrote a letter to Artaxerxes. The letter was written in Aramaic script and in the Aramaic language.

Rehum the commanding officer and Shimshai the secretary wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king as follows:

"Rehum the commanding officer and Shimshai the secretary, together with the rest of their associates—the judges and officials over the men from Tripolis, Persia,⁸ Ebrech and Sibbi and the Elamites of Susa,¹⁰ and the other associates whom the great and honorable Ashurbanipal⁹ deported and settled in the city of Samaria and elsewhere in Trans-Euphrates.

This is a copy of the letter they sent him.)

To King Artaxerxes

From your servants, the men of Trans-Euphrates:

"The king should know that the Jews who came up to us from you have gone to Jerusalem and are rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city. They are restoring the walls and repairing the foundations.

Furthermore, the king should know that if this city is built and its walls are restored, no more taxes, tribute or duty will be paid, and the royal revenues will suffer. ¹⁴Now since we are under obligation to the palace and it is not proper for us to see the king dishonored, we are sending this message to inform the king,

so that a search may be made in the archives of your predecessors. In these records you will find that this city is a rebellious city, troublesome to kings and provinces, a place of rebellion from ancient times. That is why this city was destroyed. ¹⁶We inform the king that if this city is built and its walls are restored, you will be left with nothing in Trans-Euphrates.

¹⁷The king sent this reply:

To Rehum the commanding officer, Shimshai the secretary and the rest of their associates

living in Samaria and elsewhere in Trans-Euphrates

Cordial greetings

¹⁸The letter you sent us has been read and translated in my presence. ¹⁹I issued an order and a search was made, and it was found that this city has a long history of revolt against kings and has been a place of rebellion and sedition. ²⁰Jerusalem has had powerful kings ruling over the whole of Trans-Euphrates, and taxes, tribute and duty were paid to them. ²¹Now issue an order to these men to stop work, so that this city will not be rebuilt until I so order. ²²Be careful not to neglect this matter. Why let this threat grow, to the detriment of the royal interests?

²³As soon as the copy of the letter of King Artaxerxes was read to Rehum and Shimshai the secretary and their associates, they went immediately to the Jews in Jerusalem and compelled them by force to stop.

²⁴Thus the work on the house of God in Jerusalem came to a standstill until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

Tattenai's Letter to Darius

5 Now Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the prophet, a descendant of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them. ²Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jozadak set to work to rebuild the house of God in Jerusalem. And the prophets of God were with them, helping them.

³At that time Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Bozenai and their associates went to them and asked, "Who authorized you to rebuild this temple and restore this structure?"

⁴They also asked, "What are the names of the men constructing this building?" ⁵But the eye of their God was watching over the elders of the Jews, and they were not stopped until a report could go to Darius and his written reply be received.

⁶This is a copy of the letter that Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Bozenai and their associates, the officials of Trans-Euphrates, sent to King Darius. ⁷The report they sent him read as follows:

To King Darius:

Cordial greetings.

⁸The king should know that we went to the district of Judah, to the temple of the great God. The people are building it with large stones and placing the timbers in the walls. The work is being carried on with diligence and is making rapid progress under their direction.

⁹We questioned the elders and asked them, "Who authorized you to rebuild this temple

4:6 A Flash Forward

The section from 4:6 to 4:23 is a glance forward in history. The Israelites would continue to feel opposition from their neighbors even long after the temple was successfully completed. The quarrel described here, during Xerxes' and Artaxerxes' reigns, was not over the temple but the defensive wall to be built around Jerusalem—a wall Nehemiah, with Ezra's help, completed years later.

⁸ Or written in Aramaic and translated the men from

¹⁷ The text of Ezra 4:8–6:18 is in Aramaic.

¹⁰ Aramaic Osnappar, a variant of Ashurbanipal constructing this building

¹⁹ Or officials, magistrates and governors over

²⁴ See Septuagint, Aramaic ⁹We told them the names of the men

and that of this story, too. We also asked them their names, so that we could write down the names of our readers for your information.

11 This is the answer they gave us:

12 "When the servants of the God of heaven and earth were rebuilding the temple that was built many years ago, and that a great king had built and founded. But because the king had angered the God of heaven, he handed them over to Nebuchadnezzar the Chaldean, king of Babylon, who destroyed this temple and deported the people to Babylon.

13 "However, in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, King Cyrus issued a decree to rebuild this house of God. 14 He even removed from the temple of Babylon the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem and brought to the temple in Babylon.

Then King Cyrus gave them to a man named Sheshbazzar, whom he had appointed governor, and he told him, 'Take these articles and go and deposit them in the temple in Jerusalem. And rebuild the house of God on its site.' 15 So this Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundations of the house of God in Jerusalem. From that day to the present it has been under construction but is not yet finished.

Now, if it pleases the king, let a search be made in the royal archives in Babylon to see if King Cyrus did in fact issue a decree to rebuild this house of God in Jerusalem. Then let the king send us his decision in this matter.

The Decree of Darius

6 King Darius then issued an order, and they searched in the archives stored in the treasury at Babylon. 2 A scroll was found in the citadel of Ecbatana in the province of Media, and this was written on it:

Memorandum

3 In the first year of King Cyrus, the king issued a decree concerning the temple of God in Jerusalem.

Let the temple be rebuilt as a place to present sacrifices, and let its foundations be laid. It is to be ninety feet^a high and ninety

feet wide. Build three courses of large stones and one of piers. The costs are to be paid for the royal treasury. Also, the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, are to be returned to their places in the temple in Jerusalem. They are to be deposited in the house of God.

4 Now then, Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Buzena, and you, their associates, when at that province, start away from there. Do not interfere with the work on this temple of God. Let the governor of the Jews and the Jewish elders rebuild this house of God on its site.

5 Moreover, I hereby decree what you are to do for these elders of the Jews in the construction of this house of God.

The expenses of these men are to be fully paid out of the royal treasury, such as the revenues of Trans-Euphrates, so that the work will not stop. 6 Whatever is needed—young bulls, rams, male lambs for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, and wheat, salt, wine and oil, as requested by the priests in Jerusalem—must be given them daily without fail. Also, that they may offer sacrifices pleasing to the God of heaven and pray for the well-being of the king and his sons.

7 Furthermore, I decree that if anyone changes this edict, a beam is to be pulled from his house and he is to be lifted up and impaled on it. And for this crime his house is to be made a pile of rubble. 8 May God, who has caused his Name to dwell there, overthrow any king or people who acts a hand to change this decree or to destroy this temple in Jerusalem.

9 I, Darius, have decreed it. Let it be carried out with diligence.

Completion and Dedication of the Temple

10 Then, because of the decree King Darius had sent, Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Buzena, and their associates carried it out with diligence. 11 So the elders of the Jews continued to build and prosper under the preaching of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah, a descendant of Iddo. They finished rebuilding the temple according to the command of the God of Israel and the decrees of Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes, kings of Persia. 12 The temple was completed on the third day of the month Adar in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius.

13 Then the people of Israel—the priests, the Levites and the rest of the elders—celebrated the dedication of the house of God with joy. 14 For the dedication of this house of God they offered a hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred male lambs and, as a sin offering for all Israel, twelve male goats, one for each of the tribes of Israel. 15 And they presented the priests in their divisions and the Levites in their groups for the service

6:2 The Ring of Truth

In a made-up legend, there is no need to add insignificant, divergent details. All the loose ends tie up neatly. Real life is messier. Here is a typical case: a document was searched for in Babylon, but it unexpectedly turned up in remote Ecbatana, where (history says) Cyrus spent the summer of his first year as king. Such details suggest that Ezra is based on accurate and detailed historical sources.

^a 10 cubits (15 meters) high and 10 cubits (15 meters) wide.

of God at Jerusalem, according to what is written in the Book of Moses.

The Passover

On the fourteenth day of the first month, the exiles celebrated the Passover. The priests and Levites had purified themselves and were all ceremonially clean. The Levites slaughtered the Passover lamb for their brothers, the priests, and for themselves. So the Israelites who had returned from the exile ate it together with all who had separated themselves from the unclean practices of their Gentile neighbors in order to seek the Lord, the God of Israel. For seven days they celebrated with the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

because the Lord had filled them with joy by changing the attitude of the king of Assyria, so that he assisted them in the work on the house of God, the God of Israel.

Ezra Comes to Jerusalem

After these things, during the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah, the son of Shaium, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub, the son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth, the son of Zerahiah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukkai, the son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the chief priest—this Ezra came up from Babylon. He

INSIGHT

Ezra, a Man of the Heart

He applied God's word to himself before preaching it to others

While Ezra was praying and confessing, weeping and throwing himself down before the house of God, a large crowd of Israelites—men, women and children—gathered around him. 10:1

Ezra knew how to get things done. He had the political knowledge to win a Persian king's support for the trip back to Jerusalem, the salesmanship to convince Jewish family leaders to go along, and the organizational know-how to mount the long, complicated, and dangerous expedition.

At the same time, Ezra was a priest who depended on God. He set aside days for fasting and prayer, he knew and lived by the Old Testament law, but used it as a path to a profound relationship with God. When he studied scripture, he applied it to himself before applying it to others.

A Strong Negative Reaction

Ezra's party got to Jerusalem 80 years after the first exiles had returned. Yet within four months the Jewish leaders were asking this latecomer for advice on the most sensitive matters.

They told Ezra that Israelites were marrying their idolatrous neighbors. At the news, Ezra completely lost his composure, tore his clothes, and sat down stunned (9:3). His grief-tilted prayer of repentance inspired a large crowd to join him in bitter weeping. Then and there they resolved to break up the marriages. The women and children were to be sent away. Ezra, a practical man even in his emotional condition, put the machinery into operation and saw it done.

Why did Ezra react so negatively to these marriages? How could he allow children to be sent away from their fathers, families split? Some people see proof that he was racially oriented, bound to exclude non-Jews from Israel.

But race purity was not Ezra's worry. Non-Jews like Rahab and Ruth, who converted to Judaism, had long been accepted into Israel. Ezra 6:21 suggests that outsiders who sought the Lord were still welcomed. Ezra's concern was that intermarriage represented a compromised faith that threatened the future existence of Israel.

Tossing Away One Last Chance

Marriage in those days was more than a personal matter. It created a political and religious alliance between two families. These mixed marriages were tying Israelites to other faiths—for Israel's neighbors worshiped idols, an act God hated. Ezra knew that his God must hold the only place in his people's hearts. They must be a special people with a sense of their unique destiny. The law told them not to intermarry (Exodus 34:15-16, Deuteronomy 7:3-6). (In a related situation Paul instructed Christians not to be "yoked to unbelievers" [2 Corinthians 6:14], though he told Christians already married to non-Christians not to divorce [1 Corinthians 7:12-16].)

Ezra's prayer shows that petty technicalities of the law were far from his mind. His concerns involved the heart. He saw his people falling into the same pattern of compromise that had led God to give them up to the Babylonians years before. Had they learned nothing from their long exile? They were tossing away one last, remarkable chance to start over.

Life Questions Ezra saw intermarriage as a compromise in people's faith. Do people today make other compromises that have the same impact on their faith?

was a teacher well versed in the Law of Moses, which the LORD, the God of Israel, had given. The king had granted him everything he asked, for the hand of the LORD his God was on him. ⁷Some of the Israelites, including priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers and temple servants, also came up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes.

⁸Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in the fifth month of the seventh year of the king. ⁹He had begun his journey from Babylon on the first day of the first month, and he arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month, for the gracious hand of his God was on him. ¹⁰For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.

King Artaxerxes' Letter to Ezra

¹This is a copy of the letter King Artaxerxes had given to Ezra the priest and teacher, a man learned in matters concerning the commands and decrees of the LORD for Israel.

¹²Artaxerxes, king of kings.

To Ezra the priest, a teacher of the Law of the God of heaven

Greetings

¹³Now I decree that any of the Israelites in my kingdom, including priests and Levites, who wish to go to Jerusalem with you, may go. ¹⁴You are sent by the king and his seven advisers to inquire about Judah and Jerusalem with regard to the Law of your God, which is in your hand. ¹⁵Moreover, you are to take with you the silver and gold that the king and his advisers have freely given to the God of Israel, whose dwelling is in Jerusalem, ¹⁶together with all the silver and gold you may obtain from the province of Babylon, as well as the freewill offerings of the people and priests for the temple of their God in Jerusalem. ¹⁷With this money be sure to buy bulls, rams and male lambs, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings, and sacrifice them on the altar of the temple of your God in Jerusalem.

¹⁸You and your brother Jews may then do whatever seems best with the rest of the silver and gold, in accordance with the will of your God. ¹⁹Deliver to the God of Jerusalem all the articles entrusted to you for worship in the temple of your God. ²⁰And anything else needed for the temple of your God that you may have occasion to supply, you may provide from the royal treasury.

²¹Now I, King Artaxerxes, order all the treasurers of Trans-Euphrates to provide with diligence whatever Ezra the priest, a teacher of the Law of the God of heaven, may ask of you— ²²up to a hundred talents^a of silver, a hundred cors^b of wheat, a hundred baths^c of wine, a hundred baths^d of olive oil, and salt

without limit. ²³Whatever the God of heaven has prescribed, let it be done with diligence for the temple of the God of heaven. Why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and of his sons? ²⁴You are also to know that you have no authority to impose taxes, tribute or duty on any of the priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, temple servants or other workers at this house of God.

²⁵And you, Ezra, in accordance with the wisdom of your God, which you possess, appoint magistrates and judges to administer justice to all the people of Trans-Euphrates—all who know the laws of your God. And you are to teach any who do not know them. ²⁶Whoever does not obey the law of your God and the law of the king must surely be punished by death, banishment, confiscation of property, or imprisonment.

²⁷Praise be to the LORD, the God of our fathers, who has put it into the king's heart to bring honor to the house of the LORD in Jerusalem in this way. ²⁸And who has extended his good favor to me before the king and his advisers and all the king's powerful officials. Because the hand of the LORD my God was on me, I took courage and gathered leading men from Israel to go up with me.

List of the Family Heads Returning With Ezra

8 These are the family heads and those registered with them who came up with me from Babylon during the reign of King Artaxerxes:

²of the descendants of Phinehas, Gershom; of the descendants of Ithamar, Daniel; of the descendants of David, Hattush ³of the descendants of Shecaniah;

of the descendants of Parosh, Zechariah, and with him were registered 150 men;

⁴of the descendants of Pahath-Moab, Eliehoenai son of Zerahiah, and with him 200 men;

⁵of the descendants of Zattu,^e Shecaniah son of Jahaziel, and with him 300 men;

⁶of the descendants of Adin, Ebed son of Jonathan, and with him 50 men;

⁷of the descendants of Elam, Jeshaiiah son of Athaliah, and with him 70 men;

⁸of the descendants of Shephatiah, Zebadiah son of Michael, and with him 80 men;

⁹of the descendants of Joab, Obadiah son of Jehiel, and with him 218 men;

¹⁰of the descendants of Bani,^f Shelomith son of Josiphuah, and with him 160 men;

¹¹of the descendants of Bebai, Zechariah son of Bebai, and with him 28 men;

¹²of the descendants of Azgad, Johanan son of Hakkatan, and with him 110 men;

¹³of the descendants of Adonikam, the last ones, whose names were Eliphelet, Jeuel and Shemaiah, and with them 60 men;

^a12 The text of Ezra 7:12-26 is in Aramaic.

bushels (about 22 kiloliters).

^c22 That is, probably about 600 gallons (about 2.2 kiloliters).

^d22 That is, probably about 600 gallons (about 2.2 kiloliters).

^e22 That is, probably about 600 gallons (about 2.2 kiloliters).

^f22 That is, probably about 600 gallons (about 2.2 kiloliters).

^g22 That is, probably about 600 gallons (about 2.2 kiloliters).

^h22 That is, probably about 600 gallons (about 2.2 kiloliters).

ⁱ22 That is, probably about 600 gallons (about 2.2 kiloliters).

^j22 That is, probably about 600 gallons (about 2.2 kiloliters).

¹² That is, about 334 tons (about 34 metric tons).

¹³ That is, about 334 tons (about 34 metric tons).

¹⁴ That is, about 334 tons (about 34 metric tons).

¹⁵ That is, about 334 tons (about 34 metric tons).

¹⁶ That is, about 334 tons (about 34 metric tons).

¹⁷ That is, about 334 tons (about 34 metric tons).

¹⁸ That is, about 334 tons (about 34 metric tons).

¹⁹ That is, about 334 tons (about 34 metric tons).

²⁰ That is, about 334 tons (about 34 metric tons).

²¹ That is, about 334 tons (about 34 metric tons).

²² That is, probably about 600

Some Septuagint manuscripts

also 1 Esdras 8:32). Hebrew does not have

also 1 Esdras 8:32). Hebrew does not have

also 1 Esdras 8:32). Hebrew does not have

also 1 Esdras 8:32). Hebrew does not have

also 1 Esdras 8:32). Hebrew does not have

also 1 Esdras 8:32). Hebrew does not have

also 1 Esdras 8:32). Hebrew does not have

also 1 Esdras 8:32). Hebrew does not have

of the descendants of Bigvai, Uthai and Zacchur, and with them 70 men

The Return to Jerusalem

15I assembled them at the canal that flows toward Ahava, and we camped there three days. When I checked among the people and the priests, I found no Levites there. 16So I summoned Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah and Meshullam, who were leaders, and Jorai and Elnathan, who were men of learning. 17and I sent them to Iddo, the leader in Casiphia. I told them what to say to Iddo and his kinsmen, the temple servants in Casiphia, so that they might bring attendants to us for the house of our God. 18Because the gracious hand of our God was on us, they brought us Sherebiah, a capable man, from the descendants of Mahli son of Levi, the son of Israel, and Sherebiah's sons and brothers, 18 men, 19and Hashabiah, together with Jeshuaah from the descendants of Merari, and his brothers and nephews, 20 men. 20They also brought 220 of the temple servants—a body that David and the officials had established to assist the Levites. All were registered by name

21There, by the Ahava Canal, I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions. 22I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to protect us from enemies on the road, because we had told the king, "The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to him, but his great anger is against all who forsake him." 23So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer

24Then I set apart twelve of the leading priests, together with Sherebiah, Hashabiah and ten of their brothers, 25and I weighed out to them the offering of silver and gold and the articles that the king, his advisers, his officials and all Israel present there had donated for the house of our God. 26I weighed out to them 650 talents^a of silver, silver articles weighing 100 talents,^b 100 talents^c of gold, 2720 bowls of gold valued at 1,000 darics,^c and two fine articles of polished bronze, as precious as gold

28I said to them, "You as well as these articles are consecrated to the LORD. The silver and gold are a freewill offering to the LORD, the God of your fathers. 29Guard them carefully until you weigh them out in the chambers of the house of the LORD in Jerusalem before the leading priests and the Levites and the family heads of Israel." 30Then the priests and Levites received the silver and gold and sacred articles that had been weighed out to be taken to the house of our God in Jerusalem.

31On the twelfth day of the first month we set out from the Ahava Canal to go to Jerusalem. The hand of our God was on us, and he protected us from enemies and bandits along the way. 32So we arrived in Jerusalem, where we rested three days.

33On the fourth day, in the house of our God, we weighed out the silver and gold and the sacred

articles into the hands of Meremoth son of Uriah, the priest. Eleazar son of Phinehas was with him, and so were the Levites Jozabab son of Joshua and Noadiah son of Binnui. 34Everything was accounted for by number and weight, and the entire weight was recorded at that time

35Then the exiles, who had returned from captivity, sacrificed burnt offerings to the God of Israel: twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven male lambs and—as a sin offering, twelve male goats. All this was a burnt offering to the LORD. 36They also delivered the king's orders to the royal satraps and to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, who then gave assistance to the people and to the house of God

Ezra's Prayer About Inter-marriage

9 After these things had been done, the leaders came to me and said: "The people of Israel, including the priests and the Levites, have not kept themselves separate from the neighboring peoples with their detestable practices, like those of the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians and Amorites. 2They have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, and have mingled the holy race with the peoples around them. And the leaders and officials have led the way in this unfaithfulness."

3When I heard this, I tore my tunic and cloak, pulled hair from my head and beard and sat down appalled. 4Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel gathered around me because of this unfaithfulness of the exiles. And I sat there appalled until the evening sacrifice.

5Then, at the evening sacrifice, I rose from my self-abasement, with my tunic and cloak torn, and fell on my knees with my hands spread out to the LORD my God and prayed.

"O my God, I am too ashamed and disgraced to lift up my face to you, my God, because our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens. 7From the days of our forefathers until now, our guilt has been great. Because of our sins, we and our kings and our priests have been subjected to the sword and captivity, to pillage and humiliation at the hand of foreign kings, as it is today.

8"But now, for a brief moment, the LORD our God has been gracious in leaving us a remnant and giving us a firm place in his sanctuary, and so our God gives light to our eyes and a little relief in our bondage. 9Though we are slaves, our God has not deserted us in our bondage. He has shown us kindness in the sight of the kings of Persia: He has granted us new life to rebuild the house of our God and repair its ruins, and he has given us a wall of protection in Judah and Jerusalem.

10"But now, O our God, what can we say after this? For we have disregarded the commands 11you gave through your servants the

^a26 That is, about 25 tons (about 22 metric tons)
pounds (about 8.5 kilograms)

^b26 That is, about 3 3/4 tons (about 3.4 metric tons)

^c27 That is, about 19

prophets when you said. The land you are entering to possess is a land polluted by the corruption of its peoples. By their detestable practices they have filled it with their impurity from one end to the other. ¹²Therefore, do not give your daughters in marriage to their sons or take their daughters for your sons. Do not seek a treaty of friendship with them at any time that you may be strong and eat the good things of the land and leave it to your children as an everlasting inheritance.'

What has happened to us is a result of our evil deeds and our great guilt, and yet, our God, you have punished us less than our sins have deserved and have given us a remnant like this. ¹⁴Shall we again break your commands and intermarry with the peoples who commit such detestable practices? Would you not be angry enough with us to destroy us, leaving us no remnant or survivor? ¹⁵O LORD, God of Israel, you are righteous! We are left this day as a remnant. Here we are before you in our guilt, though because of it not one of us can stand in your presence.'

The People's Confession of Sin

10 While Ezra was praying and confessing, weeping and throwing himself down before the house of God, a large crowd of Israelites—men, women and children—gathered around him. They too wept bitterly. ²Then Shecaniah son of Jehiel, one of the descendants of Elam, said to Ezra, 'We have been unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women from the peoples around us. But in spite of this, there is still hope for Israel. ³Now let us make a covenant before our God to send away all these women and their children, in accordance with the counsel of my lord and of those who fear the commands of our God. Let it be done according to the Law. ⁴Rise up; this matter is in your hands. We will support you, so take courage and do it.'

⁵So Ezra rose up and put the leading priests and Levites and all Israel under oath to do what had been suggested. And they took the oath. ⁶Then Ezra withdrew from before the house of God and went to the room of Jehohanan son of Eliashib. While he was there, he ate no food and drank no water, because he continued to mourn over the unfaithfulness of the exiles.

A proclamation was then issued throughout Judah and Jerusalem for all the exiles to assemble in Jerusalem. ⁸Anyone who failed to appear within three days would forfeit all his property, in accordance with the decision of the officials and elders,

and would himself be expelled from the assembly of the exiles.

⁹Within the three days, all the men of Judah and Benjamin had gathered in Jerusalem. And on the twentieth day of the ninth month all the people were sitting in the square before the house of God, greatly distressed by the occasion and because of the rain. ¹⁰Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, 'You have been unfaithful; you have married foreign women, adding to Israel's guilt. ¹¹Now make confession to the LORD, the God of your fathers, and do his will. Separate yourselves from the peoples around you and from your foreign wives.'

¹²The whole assembly responded with a loud voice. 'You are right. We must do as you say. ¹³But there are many people here and it is the rainy season, so we cannot stand outside. Besides, this matter cannot be taken care of in a day or two, because we have sinned greatly in this thing. ¹⁴Let our officials act for the whole assembly. Then let everyone in our towns who has married a foreign woman come at a set time, along with the elders and judges of each town, until the fierce anger of our God in this matter is turned away from us.' ¹⁵Only Jonathan son of Asahel and Jahzeiah son of Tikvah, supported by Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite, opposed this.

¹⁶So the exiles did as was proposed. Ezra the priest selected men who were family heads, one from each family division, and all of them designated by name. On the first day of the tenth month they sat down to investigate the cases, ¹⁷and by the first day of the first month they finished dealing with all the men who had married foreign women.

Those Guilty of Intermarriage

¹⁸Among the descendants of the priests, the following had married foreign women: From the descendants of Jeshua son of Jozadak, and his brothers: Maaseiah, Ehezzer, Jarib and Gedaliah. ¹⁹(They all gave their hands in pledge to put away their wives, and for their guilt they each presented a ram from the flock as a guilt offering.)

²⁰From the descendants of Immer: Hanani and Zebadiah.

²¹From the descendants of Harim: Maaseiah, Elijah, Shemaiah, Jehiel and Uzziab.

²²From the descendants of Pashhur: Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad and Elasah.

10:1 Unprecedented Response

Ezra's grief over Israel's spiritual compromise was similar to that of many prophets. But the people's response to Ezra was unprecedented. Pre-exile prophets like Amos or Jeremiah never saw such heartfelt repentance. Evidently the exile really had purified Israel.

10:17 Corrupted Religious Leaders

The problem Ezra had evidently expected to solve in a day (verse 13) took, in fact, two months to sort out. Intermarriage must have been more widespread than he realized. The list of those involved shows that the priests and Levites, who were the religious leaders, had a higher proportion of intermarriage than the rest of the people.

²³Among the Levites:

Jozabad, Shimei, Kelaiah (that is, Kelita),
Pethahiah, Judah and Eliezer.

²⁴From the singers:

Eliashib.

From the gatekeepers:

Shallum, Telem and Uri.

²⁵And among the other Israelites:

From the descendants of Parosh:

Ramiah, Izziah, Malkijah, Mijamin, Eleazar, Malkijah and Benaiah.

²⁶From the descendants of Elam:

Mattaniah, Zechariah, Jehiel, Abdi, Jeremoth and Elijah.

²⁷From the descendants of Zattu:

Elioenai, Ehashib, Mattaniah, Jeremoth, Zabad and Aziza.

²⁸From the descendants of Bebai:

Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai and Athlai.

²⁹From the descendants of Bani:

Meshullam, Malluch, Adaiah, Jashub, Sheal and Jeremoth.

³⁰From the descendants of Pahath-Moab:

Adna, Kelai, Benaiah, Maaserah, Mattaniah, Bezael, Binnui and Manasseh

³¹From the descendants of Harim

Ehezzer, Ishijah, Malkijah, Shemaiah, Shimeon, ³²Benjamin, Malluch and Shemaiah

³³From the descendants of Hashum

Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Elphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh and Shimei

³⁴From the descendants of Bani

Maadai, Amram, Uel, ³⁵Benaiah, Be-deiah, Keluhi, ³⁶Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib, ³⁷Mattaniah, Mattenai and Jaasu

³⁸From the descendants of Binnui ^a

Shimei, ³⁹Shelemiah, Nathan, Adaiah, ⁴⁰Macnadebai, Shashai, Sharai, ⁴¹Azarel, Shelemiah, Shemaiah, ⁴²Shallum, Amariah and Joseph

⁴³From the descendants of Nebo

Jeiel, Matthatiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jaddai, Joel and Benaiah

⁴⁴All these had married foreign women, and some of them had children by these wives.^b

^a 37-38 See Septuagint (also 1 Esdras 9:34), Hebrew Jaasu ³⁸and Bani and Binnui

^b 44 Or and they sent them away with their children

NEHEMIAH

INTRODUCTION

A Man of Action

He set out to build a wall, but left an enduring legacy of leadership

"Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight." 4:14

In the book of Nehemiah we peek inside the personal memoirs of a great leader. You can't mistake his style. He was an organizer, a pragmatic leader. That, no doubt, is why he had made his way to a top position in the the Persian empire, one of the grandest in the history of the world.

Yet his heart was elsewhere—in Jerusalem, a small, troublesome place far from the center of power. When he heard of the difficulties his people were experiencing there, he took his career—and probably his life—in his hands and spoke to the king about it. Shortly thereafter he was touring, by night, the broken-down walls of a city he probably had never seen before.

Nearly 100 years had passed since his people had returned to Jerusalem from exile. Though the temple had been rebuilt, the city was barely occupied. More Jews lived in the outlying villages and towns than in the holy city. They mixed with all kinds of foreigners. They were in danger of losing their identity. Why? Partly because the city lacked a wall.

What's in a Wall?

For lack of a wall the Jews were facing assimilation into the culture of their neighbors. In those days a city without a wall was easy pickings for any robber band. Jews, concerned for security, had scattered among other nationalities in small villages outside Jerusalem. There they were intermarrying and gradually losing their own language, culture and—most important—their own religion. A wall would give them a chance to make Jerusalem a truly Jewish city, keeping it safe and controlling who came and went.

Waiting for a Leader

What had kept them from doing anything about the broken-down wall for nearly 100 years? One obstacle was local resistance—powerful politicians were determined to keep the Jews down. Perhaps another reason was the lack of a leader like Nehemiah. In his memoirs, which fill most of this book, he shows remarkable qualities of leadership: impassioned speech, prayer, organization, resolve, trust in God, quick and determined response to problems, unselfishness. Perhaps his years in the Persian court had been preparing him. Organizing a difficult building project and handling fierce opposition seemed to come easily to him.

Nehemiah was more than a good business manager. He was a man of God. He did not act without prayer, and he did not pray without acting. His prayers punctuate the book. He recognized God's role in all that happened and never forgot to give him credit. He was not looking for earthly status—if he had been, he never would have left Persia.

How to Read Nehemiah

Nehemiah's personality is the outstanding quality of the book that bears his name. No other biblical character gives such clear information about how he "practices the presence of God" while carrying a leadership role. As you read, take note of the qualities that made Nehemiah successful as a leader and man of God. You may also wish to contrast his leadership with Ezra's. They worked in tandem but had very different styles. Nehemiah was an activist, Ezra a student. Nehemiah was outspoken, Ezra more withdrawn. Yet both faced similar problems and had similar success—and the two worked smoothly together.

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah both tell how the disgraced and chastened Jews returned from exile to rebuild their country. As history, Nehemiah includes some long lists of different family groups, as well as a detailed description of who built which parts of the Jerusalem wall. Unless

you are an advanced student, you should skim these lists mainly to get an idea of the *content* of what they were kept. Concentrate more on how the Israelites had been *trained* and *prepared* for exile, making them ready to meet new challenges when they returned home.

PLANS FOR READING NEHEMIAH

PLAN 1: An Overview of Nehemiah in 2 Days

- ☐ Day 1. Read chapter 2, which tells how Nehemiah began his work on the wall.
- ☐ Day 2. Read chapter 8, showing the power of God's word read aloud.

PLAN 2: All of Nehemiah in 12 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2-3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13

Nehemiah's Prayer

1 The words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah:

In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, ²Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem.

³They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire."

⁴When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. ⁵Then I said:

"O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands, ⁶let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you. ⁷We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

⁸"Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, ⁹but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.'

¹⁰"They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand. ¹¹O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant

and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man."

I was cupbearer to the king.

Artaxerxes Sends Nehemiah to Jerusalem

²In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before; ^{2a}so the king asked me, "Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart."

I was very much afraid, ³but I said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my fathers are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?"

⁴The king said to me, "What is it you want?"

Then I prayed to the God of heaven, ⁵and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it."

⁶Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, "How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?" It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time.

2:4 The "Arrow Prayer"

Nehemiah characteristically prayed to God while he went about his duties. He even "shot an arrow" to God, silently asking him for help in the middle of this crucial conversation with the king. He spontaneously inserted prayers as he wrote his memoirs. Some other examples: 1:5-11; 4:4-5; 5:19; 6:9,14; 13:14,22,31.

¶ also said to him, "If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe conduct until I arrive in Judah? Also may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the king's forest, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence of the temple and for the city wall and for the residence of the temple?" And because the gracious hand of my God was upon me, the king granted my request.¹³ So I went to the governors of Trans-Euphrates and gave them the king's letters. The king had also sent army officers and cavalry with me.

¹⁴When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about this, they were very much disturbed that someone had come to promote the welfare of the Israelites.

Nehemiah Inspects Jerusalem's Walls

¹⁵I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there three days ¹⁶I set out during the night with a few men. I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem. There were no mounts with me except the one I was riding on.

¹⁷By night I went out through the Valley Gate toward the Jackal Well and the Dung Gate, examining the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken down, and its gates, which had been destroyed by fire. ¹⁸Then I moved on toward the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool, but there was not enough room for my mount to get through; ¹⁹so I went up the valley by night, examining the wall. Finally, I turned back and reentered through the Valley Gate. ²⁰The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, because as yet I had said nothing to the Jews or the priests or nobles or officials or any others who would be doing the work.

²¹Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace." ²²I also told them about the gracious hand of my God upon me and what the king had said to me.

They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work.

²³But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official and Geshem the Arab heard about it, they mocked and ridiculed us. "What is

this you are doing?" they asked. "Are you rebelling against the king?"

²⁴I answered them by saying, "The God of heaven will give us success. We his servants will start rebuilding, but as for you, you have no share in Jerusalem or any claim or historic right to it."

Builders of the Wall

³Eliashib the high priest and his fellow priests went to work and rebuilt the Sheep Gate. They dedicated it and set its doors in place, building as far as the Tower of the Hundred, which they dedicated, and as far as the Tower of Hananel. ²The men of Jericho built the adjoining section, and Zaccur son of Imri built next to them.

³The Fish Gate was rebuilt by the sons of Has-senaah. They laid its beams and put its doors and bolts and bars in place. ⁴Meremoth son of Uriah, the son of Hakkoz, repaired the next section. Next to him Meshullam son of Berekiah, the son of Mesh-ezabel, made repairs, and next to him Zadok son of Baana also made repairs. ⁵The next section was repaired by the men of Tekoa, but their nobles would not put their shoulders to the work under their supervisors.^b

⁶The Jeshanah Gate was repaired by Joiada son of Paseah and Meshullam son of Besodeiah. They laid its beams and put its doors and bolts and bars in place. ⁷Next to them, repairs were made by men from Gibeon and Mizpah—Melatah of Gibeon and Jadon of Meronoth—places under the authority of the governor of Trans-Euphrates. ⁸Uzziel son of Harhaiah, one of the goldsmiths, repaired the next section; and Hananiah, one of the perfume-makers, made repairs next to that. They restored^d Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall. ⁹Rephaiah son of Hur, ruler of a half-district of Jerusalem, repaired the next section. ¹⁰Adjoining this, Jedaiah son of Harumaph made repairs opposite his house, and Hattush son of Hashabneiah made repairs next to him. ¹¹Malkijah son of Harim and Hasshub son of Pahath-Moab repaired another section and the Tower of the Ovens. ¹²Shallum son of Hallohesh, ruler of a half-district of Jerusalem, repaired the next section with the help of his daughters.

¹³The Valley Gate was repaired by Hanun and the residents of Zanoah. They rebuilt it and put its doors and bolts and bars in place. They also repaired five hundred yards^e of the wall as far as the Dung Gate.

¹⁴The Dung Gate was repaired by Malkijah son of Recab, ruler of the district of Beth Hakkerem. He rebuilt it and put its doors and bolts and bars in place.

¹⁵The Fountain Gate was repaired by Shallun son of Col-Hozeh, ruler of the district of Mizpah. He rebuilt it, roofing it over and putting its doors and bolts and bars in place. He also repaired the wall of the Pool of Siloam,^f by the King's Garden, as far as the steps going down from the City of

2:10 Powerful Opponents

Both Sanballat and Tobiah were influential local politicians. Sanballat's family governed Samaria and had managed to marry into the high priest's family (see 13:28). Tobiah, an official in Ammon (a small country east of Judah), had family ties and influence among the top Jewish families (see 6:17-19; 13:4,5). There is some evidence both men were from Jewish backgrounds, though they preferred the political status quo in which Jewish identity was diluted.

¹³ Or Serpent or Fig
units (about 450) meters

¹⁵ Or their Lord or the governor

¹⁵ Hebrew Shelah, a variant of Shiloah, that is, Siloam

¹⁶ Or Old

¹⁸ Or They left out part of

¹³ Hebrew a thousand

David. ¹⁶Beyond him, Nehemiah son of Azbuk, ruler of a half-district of Beth Zur, made repairs up to a point opposite the tomb^s of David, as far as the artificial pool and the House of the Heroes.

¹⁷Next to him, the repairs were made by the Levites under Rehum son of Bani. Beside him, Hashabiah, ruler of half the district of Keilah, carried out repairs for his district. ¹⁸Next to him, the repairs were made by their countrymen under Binnui son of Henadad, ruler of the other half-district of Keilah. ¹⁹Next to him, Ezer son of Jeshua, ruler of Mizpah, repaired another section, from a point facing the ascent to the armory as far as the angle. ²⁰Next to him, Baruch son of Zabbai zealously repaired another section, from the angle to the entrance of the house of Eliashib the high priest. ²¹Next to him, Meremoth son of Uriah, the son of Hakkoz, repaired another section, from the entrance of Eliashib's house to the end of it.

²²The repairs next to him were made by the priests from the surrounding region. ²³Beyond them, Benjamin and Hasshub made repairs in front of their house, and next to them, Azariah son of Maaseiah the son of Ananiah, made repairs beside his house. ²⁴Next to him, Binnui son of Henadad repaired another section, from Azariah's house to the angle and the corner. ²⁵And Palai son of Uzai worked opposite the angle and the tower projecting from the upper palace near the court of the guard. Next to him, Pedaiiah son of Parosh and the temple servants living on the hill of Ophel made repairs up to a point opposite the Water Gate toward the east and the projecting tower. ²⁷Next to them, the men of Tekoa repaired another section, from the great projecting tower to the wall of Ophel.

²⁸Above the Horse Gate, the priests made repairs, each in front of his own house. ²⁹Next to them, Zadok son of Immer made repairs opposite his house. Next to him, Shemaiah son of Shecaniah, the guard at the East Gate, made repairs. ³⁰Next to him, Hananiah son of Shelemiah, and Hanun, the sixth son of Zalaph, repaired another section. Next to them, Meshullam son of Berekiah made repairs opposite his living quarters. ³¹Next to him, Malkijah, one of the goldsmiths, made repairs as far as the house of the temple servants and the merchants, opposite the Inspection Gate, and as far as the room above the corner; ³²and between the room above the corner and the Sheep Gate the goldsmiths and merchants made repairs.

Opposition to the Rebuilding

4 When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews, and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, "What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?"

³Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side,

said, "What they are building—if even a fox climbed up on it, he would break down their wall of stones!"

⁴Hear us, O our God, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. ⁵Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders.

⁶So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart.

⁷But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the men of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem's walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. ⁸They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. ⁹But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.

¹⁰Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall."

¹¹Also our enemies said, "Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work."

¹²Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, "Wherever you turn, they will attack us."

¹³Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows. ¹⁴After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes."

¹⁵When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to his own work.

¹⁶From that day on, half of my men did the work, while the other half were equipped with spears, shields, bows and armor. The officers posted themselves behind all the people of Judah who were building the wall. Those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other, ¹⁸and each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked. But the man who sounded the trumpet stayed with me.

¹⁹Then I said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "The work is extensive and spread out, and we are widely separated from each

4:9 Praise the Lord and Fight

Nehemiah felt no difficulty combining prayer and action, as this verse shows: "We prayed to our God and posted a guard." Verse 14 gives another unembarrassed combination of spiritual and military tactics: "Remember the Lord . . . and fight."

¹⁶ Hebrew, Septuagint, some Vulgate manuscripts and Syriac (omit and verse 24); most Hebrew manuscripts Borei

¹⁸ Two Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac (see also Septuagint

⁵ Or have provoked you to anger before

other along the wall. ²⁰Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us there. Our God will be for us!

²¹So we continued the work with half the men holding spears, from the first light of dawn till the stars came out. ²²At that time I also said to the people: "Have every man and his helper stay inside Jerusalem at night, so they can serve us as guards by night and workmen by day." ²³Neither I nor my brothers nor my men nor the guards with me took off our clothes; each had his weapon, even when I went for water.

Nehemiah Helps the Poor

5 Now the men and their wives raised a great outcry against their Jewish brothers. ²Some were saying: "We and our sons and daughters are numerous, in order for us to eat and stay alive, we must get grain."

³Others were saying, "We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards and our homes to get grain during the famine."

⁴Still others were saying, "We have had to borrow money to pay the king's tax on our fields and vineyards. ⁵Although we are of the same flesh and blood as our countrymen and though our sons are as good as theirs, yet we have to subject our sons and daughters to slavery. Some of our daughters have already been enslaved, but we are powerless, because our fields and our vineyards belong to others."

⁶"When I heard their outcry and these charges, I was very angry. ⁷I pondered them in my mind and then accused the nobles and officials. I told them, "You are exacting usury from your own countrymen!" So I called together a large meeting to deal with them ⁸and said: "As far as possible, we have bought back our Jewish brothers who were sold to the Gentiles. Now you are selling your brothers, only for them to be sold back to us!" They kept quiet, because they could find nothing to say.

⁹So I continued, "What you are doing is not right. Shouldn't you walk in the fear of our God to avoid the reproach of our Gentile enemies? ¹⁰I and my brothers and my men are also lending the people money and grain. But let the exacting of usury stop! ¹¹Give back to them immediately their fields, vineyards, olive groves and houses, and also the usury you are charging them—the hundredth part of the money, grain, new wine and oil."

¹²"We will give it back," they said. "And we will not demand anything more from them. We will do as you say."

Then I summoned the priests and made the nobles and officials take an oath to do what they had promised. ¹³I also shook out the folds of my robe and said, "In this way may God shake out of his house and possessions every man who does not keep this promise. So may such a man be shaken out and emptied!"

At this the whole assembly said, "Amen," and

praised the Lord. And the people did as they had promised.

¹⁴Moreover, from the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, until his thirty-second year—twelve years—neither I nor my brothers ate the food allotted to the governor. ¹⁵But the earlier governors—those preceding me—placed a heavy burden on the people and took forty shekels^a of silver from them in addition to food and wine. Their assistants also lorded it over the people. But out of reverence for God I did not act like that. ¹⁶Instead, I devoted myself to the work on this wall. All my men were assembled there for the work; we did not acquire any land.

¹⁷Furthermore, a hundred and fifty Jews and officials ate at my table, as well as those who came to us from the surrounding nations. ¹⁸Each day one ox, six choice sheep and some poultry were prepared for me, and every ten days an abundant supply of wine of all kinds. In spite of all this, I never demanded the food allotted to the governor, because the demands were heavy on these people.

¹⁹Remember me with favor, O my God, for all I have done for these people.

Further Opposition to the Rebuilding

6 When word came to Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies that I had rebuilt the wall and not a gap was left in it—though up to that time I had not set the doors in the gates—²Sanballat and Geshem sent me this message: "Come, let us meet together in one of the villages^d on the plain of Ono."

But they were scheming to harm me; ³so I sent messengers to them with this reply: "I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?" ⁴Four times they sent me the same message, and each time I gave them the same answer.

⁵Then, the fifth time, Sanballat sent his aide to me with the same message, and in his hand was an unsealed letter^e in which was written:

"It is reported among the nations—and Geshem^f says it is true—that you and the Jews are plotting to revolt, and therefore you are building the wall. Moreover, according to these reports you are about to become their king^g and have even appointed prophets to make this proclamation about you in Jerusalem: 'There is a king in Judah!' Now this report will get back to the king; so come, let us confer together."

⁸I sent him this reply: "Nothing like what you are saying is happening; you are just making it up out of your head."

⁹They were all trying to frighten us, thinking, "Their hands will get too weak for the work, and it will not be completed."

But I prayed, "Now strengthen my hands."

¹⁰One day I went to the house of Shemaiah son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabel, who was shut in

^a23 The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain. Hebrew manuscripts, some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac have variant of Geshem.

^b15 That is, about 1 pound (about 0.5 kilogram).

^c12 Or in Kephirim.

^d16 Most

^e16 Hebrew Geshmu, a

NEHEMIAH 6:11

at his home. He said, "Let us meet in the house of God, inside the temple, and let us close the temple doors, because men are coming to kill you—by night they are coming to kill you."

¹¹But I said, "Should a man like me run away? Or should one like me go into the temple to save his life? I will not go!" ¹²I realized that God had not sent him, but that he had prophesied against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. ¹³He had been hired to intimidate me so that I would commit a sin by doing this, and then they would give me a bad name to discredit me.

¹⁴Remember Tobiah and Sanballat, O my God, because of what they have done; remember also the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who have been trying to intimidate me

The Completion of the Wall

¹⁵So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days. ¹⁶When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God.

¹⁷Also, in those days the nobles of Judah were sending many letters to Tobiah, and replies from Tobiah kept coming to them. ¹⁸For many in Judah were under oath to him, since he was son-in-law to Shecaniah son of Arah, and his son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam son of Bere-kiah. ¹⁹Moreover, they kept reporting to me his good deeds and then telling him what I said. And Tobiah sent letters to intimidate me.

7 After the wall had been rebuilt and I had set the doors in place, the gatekeepers and the singers and the Levites were appointed. ²¹I put in charge of Jerusalem my brother Hanani, along with^a Hana-niah the commander of the citadel, because he was a man of integrity and feared God more than most men do. ³¹I said to them, "The gates of Jerusalem are not to be opened until the sun is hot. While the gatekeepers are still on duty, have them shut the doors and bar them. Also appoint residents of Jerusalem as guards, some at their posts and some near their own houses."

The List of the Exiles Who Returned

⁴Now the city was large and spacious, but there were few people in it, and the houses had not yet been rebuilt. ⁵So my God put it into my heart to assemble the nobles, the officials and the common people for registration by families. I found the genealogical record of those who had been the first to return. This is what I found written there:

⁶These are the people of the province who came up from the captivity of the exiles whom

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had taken captive (they returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his own town, ⁷in company with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum and Baanah):

The list of the men of Israel

⁸ the descendants of Parosh	2,172
⁹ of Shephatiah	372
¹⁰ of Arah	652
¹¹ of Pahath-Moab (through the line of Jeshua and Joab)	2,818
¹² of Elam	1,254
¹³ of Zattu	845
¹⁴ of Zaccai	760
¹⁵ of Binnui	648
¹⁶ of Bebai	628
¹⁷ of Azgad	2,322
¹⁸ of Adonikam	667
¹⁹ of Bigvai	2,067
²⁰ of Adin	655
²¹ of Ater (through Hezekiah)	98
²² of Hashum	328
²³ of Bezai	324
²⁴ of Hariph	112
²⁵ of Gibeon	95

²⁶ the men of Bethlehem and Netophah	188
²⁷ of Anathoth	128
²⁸ of Beth Azmaveth	42
²⁹ of Kiriath Jearim, Kephirah and Beeroth	743
³⁰ of Ramah and Geba	621
³¹ of Micmash	122
³² of Bethel and Ai	123
³³ of the other Nebo	52
³⁴ of the other Elam	1,254
³⁵ of Harim	320
³⁶ of Jericho	345
³⁷ of Lod, Hadid and Ono	721
³⁸ of Senaah	3,930

³⁹The priests:

the descendants of Jedaiah (through the family of Jeshua)	973
⁴⁰ of Immer	1,052
⁴¹ of Pashhur	1,247
⁴² of Harim	1,017

⁴³The Levites:

the descendants of Jeshua (through Kadmiel through the line of Hodaviah)	74
--	----

⁴⁴The singers:

the descendants of Asaph	148
--------------------------	-----

⁴⁵The gatekeepers:

the descendants of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita and Shobai	138
--	-----

⁴⁶The temple servants:

the descendants of

7:6 Remembering Our Past

Because their cultural identity was threatened, the Jews in Ezra and Nehemiah kept careful track of their roots. This list (verses 8-73) almost exactly repeats the one found in Ezra 2.

^a2 Or Hanani; that is

Ziba Hicupha Labbaidi
 67Kerem, Sin Parlon
 68Jehonai Hupha, Talmat
 69Hanan Giddel, Uchar
 70Jehiah Rizin, Nekoda
 71Jehonai, Ezra, Pasah
 72Jehonai, Almon, Nephussim,
 73Akub, Hakupha, Harhur,
 74Jehuth, Mehida, Harsha,
 75Kerem, Asera, Lemah,
 76Neziah and Hatipha

77The descendants of the servants of Solomon.

the descendants of
 Sotai, Sophereth, Perida,
 78Jaala, Darkon, Giddel,
 79Shephatiah, Hattai,
 80Pokereth-Hazzebaim and Amon

81The temple servants and the descendants
 of the servants of Solomon 392

82The following came up from the towns of
 Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Kerub, Addon and
 Immer, but they could not show that their
 families were descended from Israel

83the descendants of
 Delaiah, Tobiah and Nekoda 642

84And from among the priests

the descendants of
 Hobaiah, Hakkoz and Barzillai (a man
 who had married a daughter of Barzillai
 the Gileadite and was called by that
 name)

85These searched for their family records,
 but they could not find them and so were
 excluded from the priesthood as unclean.
 86The governor, therefore, ordered them not
 to eat any of the most sacred food until there
 should be a priest ministering with the Urim
 and Thummim.

87The whole company numbered 42,360,
 88besides their 7,337 menservants and maid-
 servants; and they also had 245 men and
 women singers. 89There were 736 horses, 245
 mules, 90435 camels and 6,720 donkeys.

91Some of the heads of the families contrib-
 uted to the work. The governor gave to the
 treasury 1,000 drachmas^b of gold, 50 bowls
 and 530 garments for priests. 92Some of the
 heads of the families gave to the treasury for
 the work 20,000 drachmas^c of gold and 2,200
 minas^d of silver. 93The total given by the rest
 of the people was 20,000 drachmas of gold,
 2,000 minas^e of silver and 67 garments for
 priests.

94The priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers,
 the singers and the temple servants, along
 with certain of the people and the rest of the
 israelites, settled in their own towns.

Ezra Reads the Law

When the seventh month came and the israel-
 8ites had settled in their towns, all the people
 assembled as one man in the square before the
 Water Gate. They told Ezra the scribe, bring out
 the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had
 commanded for Israel.

95So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra
 the priest brought the Law before the assembly,
 which was made up of men and women, and all
 who were able to understand. He read it aloud
 from daybreak till noon as he faced the square
 before the Water Gate in the presence of the men,
 women and others who could understand. And all
 the people listened attentively to the Book of the
 Law.

96Ezra the scribe stood on a high wooden plat-
 form built for the occasion. Beside him on his right
 stood Mattithiah, Shema, Ananiah, Uriah, Hilkan
 and Maasiah, and on his left were Pedaiiah, Mish-
 ael, Malkijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zech-
 ariah and Meshullam.

97Ezra opened the book. All the people could see
 him because he was standing above them, and as
 he opened it, the people all stood up. 98Ezra praised
 the Lord, the great God, and all the people lifted
 their hands and responded, "Amen! Amen!" Then
 they bowed down and worshiped the Lord with
 their faces to the ground.

99The Levites—Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin,
 Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maasiah, Kelita,
 Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan and Pelaiah—instructed
 the people in the Law while the people were stand-
 ing there. 100They read from the Book of the Law of
 God, making it clear and giving the meaning so
 that the people could understand what was being
 read.

101Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest
 and scribe, and the Levites who were instructing
 the people said to them all, "This day is sacred to
 the Lord your God. Do not mourn or weep." For
 all the people had been weeping as they listened to
 the words of the Law.

102Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food
 and sweet drinks, and send some to those who
 have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our
 Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your
 strength."

103The Levites calmed all the people, saying, "Be
 still, for this is a sacred day. Do not grieve."

104Then all the people went away to eat and

8:9 The Joy of the Lord

People sometimes think of the Old Testament as
 gloomy. Here, however, (verses 9-12) Israel's
 leaders urged the people to stop weeping. Sadness,
 they said, did not suit a sacred day. As they
 discovered the next day, the law they mourned
 over commanded not weeping, but an eight-day
 celebration and campout.

^a68 Some Hebrew manuscripts (see also Ezra 2:66), most Hebrew manuscripts do not have this verse
 (about 8.5 kilograms)
 (about 1.2 metric tons)

^b That is, about 375 pounds (about 170 kilograms); also in verse 72

^c72 That is, about 1 1/4 tons (about 1.1 metric tons)

^d18 Or God, translating of

^e71 That is, about 19 pounds

^f71 That is, about 1.17 tons

drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great joy, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them

¹³On the second day of the month, the heads of all the families along with the priests and the Levites, gathered around Ezra the scribe to give attention to the words of the Law. ¹⁴They found written in the Law, which the Lord had commanded through Moses, that the Israelites were to live in booths during the feast of the seventh month ¹⁵and that they should proclaim this word

*15 See Lev 23:37-40

and spread it throughout their towns and in Jerusalem: "Go out into the hill country and bring back branches from olive and wild olive trees, and from myrtles, palms and shade trees, to make booths"—as it is written "

¹⁶So the people went out and brought back branches and built themselves booths on their own roofs, in their courtyards, in the courts of the house of God and in the square by the Water Gate and the one by the Gate of Ephraim. ¹⁷The whole company that had returned from exile built booths

INSIGHT

A People of the Book

Ezra stood on a wooden platform, reading from a simple scroll

Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly . . . He read it aloud from daybreak till noon 8:2-3

Picture it: a vast, hushed crowd watching as Ezra ascends a newly built platform in the square. As he opens the book, they rise. They praise God, hands lifted high; then they bow down, faces in the dirt. Ezra begins to read. His helpers circulate in the crowd, explaining and interpreting what God's Word says. The people listen attentively. And then a strange sound begins to rise, spreading through the multitude. It is the sound of weeping.

The Law Ezra read was very ancient, but that day marked something new. The Jews were becoming, in a way they had never been before, a people of the book. They were being rebuilt, with material as strong as the stones in their newly built city wall.

Throughout their history, they had drawn strength from two sources besides the Law. One was the temple, where they worshiped God. It was a magnificently beautiful building in which they met God. The other was their leadership—first Moses, then Joshua, then the judges, and finally David and his offspring, the kings.

The Disappointing Reality

But these realities had not saved them from disgrace. The temple? For all its splendor it had become a meaningless symbol to most Jews. They had even put idols in it. God had finally allowed the Babylonians to burn the temple down.

After the exile the Jews had made rebuilding the temple their first priority (see Ezra 1-6). But it was no longer an automatic insurance policy. They could never again see the building as a substitute for real devotion to God.

Their leaders? Not one king, over hundreds of years, had come close to matching God's ideal. Most kings had been scoundrels—descendants of David in name only. After the exile, Israel had no king of its own. The Israelites were under the thumb of a Persian, who was determined to keep all power himself.

The Power of the Word

They turned to another source of power: the Word of God. The great gathering of chapter 8 stands in contrast to temples and kings. The splendor of jewels and crowns is replaced by a single man atop a wooden platform, reading from a simple scroll. Yet the words he reads, carefully explained to all, show their power in the way they affect those who hear them. The people are moved to praise God, to weep over their sins, to change their behavior, and to make renewed promises to God.

From this time on, the Jews were known as the people of the book. They lived under foreign domination, so their political leadership became secondary. Their temple, while important, was never again a guarantee of God's presence. Increasingly they studied God's law and tried to obey it. A new kind of leader emerged, following Ezra—the scribe, a student of Scripture. The nation we see at the end of Nehemiah looks very much like the nation we find, after 400 years of Scriptural silence, when Jesus appears. Israelites found their unique strength neither in government nor in worship rituals, but in reverence for God's written Word.

Life Questions: Can you point to ways in which God's Word has been powerful in your life? How has it changed you?

and from the days of Joshua until this day the Israelites had not been at rest. And their law was very strict.

On the first day from the first day to the last, Ezra was with the people of the Law of God. They fasted and wept for seven days, and on the eighth day in accordance with the regulation, there was an assembly.

The Israelites Confess Their Sins

9 On the twentieth-fourth day of the same month, the Israelites gathered together fasting and wearing sackcloth and having dust on their heads. Those of Israelite descent had separated themselves from all foreigners. They stood in their places and confessed their sins and the wickedness of their fathers. They stood where they were and read from the Book of the Law of the Lord. They did so a quarter of the day, and spent another quarter in confession and in worshipping the Lord their God. Standing on the stairs were the Levites—Joshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunai, Sherebiah, Bani and Kenani—who called with loud voices to the Lord their God. And the Levites—Joshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Habbai, Shebaniah and Pethaiah—said: Stand up and praise the Lord your God, who is from everlasting to everlasting.⁴⁵

Blessed be your glorious name, and may it be exalted above all blessing and praise. You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.

You are the Lord God, who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and named him Abraham. You found his heart faithful to you, and you made a covenant with him to give to his descendants the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Jebusites and Girgashites. You have kept your promise because you are righteous.

You saw the suffering of our forefathers in Egypt; you heard their cry at the Red Sea.⁴⁶

You sent miraculous signs and wonders against Pharaoh, against all his officials and all the people of his land, for you knew how arrogantly the Egyptians treated them. You made a name for yourself, which remains to this day. You divided the sea before them, so that they passed through it on dry ground, but you hurled their pursuers into the depths, like a stone into mighty waters. By day you led them with a pillar of cloud, and by night with a pillar of fire to give them light on the way they were to take.

You came down on Mount Sinai; you spoke to them from heaven. You gave them regulations and laws that are just and right,

and decrees and commands that are good. You made known to them your holy Sabbath and gave them commands, decrees and laws through your servant Moses. In their hunger you gave them bread from heaven and in their thirst you brought them water from the rock. You told them to go in and take possession of the land you had sworn with uplifted hand to give them.

But they, our forefathers, became arrogant and stiff-necked, and did not obey your commands. They refused to listen and failed to remember the miracles you performed among them. They became stiff-necked and in their rebellion appointed a leader in order to return to their slavery. But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. Therefore you did not desert them, even when they cast for themselves an image of a calf and said, 'This is your god, who brought you up out of Egypt,' or when they committed awful blasphemies.

Because of your great compassion you did not abandon them in the desert. By day the pillar of cloud did not cease to guide them on their path, nor the pillar of fire by night to shine on the way they were to take. You gave your good Spirit to instruct them. You did not withhold your manna from their mouths, and you gave them water for their thirst. For forty years you sustained them in the desert; they lacked nothing, their clothes did not wear out nor did their feet become swollen.

You gave them kingdoms and nations, allotting to them even the remotest frontiers. They took over the country of Sihon, king of Heshbon and the country of Og king of Bashan. You made their sons as numerous as the stars in the sky, and you brought them into the land that you told their fathers to enter and possess. Their sons went in and took possession of the land. You subdued before them the Canaanites, who lived in the land; you handed the Canaanites over to them, along with their kings and the peoples of the land, to deal with them as they pleased. They captured fortified cities and fertile land; they took possession of houses filled with all kinds of good things, wells already dug, vineyards, olive groves and fruit trees in abundance. They ate to the full and were well-nourished; they reveled in your great goodness.

But they were disobedient and rebelled against you; they put your law behind their backs. They killed your prophets, who had admonished them in order to turn them back to you; they committed awful blasphemies. So you handed them over to their enemies, who oppressed them. But when they were oppressed they cried out to you. From heaven you heard them, and in your great compas-

⁴⁵ Or God for ever and ever

⁴⁶ Hebrew Yam Suph; that is, Sea of Reeds

⁴⁷ One Hebrew manuscript and Septuagint; most

Hebrew manuscripts Sihon; that is, the country of the

sion you gave them deliverers, who rescued them from the hand of their enemies.

28²⁸But as soon as they were at rest, they again did what was evil in your sight. Then you abandoned them to the hand of their enemies so that they ruled over them. And when they cried out to you again, you heard from heaven, and in your compassion you delivered them time after time.

29²⁹You warned them to return to your law, but they became arrogant and disobeyed your commands. They sinned against your ordinances, by which a man will live if he obeys them. Stubbornly they turned their backs on you, became stiff-necked and refused to listen. 30³⁰For many years you were patient with them. By your Spirit you admonished them through your prophets. Yet they paid no attention, so you handed them over to the neighboring peoples. 31³¹But in your great mercy you did not put an end to them or abandon them, for you are a gracious and merciful God.

32³²Now therefore, O our God, the great, mighty and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love, do not let all this hardship seem trifling in your eyes—the hardship that has come upon us, upon our kings and leaders, upon our priests and prophets, upon our fathers and all your people, from the days of the kings of Assyria until today. 33³³In all that has happened to us, you have been just; you have acted faithfully, while we did wrong. 34³⁴Our kings, our leaders, our priests and our fathers did not follow your law; they did not pay attention to your commands or the warnings you gave them. 35³⁵Even while they were in their kingdom, enjoying your great goodness to them in the spacious and fertile land you gave them, they did not serve you or turn from their evil ways.

36³⁶But see, we are slaves today, slaves in the land you gave our forefathers so they could eat its fruit and the other good things it produces. 37³⁷Because of our sins, its abundant harvest goes to the kings you have placed over us. They rule over our bodies and our cattle as they please. We are in great distress.

The Agreement of the People

38³⁸In view of all this, we are making a binding agreement, putting it in writing, and our leaders, our Levites and our priests are affixing their seals to it."

10 Those who sealed it were:

Nehemiah the governor, the son of Hachabiah

Zedekiah, 2²Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah,

3³Pashhur, Amoniah, Malkijah,

4⁴Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch,

5⁵Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah,

6⁶Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch,

7⁷Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin,

8⁸Maaziah, Bilgai and Shemariah
These were the priests

9The Levites:

Jeshua son of Azariah, Binnui of the sons of Henadad, Kadmiel,

10¹⁰and their associates, Shebaniah,

Hodiah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan,

11¹¹Mica, Rehob, Hashabiah,

12¹²Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah,

13¹³Hodiah, Bani and Beninu.

14The leaders of the people:

Parosh, Pahath-Moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani,

15¹⁵Bunni, Azgad, Bebai,

16¹⁶Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin,

17¹⁷Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur,

18¹⁸Hodiah, Hashum, Bezai,

19¹⁹Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai,

20²⁰Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir,

21²¹Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua,

22²²Pelattiah, Hanan, Anaiah,

23²³Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub,

24²⁴lailohesh, Pilha, Shobek,

25²⁵Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah,

26²⁶Ahiah, Hanan, Anan,

27²⁷Malluch, Harim and Baanah.

28²⁸The rest of the people—priests, Levites, gatekeepers, singers, temple servants and all who separated themselves from the neighboring peoples for the sake of the Law of God, together with their wives and all their sons and daughters who are able to understand—29²⁹all these now join their brothers the nobles, and bind themselves with a curse and an oath to follow the Law of God given through Moses the servant of God and to obey carefully all the commands, regulations and decrees of the Lord our Lord.

30³⁰"We promise not to give our daughters in marriage to the peoples around us or take their daughters for our sons.

31³¹"When the neighboring peoples bring merchandise or grain to sell on the Sabbath, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath or on any holy day. Every seventh year we will forgo working the land and will cancel all debts.

32³²We assume the responsibility for carrying out the commands to give a third of a shekel³² each year for the service of the house

10:31 A Year of Freedom

According to God's law, Jews were supposed to take every seventh day—the Sabbath—off work. Not only that, but every seventh year was a holiday from farming and a time when all debts were cancelled (see Leviticus 25:1-7; Deuteronomy 15:1-11). But these rules for the seventh year were seldom if ever followed; "business as usual" generally prevailed.

³² That is, about 1/3 ounce (about 4 grams).

of our God. ¹³For the bread set out on the table; for the regular grain offerings and burnt offerings for the offerings on the Sabbaths, New Moon festivals and appointed feasts for the holy offerings, for sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and for all the duties of the house of our God.

¹⁴We—the priests, the Levites and the people—have cast lots to determine when each of our families is to bring to the house of our God at set times each year a contribution of wood to burn on the altar of the Lord our God, as it is written in the Law.

¹⁵We also assume responsibility for bringing to the house of the Lord each year the firstfruits of our crops and of every fruit tree.

¹⁶As it is also written in the Law, we will bring the firstborn of our sons and of our cattle, of our herds and of our flocks to the house of our God, to the priests ministering there.

¹⁷Moreover, we will bring to the storerooms of the house of our God, to the priests, the first of our ground meal, of our grain offerings, of the fruit of all our trees and of our new wine and oil. And we will bring a tithe of our crops to the Levites, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all the towns where we work. ¹⁸A priest descended from Aaron is to accompany the Levites when they receive the tithes, and the Levites are to bring a tenth of the tithes up to the house of our God, to the storerooms of the treasury. ¹⁹The people of Israel, including the Levites, are to bring their contributions of grain, new wine and oil to the storerooms where the articles for the sanctuary are kept and where the ministering priests, the gatekeepers and the singers stay.

"We will not neglect the house of our God."

The New Residents of Jerusalem

11 Now the leaders of the people settled in Jerusalem, and the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of every ten to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while the remaining nine were to stay in their own towns. ²The people commended all the men who volunteered to live in Jerusalem.

³These are the provincial leaders who settled in Jerusalem (now some Israelites, priests, Levites, temple servants and descendants of Solomon's servants lived in the towns of Judah, each on his own property in the various towns, ⁴while other people from both Judah and Benjamin lived in Jerusalem):

From the descendants of Judah:

Athaiah son of Uziah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahalalel, a descendant of Perez; ⁵and Maaseiah son of Baruch, the son of Col-Hozeh, the son of Hazaiah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Joarib, the son of Zechariah, a descendant of Shelah. ⁶The descendants of

Perez who lived in Jerusalem totaled 468 able men.

⁷From the descendants of Benjamin:

Sallu son of Meshullam, the son of Joed, the son of Pedaiiah, the son of Kolaiah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ithiel, the son of Jeshaiiah, ⁸and his followers, Gabbar and Sallai—928 men. ⁹Joel son of Zicri was their chief officer, and Judah son of Hassenuah was over the Second District of the city.

¹⁰From the priests:

Jedaiah, the son of Joiarib, Jakin, ¹¹Seraiah son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, supervisor in the house of God, ¹²and their associates, who carried on work for the temple—822 men, Adaiah son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashhur, the son of Malkijah, ¹³and his associates, who were heads of families—242 men; Amashsai son of Azarel, the son of Ahzai, the son of Meshullemoth, the son of Immer, ¹⁴and his associates, who were able men—128. Their chief officer was Zabdiel son of Haggadolim.

¹⁵From the Levites:

Shemaiah son of Hasshub, the son of Az-nkam, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Bunni; ¹⁶Shabbethai and Jozabad, two of the heads of the Levites, who had charge of the outside work of the house of God; ¹⁷Mattaniah son of Mica, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, the director who led in thanksgiving and prayer; Bakbukiah, second among his associates; and Abda son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun. ¹⁸The Levites in the holy city totaled 284.

¹⁹The gatekeepers:

Akkub, Talmon and their associates, who kept watch at the gates—172 men.

²⁰The rest of the Israelites, with the priests and Levites, were in all the towns of Judah, each on his ancestral property.

²¹The temple servants lived on the hill of Ophel, and Ziha and Gishpa were in charge of them.

²²The chief officer of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Mica. Uzzi was one of Asaph's descendants, who were the singers responsible for the service of the house of God. ²³The singers were under the king's orders, which regulated their daily activity.

²⁴Pethahiah son of Meshezabel, one of the descendants of Zerah son of Judah, was the king's agent in all affairs relating to the people.

²⁵As for the villages with their fields, some of the people of Judah lived in Kiriath Arba and its surrounding settlements, in Dibon and its settlements, in Jekabzeel and its villages, ²⁶in Jeshua, in Moladah, in Beth Pelet, ²⁷in Hazar Shual, in Beer-

sang under the direction of Jeremiah. ⁴And on that day they offered great sacrifices, rejoicing because they had given them great joy. The women and children also rejoiced. The sound of rejoicing in Jerusalem could be heard far away.

⁵At that time men were appointed to be in charge of the storerooms for the contributions, tithes, and tithes from the fields around the towns, due to bring into the storerooms the portions required by the Law for the priests and the Levites, for Judah was pleased with the ministering priests and Levites. ⁶They performed the service of the Lord and the service of purification as did also the singers and gatekeepers according to the commands of David and his son Solomon. ⁷For long ago, in the days of David and Asaph, there had been dinners for the singers and for the songs of praise and thanksgiving to God. ⁸So in the days of Zerubbabel and of Nehemiah, all Israel contributed the daily portions for the singers and gatekeepers. They also set aside the portion for the other Levites, and the Levites set aside the portion for the descendants of Aaron.

Nehemiah's Final Reforms

13 On that day the book of Moses was read aloud in the hearing of the people and there it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever be admitted into the assembly of God, ²because they had not met the Israelites with food and water but had hired Balaam to call a curse down on them. (Our God, however, turned the curse into a blessing.) ³When the people heard this law, they excluded from Israel all who were of foreign descent.

⁴Before this, Eliashib the priest had been put in charge of the storerooms of the house of our God. He was closely associated with Tobiah, ⁵and he had provided him with a large room formerly used to store the grain offerings and incense and temple articles, and also the tithes of grain, new wine and oil prescribed for the Levites, singers and gatekeepers, as well as the contributions for the priests.

⁶But while all this was going on, I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had returned to the king. Some time later I asked his permission ⁷and came back to Jerusalem. Here I learned about the evil thing Eliashub had done in providing Tobiah a room in the courts of the house of God. ⁸I was greatly displeased and threw all Tobiah's household goods out of the room. ⁹I gave orders to purify the rooms, and then I put back into them the equipment of the house of God, with the grain offerings and the incense.

¹⁰I also learned that the portions assigned to the Levites had not been given to them, and that all the Levites and singers responsible for the service had gone back to their own fields. ¹¹So I rebuked the officials and asked them, "Why is the house of God neglected?" Then I called them together and stationed them at their posts.

¹²All Judah brought the tithes of grain, new wine and oil into the storerooms. ¹³I put Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and a Levite

named Pedaiiah in charge of the storerooms and made Hanan son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah, their assistant, because these men were considered trustworthy. They were made responsible for distributing the supplies to their brothers.

¹⁴Remember me for this, O my God, and do not blot out what I have so faithfully done for the house of my God and its services.

¹⁵In those days I saw men in Judah treading winepresses on the Sabbath and bringing in grain and loading it on donkeys, together with wine, grapes, figs and all other kinds of loads. And they were bringing all this into Jerusalem on the Sabbath. Therefore I warned them against selling food on that day. ¹⁶Men from Tyre who lived in Jerusalem were bringing in fish and all kinds of merchandise and selling them in Jerusalem on the Sabbath to the people of Judah. ¹⁷I rebuked the nobles of Judah and said to them, "What is this wicked thing you are doing—desecrating the Sabbath day?" ¹⁸Didn't your forefathers do the same things, so that our God brought all this calamity upon us and upon this city? Now you are stirring up more wrath against Israel by desecrating the Sabbath."

¹⁹When evening shadows fell on the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath, I ordered the doors to be shut and not opened until the Sabbath was over. I stationed some of my own men at the gates so that no load could be brought in on the Sabbath day. ²⁰Once or twice the merchants and sellers of all kinds of goods spent the night outside Jerusalem. ²¹But I warned them and said, "Why do you spend the night by the wall? If you do this again, I will lay hands on you." From that time on they no longer came on the Sabbath. ²²Then I commanded the Levites to purify themselves and go and guard the gates in order to keep the Sabbath day holy.

Remember me for this also, O my God, and show mercy to me according to your great love.

²³Moreover, in those days I saw men of Judah who had married women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab. ²⁴Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod or the language of one of the other peoples, and did not know how to speak the language of Judah. ²⁵I rebuked them and called curses down on them. I beat some of the men and pulled out their hair. I made them take an oath in God's name and said: "You are not to give your daughters in marriage to their sons, nor are you to take their daughters in marriage for your sons or for yourselves. ²⁶Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon king of Israel sinned? Among the many nations there was no king like him. He was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel, but even he was led into sin by foreign women. ²⁷Must we hear now that you too are doing all this terrible wickedness and are being unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women?"

²⁸One of the sons of Joiada son of Eliashib the high priest was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite. And I drove him away from me.

²⁹Remember them, O my God, because they

before the people, and the covenant of the
 LORD, and the people.

And I divided the people and the Levites of
 the temple, and assigned them duties.

each to his own task. I also made provision for
 contributions of wood at designated times, and for
 the priests.

Remember me with favor, O my God.

ESTHER

INTRODUCTION

A Profile of Courage

Heroes act while others stand and watch

"I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish." 4:16

What makes a hero? Ask one, and you may find a surprising nonchalance: "I'm sure other people would have done exactly the same thing," they say. "I was just in the right place at the right time."

People become heroes because they take quick action at that "right time," while others stand watching in horror. The true hero recognizes the crisis and moves to meet it. This kind of courage made Esther great—worthy of a book in the Bible.

A Queen Risks Her Life

By the "accident" of her beauty and the "accident" of the former queen's dismissal, Esther found herself queen of one of the greatest powers of the world. Then, when all seemed smooth, her crucial moment came.

This moment has been echoed many times since. As a successful racial minority in the Persian empire, Esther's people, the Jews, had not melted into their surroundings. Others were jealous of their success and separatism. A vengeful prime minister, Haman, made up his mind to destroy them. He issued an edict of government-sponsored genocide.

Would Queen Esther intervene? Doing so would risk her life. And what difference could she make? She was a powerless sex partner to a king who strongly preferred women who never interfered with his wishes. She came only when he called, and he had not called her for a month. And yet she alone, of all the Jews, had access to the king.

Esther's cousin Mordecai reminded her of her unique place. "Who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?" Esther responded with action. Her courageous words are a classic statement of heroism: "I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish" (Esther 4:16).

Coincidence or Plan?

The book of Esther shows, though indirectly, God's heroic concern for the Jews. The story runs on a series of extraordinary coincidences. Esther just "happened" to be chosen as the new queen. The king just "happened" to be unable to sleep, and when he picked up some reading, just "happened" across an account of a good deed Esther's cousin Mordecai had done. The evil Haman just "happened" along at that crucial moment. These coincidences, along with Esther's courage, tilted terrible events toward the Jews' favor.

Were these really mere coincidences? Or was God behind them? The book of Esther doesn't say directly: God is not mentioned even once, and sometimes seems deliberately left out. But believing readers, whether Jews or Christians, can have no doubt. All of life is under God's command. Nothing just happens. These coincidences were part of God's plan to save the Jews.

God protected his people because he loved them—because he had chosen them from the beginning. Even their enemies knew the power of the Jews. (See Esther 6:13, for instance.) Esther's story is another chapter in the amazing story of God's perpetual love for the Jews. Though sometimes far from his will, this tiny, often hated minority has survived and thrived down the centuries.

From Haman to Hitler, vindictive leaders have hated the Jews. Yet while no other group has been so hated, no other group has shown the Jews' ability to overcome adversity. Nor can any other ethnic group alive today point to such continuity with their ancestors. They have endured as a unique and great people. How? Esther shows that God's exquisite timing—combined with the courage of individuals who "happened" to be in the right place at the right time—made his chosen people prosper.

How to Read Esther

Esther makes such suspenseful reading that most people will find it hard to quit. As in a detective story, every detail folds into another. You don't know from one page to the next how the drama will turn out.

The essence of Esther lies in its characters. Study Esther, Mordecai, Haman, and King Xerxes. What kind of people were they? What were their ambitions? What were their strengths and weaknesses? What crucial moment showed the true character of each? What do you learn from them that can help you rise to the challenge when you are "the right person at the right place at the right time"?

Knowing the historical setting for Esther's story can enrich your study. A good commentary or Bible dictionary (under "Esther") will illuminate many of the details that make Esther such a convincing historical document.

PLANS FOR READING ESTHER

PLAN 1: An Overview of Esther in 1 Day

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to Esther and chapter 4, in which Esther learns that her people are in dire straits and decides to take action.

PLAN 2: All of Esther in 8 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6-7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9-10

Queen Vashti Deposed

1 This is what happened during the time of Xerxes—the Xerxes who ruled over 127 provinces stretching from India to Cush:² At that time King Xerxes reigned from his royal throne in the citadel of Susa. And in the third year of his reign he gave a banquet for all his nobles and officials. The military leaders of Persia and Media, the princes, and the nobles of the provinces were present.

For a full 180 days he displayed the vast wealth of his kingdom and the splendor and glory of his majesty. When these days were over, the king gave a banquet, lasting seven days, in the enclosed garden of the king's palace, for all the people from the least to the greatest, who were in the citadel of Susa. The garden had hangings of white and blue linen, fastened with cords of white linen and purple material to silver rings on marble pillars. There were couches of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl and other costly stones. Wine was served in goblets of gold, each one different from the other, and the royal wine was abundant, in keeping with the king's liberality. ⁸By the king's command each guest was allowed to drink in his own way, for the king instructed all the wine stewards to serve each man what he wished.

Queen Vashti also gave a banquet for the women in the royal palace of King Xerxes.

¹⁰On the seventh day, when King Xerxes was in high spirits from wine, he commanded the seven eunuchs who served him—Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar and Carcas—

¹¹to bring before him Queen Vashti, wearing her royal crown, in order to display her beauty to the people and nobles, for she was lovely to look at. ¹²But when the attendants delivered the king's command, Queen Vashti refused to come. Then the king became furious and burned with anger.

¹³Since it was customary for the king to consult experts in matters of law and justice, he spoke with the wise men who understood the times. ¹⁴And were closest to the king—Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena and Memucan, the seven nobles of Persia and Media who had special access to the king and were highest in the kingdom.

¹⁵"According to law, what must be done to Queen Vashti?" he asked. "She has not obeyed the command of King Xerxes that the eunuchs have taken to her."

¹⁶Then Memucan replied in the presence of the king and the nobles, "Queen Vashti has done wrong, not only against the king but also against

1:7 The Influence of Wine

Other historical sources bear out the accuracy of this verse. Greek historian Herodotus wrote that the Persians "are very fond of wine, and drink it in large quantities . . . It is also their general practice to deliberate upon affairs of weight when they are drunk . . . Sometimes, however, they are sober at their first deliberation, but in this case they always reconsider the matter under the influence of wine."

² Hebrew Ahazmaris, a variant of Xerxes' name here and throughout Esther.

¹² That is, the upper Nile region.

was investigated and found to be true, the two officials were hanged on a gallows.² All this was recorded in the book of the annals in the presence of the king.

Haman's Plot to Destroy the Jews

3 After these events, King Xerxes honored Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, elevating him and giving him a seat of honor higher than that of all the other nobles. ²All the royal officials at the king's gate knelt down and paid honor to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him. But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor.

³Then the royal officials at the king's gate asked Mordecai, "Why do you disobey the king's command?" ⁴Day after day they spoke to him but he refused to comply. Therefore they told Haman about it to see whether Mordecai's behavior would be tolerated, for he had told them he was a Jew.

⁵When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor, he was enraged. ⁶After having learned who Mordecai's people were, he wanted the idea of killing only Mordecai. Instead, Haman looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai's people, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes.

⁷In the twelfth year of King Xerxes, in the first month, the month of Nisan, they cast the *pur* (that is, the lot) in the presence of Haman to select a day and month. And the lot fell on^b the twelfth month, the month of Adar.

⁸Then Haman said to King Xerxes, "There is a certain people dispersed and scattered among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom whose customs are different from those of all other people and who do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. ⁹If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will put ten thousand talents^c of silver into the royal treasury for the men who carry out the king's business."

¹⁰So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. ¹¹"Keep the money," the king said to Haman, "and do with the people as you please."

¹²Then on the thirteenth day of the first month the royal secretaries were summoned. They wrote out in the script of each province and in the language of each people all Haman's orders to the king's satraps, the governors of the various provinces and the nobles of the various peoples. These were written in the name of King Xerxes himself and sealed with his own ring. ¹³Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews— young and old, women and little children—on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods. ¹⁴A copy of the text of the edict was to be issued as law in every province and made known to the people of every nationality so they would be ready for that day.

¹⁵Spurred on by the king's command, the couriers went out, and the edict was issued in the citadel of Susa. The king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was bewildered.

Mordecai Persuades Esther to Help

4 When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly. ²But he went only as far as the king's gate, because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it. ³In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

⁴When Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her about Mordecai, she was in great distress. She sent clothes for him to put on instead of his sackcloth, but he would not accept them. ⁵Then Esther summoned Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs assigned to attend her, and ordered him to find out what was troubling Mordecai and why.

⁶So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate. ⁷Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. ⁸He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict for their annihilation, which had been published in Susa, to show to Esther and explain it to her, and he told him to urge her to go into the king's presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people.

⁹Hathach went back and reported to Esther what Mordecai had said. ¹⁰Then she instructed him to say to Mordecai, ¹¹"All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that he be put to death. The only exception to this is for the king to extend the gold scepter to him and spare his life. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king."

¹²When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, ¹³he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. ¹⁴For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?"

¹⁵Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: ¹⁶"Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."

¹⁷So Mordecai went away and carried out all of Esther's instructions.

²³ Or more hang (or impaled) on poles; similarly elsewhere in Esther
⁵ That is, about 375 tons (about 345 metric tons)

⁶⁷ Septuagint, Hebrew does not have And the lot fell on

Esther's Request to the King

5 On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace, in front of the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall, facing the entrance. **2** When he saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold scepter that was in his hand. So Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter.

3 Then the king asked, "What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be given you."

4 "If it pleases the king," replied Esther, "let the king, together with Haman, come today to a banquet I have prepared for him."

5 "Bring Haman at once," the king said, "so that we may do what Esther asks."

So the king and Haman went to the banquet Esther had prepared. **6** As they were drinking wine, the king again asked Esther, "Now what is your petition? It will be given you. And what is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted."

7 Esther replied, "My petition and my request is this. **8** If the king regards me with favor and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, let the king and Haman come tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for them. Then I will answer the king's question."

Haman's Rage Against Mordecai

9 Haman went out that day happy and in high spirits. But when he saw Mordecai at the king's gate and observed that he neither rose nor showed fear in his presence, he was filled with rage against Mordecai. **10** Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself and went home.

Calling together his friends and Zeresh, his wife, **11** Haman boasted to them about his vast wealth, his many sons, and all the ways the king had honored him and how he had elevated him above the other nobles and officials. **12** "And that's not all," Haman added. "I'm the only person Queen Esther invited to accompany the king to the banquet she gave. And she has invited me along with the king tomorrow. **13** But all this gives me no satisfaction as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king's gate."

14 His wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Have a gallows built, seventy-five feet^a high, and ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai hanged on it. Then go with the king to the dinner and be happy." This suggestion delighted Haman, and he had the gallows built.

Mordecai Honored

6 That night the king could not sleep; so he ordered the book of the chronicles, the record of his reign, to be brought in and read to him. **2** It was found recorded there that Mordecai had exposed Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, who had conspired to assassinate King Xerxes.

3 "What honor and recognition has Mordecai received for this?" the king asked.

"Nothing has been done for him," his attendants answered.

4 The king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the palace to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows he had erected for him.

5 His attendants answered, "Haman is standing in the court."

"Bring him in," the king ordered.

6 When Haman entered, the king asked him, "What should be done for the man the king delights to honor?"

Now Haman thought to himself, "Who is there that the king would rather honor than me?" **7** So he answered the king, "For the man the king delights to honor, **8** have them bring a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head. **9** Then let the robe and horse be entrusted to one of the king's most noble princes. Let them robe the man the king delights to honor, and lead him on the horse through the city streets, proclaiming before him, 'This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!'"

10 "Go at once," the king commanded Haman. "Get the robe and the horse and do just as you have suggested for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king's gate. Do not neglect anything you have recommended."

11 So Haman got the robe and the horse. He robed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city streets, proclaiming before him, "This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!"

12 Afterward Mordecai returned to the king's gate. But Haman rushed home, with his head covered in grief, **13** and told Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him.

His advisers and his wife Zeresh said to him, "Since Mordecai, before whom your downfall has started, is of Jewish origin, you cannot stand against him—you will surely come to ruin!"

14 While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hurried Haman away to the banquet Esther had prepared.

6:1 Xerxes: A Wild Man

Other historical sources portray Xerxes as a dangerously impulsive king. When a bridge he had ordered built was destroyed in a storm, he commanded that the sea receive 300 lashes, and then had the bridge builders beheaded. When one of his loyal subjects contributed a huge sum toward a military expedition, Xerxes was so enraptured that he returned the money, along with a handsome gift of his own. But when the same man asked Xerxes to let just one of his sons go free from the draft, Xerxes, enraged, ordered the son cut into two and the army to march between the pieces.

^a14 Hebrew fifty cubits (about 23 meters)

Haman Hanged

7 So the king and Haman went to dine with Queen Esther. And as they were drinking wine on that second day, the king again asked, "Queen Esther, what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted."

³Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor with you, O king, and if it pleases your majesty, grant me my life—this is my petition. And spare my people—this is my request. ⁴For I and my people have been sold for destruction and slaughter and annihilation. If we had merely been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept quiet, because no such distress would justify disturbing the king."^a

⁵King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, "Who is he? Where is the man who has dared to do such a thing?"

⁶Esther said, "The adversary and enemy is this vile Haman."

Then Haman was terrified before the king and queen. ⁷The king got up in a rage, left his wine and went out into the palace garden. But Haman, realizing that the king had already decided his fate, stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life.

⁸Just as the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was reclining.

The king exclaimed, "Will he even molest the queen while she is with me in the house?"

As soon as the word left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. ⁹Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs attending the king, said, "A gallows seventy-five feet^b high stands by Haman's house. He had it made for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king."

The king said, "Hang him on it!" ¹⁰So they hanged Haman on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's fury subsided.

The King's Edict in Behalf of the Jews

8 That same day King Xerxes gave Queen Esther the estate of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai came into the presence of the king, for Esther had told how he was related to her. ²The king took off his signet ring, which he had reclaimed from Haman, and presented it to Mordecai. And Esther appointed him over Haman's estate.

³Esther again pleaded with the king, falling at his feet and weeping. She begged him to put an end to the evil plan of Haman the Agagite, which he had devised against the Jews. ⁴Then the king extended the gold scepter to Esther and she arose and stood before him.

⁵"If it pleases the king," she said, "and if he regards me with favor and thinks it the right thing to do, and if he is pleased with me, let an order be written overruling the dispatches that Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, devised and wrote to destroy the Jews in all the king's provinces. ⁶For how can I bear to see disaster fall on my people?

How can I bear to see the destruction of my family?"

⁷King Xerxes replied to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, "Because Haman attacked the Jews, I have given his estate to Esther, and they have hanged him on the gallows. ⁸Now write another decree in the king's name in behalf of the Jews as seems best to you, and seal it with the king's signet ring—for no document written in the king's name and sealed with his ring can be revoked."

⁹At once the royal secretaries were summoned—on the twenty-third day of the third month, the month of Sivan. They wrote out all Mordecai's orders to the Jews, and to the satraps, governors and nobles of the 127 provinces stretching from India to Cush.^c These orders were written in the script of each province and the language of each people and also to the Jews in their own script and language. ¹⁰Mordecai wrote in the name of King Xerxes, sealed the dispatches with the king's signet ring, and sent them by mounted couriers, who rode fast horses especially bred for the king.

¹¹The king's edict granted the Jews in every city the right to assemble and protect themselves; to destroy, kill and annihilate any armed force of any nationality or province that might attack them and their women and children; and to plunder the property of their enemies. ¹²The day appointed for the Jews to do this in all the provinces of King Xerxes was the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar. ¹³A copy of the text of the edict was to be issued as law in every province and made known to the people of every nationality so that the Jews would be ready on that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

¹⁴The couriers, riding the royal horses, raced out, spurred on by the king's command. And the edict was also issued in the citadel of Susa.

¹⁵Mordecai left the king's presence wearing royal garments of blue and white, a large crown of gold and a purple robe of fine linen. And the city of Susa held a joyous celebration. ¹⁶For the Jews it was a time of happiness and joy, gladness and honor. ¹⁷In every province and in every city, wherever the edict of the king went, there was joy and gladness among the Jews, with feasting and celebrating. And many people of other nationalities became Jews because fear of the Jews had seized them.

Triumph of the Jews

9 On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, the edict commanded by the king was to be carried out. On this day the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, but now the tables were turned and the Jews got the upper hand over those who hated them. ²The Jews assembled in their cities in all the provinces of King Xerxes to attack those seeking their destruction. No one could stand against them, because the people of all the other nationalities were afraid of them. ³And all the nobles of the provinces, the satraps, the governors and the king's administra-

^a4 Or quiet, but the compensation our adversary offers cannot be compared with the loss the king would suffer (meters) ^b9 That is, the upper Nile region

^c9 Hebrew fifty cubits (about 23

men helped the Jews, because fear of Mordecai had seized them. ¹⁴Mordecai was prominent in the palace; his reputation spread throughout the provinces, and he became more and more powerful.

The Jews struck down all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying them, and they did what they pleased to those who hated them. ¹⁵In the citadel of Susa the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men. They also killed Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, ¹⁶Puratha, Adalia, Aradatha, ¹⁷Armashtha, Arisai, Ardat and Vaizatha. ¹⁸The ten sons of Haman son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews. But they did not lay their hands on the plunder.

The number of those slain in the citadel of Susa was reported to the king that same day. ¹⁹The king said to Queen Esther, "The Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men and the ten sons of Haman in the citadel of Susa. What have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? Now what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? It will also be granted."

²⁰"If it pleases the king," Esther answered, "give the Jews in Susa permission to carry out this day's edict tomorrow also, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged on gallows."

²¹So the king commanded that this be done. An edict was issued in Susa, and they hanged the ten sons of Haman. ²²The Jews in Susa came together on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar, and they put to death in Susa three hundred men, but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.

²³Meanwhile, the remainder of the Jews who were in the king's provinces also assembled to protect themselves and get relief from their enemies. They killed seventy-five thousand of them but did not lay their hands on the plunder. ²⁴This happened on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, and on the fourteenth they rested and made it a day of feasting and joy.

Purim Celebrated

²⁵The Jews in Susa, however, had assembled on

the thirteenth and fourteenth, and then on the fifteenth they rested and made it a day of feasting and joy.

²⁶That is why rural Jews—those living in villages—observe the fourteenth of the month of Adar as a day of joy and feasting, a day for giving presents to each other.

²⁷Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the provinces of King Xerxes, near and far, ²⁸to have them celebrate annually the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar ²⁹as the time when the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month when their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into a day of celebration. He wrote them to observe the days as days of feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor.

³⁰So the Jews agreed to continue the celebration they had begun, doing what Mordecai had written to them. ³¹For Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to destroy them and had cast the *pur* (that is, the lot) for their ruin and destruction. ³²But when the plot came to the king's attention, ³³he issued written orders that the evil scheme Haman had devised against the Jews should come back onto his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows. ³⁴(Therefore these days were called Purim, from the word *pur*.) Because of everything written in this letter and because of what they had seen and what had happened to them, ³⁵the Jews took it upon themselves to establish the custom that they and their descendants and all who join them should without fail observe these two days every year, in the way prescribed and at the time appointed. ³⁶These days should be remembered and observed in every generation by every family, and in every province and in every city. And these days of Purim should never cease to be celebrated by the Jews, nor should the memory of them die out among their descendants.

³⁷So Queen Esther, daughter of Abihail, along with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter concerning Purim. ³⁸And Mordecai sent letters to all the Jews in the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Xerxes—words of goodwill and assurance— ³⁹to establish these days of Purim at their designated times, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had decreed for them, and

8:16 What about God?

Why is God's name not mentioned in Esther—especially in obvious places like this one? Scholars suggest several answers to this riddle. Some, reading between the lines, suggest that Esther and Mordecai were not outstanding examples of faith. They were even willing to hide Esther's Jewish background. Esther showed no reluctance to be married to a pagan king and become part of his harem. Most critically, she and Mordecai (along with all the other Jews in Esther) had chosen not to return to Jerusalem with the first wave of Jews nearly half a century before. (The story of that return is told in Ezra 1-6.) Those who stayed in Persia presumably cared more about their finances than about God's plans for the Jews to return to Jerusalem from exile. Perhaps because of this, Esther is told as a secular story, to illustrate God's care over even "secularized" Jews.

10:2 Is Esther Accurate?

Because of the many coincidences in Esther, some have considered it "just a story," having little or no historical validity. Yet as archaeologists have learned more about ancient Persian history, the details of Esther have proven remarkably reliable. Certainly the book presents itself as history: here the author confidently asserts that readers can check the facts in the historical records. These records are lost—but evidently they were known to the early readers of Esther.

²⁵ Or when Esther came before the king

as they had established for themselves and their descendants in regard to their times of fasting and lamentation. ³²Esther's decree confirmed these regulations about Purim, and it was written down in the records.

The Greatness of Mordecai

10 King Xerxes imposed tribute throughout the empire, to its distant shores. ²And all his

acts of power and might, together with a full account of the greatness of Mordecai to which the king had raised him, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Media and Persia? ³Mordecai the Jew was second in rank to king Xerxes, preeminent among the Jews, and held in high esteem by his many fellow Jews, because he worked for the good of his people and spoke up for the welfare of all the Jews.

JOB

INTRODUCTION

When Bad Things Happened to a Good Person

Nobody suffered more; nobody deserved it less

"There was no one like him among the sons of men. There is no one on earth like him, he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil." 1:8

How could it happen? At once the world came crashing down on a single innocent man, a man named Job. It seemed like the ultimate in unfairness.

Job lost all his belongings and slaughtered his servants. Then fire from the sky burned up his sheep, and a mighty wind destroyed his house and killed his sons and daughters. Finally, Job came down with a horrible, painful disease. What did I do to deserve such suffering?, he asked.

A Cosmic Contest

The book of Job reads like a detective story in which the readers know far more than the central characters. The very first chapter answers Job's main question: he had done nothing to deserve such suffering. We, the readers, know that, but nobody tells Job and his friends.

Unknown to him, Job was involved in a cosmic test, a contest proposed in heaven but staged on earth. In this extreme test of faith, the best man on earth suffered the worst calamities. Satan had claimed that people like Job love God only because of the good things he provides. Remove those good things, Satan challenged, and Job's faith would melt away along with his riches and reputation.

God's reputation was on the line. Would Job continue to trust him, even while his life was falling apart? This is the crucial question of the book: Would Job turn against God?

Job's wife mocked him: "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" (2:9). His friends were even crueller: they argued that Job was being punished, that he fully deserved the tragedies crashing into his life. For his part, Job struggled to do what seemed impossible: to keep on believing in a loving, fair God even though all the evidence pointed against such a God.

Job on Trial

It helps to think of this book as a courtroom drama, full of long, eloquent speeches. For most of the book, Job sits in the defendant's chair listening to his friends' harangues. He knows no a priori refutations: what they say about suffering as punishment seems to make sense. Yet he also knows deep in his soul that they are wrong. He does not deserve the treatment he is getting. There has to be some other explanation.

Like all grieving persons, Job went through emotional cycles. He whined, exploded, cajoled, and collapsed in self-pity. He agreed with his friends, then shifted positions and contradicted himself. And occasionally he came up with a statement of brilliant hope.

Finally, Job asked for one thing: an appearance by the one Person who could explain his miserable fate. He wanted to meet God himself, face to face. Eventually Job got his wish; God did show up in person. And when God finally spoke, no one—not Job, nor any of his friends—was prepared for what he had to say.

When We Feel Like Job

Sooner or later we all find ourselves in a position somewhat like Job's. Our world seems to crumble apart. Nothing makes sense any more. God seems distant and silent.

At such moments of great crisis, each one of us is put on trial. In a sense we become actors in a contest like the one Job went through. This book records every step in that process with unflinching honesty. Job's life stands as an example to every person who must go through great suffering.

How to Read Job

The book of Job is regarded as one of the world's truly great literary masterpieces. It contains some of the finest, most expressive poetry in the Bible. Yet first-time readers of Job can easily get lost because the complete "story line" is found in the first two chapters and the last one. Everything in between consists of a series of speeches.

The boldface sectional headings and the phrases that follow, such as "And Job continued his discourse" and "Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied," serve as markers or signposts throughout the book. Rather than reading large sections of the book, read one entire speech by Job, or a speech by Job and a rebuttal from one of his friends.

It may help if you try to summarize the statement behind each speech in one sentence and write that sentence in the margin (For example, "Job protests that he's innocent"). Speakers of that day impressed their audience more by eloquence than by rigorous logic, so the speeches may seem flowery. The issues Job and his friends address, however, are life-and-death ones.

As you read the speeches of Job's friends, remember that their views do not necessarily reflect God's. The book of Job merely records the friends' viewpoints; it does not endorse them.

PLANS FOR READING JOB

PLAN 1: An Overview of Job in 3 Days

- Day 1 Read the Introduction to Job and then two short chapters, 1 and 2, which give background for the entire book.
- Day 2 Read chapter 38, which opens God's great speech to Job
- Day 3 Read chapter 42, completing the "plot" of Job

PLAN 2: All of Job in 41 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16
☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25-26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28 ☐ 29 ☐ 30 ☐ 31
☐ 32 ☐ 33 ☐ 34 ☐ 35 ☐ 36 ☐ 37 ☐ 38 ☐ 39 ☐ 40 ☐ 41 ☐ 42

Prologue

1 In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. **2**He had seven sons and three daughters, **3**and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.

4His sons used to take turns holding feasts in their homes, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. **5**When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would send and have them purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom.

Job's First Test

6One day the angels^a came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan^b also came with them. **7**The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?"

Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it."

8Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you con-

sidered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him, he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil."

9"Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. **10**"Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. **11**But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."

12The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger."

Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

13One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, **14**a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, **15**and the Sabeans attacked and carried them off. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

16While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell from the sky and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

^a Hebrew the sons of God

^b Satan means accuser

JOB 3:19

- they no longer hear the slave driver's shout
 19The small and the great are there,
 and the slave is freed from his master.
 20Why is light given to those in misery,
 and life to the bitter of soul,
 21to those who long for death that does not
 come
 who search for it more than for hidden
 treasure
 22who are filled with gladness
 and rejoice when they reach the grave?
 23Why is life given to a man
 whose way is hidden,
 whom God has hedged in?
 24For sighing comes to me instead of food,
 my groans pour out like water.
 25What I feared has come upon me,
 what I dreaded has happened to me.
 26I have no peace, no quietness;
 I have no rest, but only turmoil."

Eliphaz

4 Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:

- 2 "If someone ventures a word with you, will
 you be impatient?
 But who can keep from speaking?
 3 Think how you have instructed many,
 how you have strengthened feeble hands.
 4 Your words have supported those who
 stumbled,
 you have strengthened faltering knees.
 5 But now trouble comes to you, and you are
 discouraged;
 it strikes you, and you are dismayed.
 6 Should not your piety be your confidence
 and your blameless ways your hope?
 7 "Consider now: Who, being innocent, has ever
 perished?
 Where were the upright ever destroyed?
 8 As I have observed, those who plow evil
 and those who sow trouble reap it.
 9 At the breath of God they are destroyed;
 at the blast of his anger they perish.
 10 The lions may roar and growl,
 yet the teeth of the great lions are broken.
 11 The lion perishes for lack of prey,
 and the cubs of the lioness are scattered.
 12 "A word was secretly brought to me,
 my ears caught a whisper of it.
 13 Amid disquieting dreams in the night,
 when deep sleep falls on men,

- 14 fear and trembling seized me
 and made all my bones shake.
 15 A spirit glided past my face,
 and the hair on my body stood on end
 16 It stopped,
 but I could not tell what it was.
 A form stood before my eyes,
 and I heard a hushed voice:
 17 "Can a mortal be more righteous than God?
 Can a man be more pure than his Maker?
 18 If God places no trust in his servants,
 if he charges his angels with error,
 19 how much more those who live in houses of
 clay,
 whose foundations are in the dust,
 who are crushed more readily than a moth!
 20 Between dawn and dusk they are broken to
 pieces;
 unnoticed, they perish forever.
 21 Are not the cords of their tent pulled up,
 so that they die without wisdom?"^a

5 "Call if you will, but who will answer you?
 To which of the holy ones will you turn?

- 2 Resentment kills a fool,
 and envy slays the simple.
 3 I myself have seen a fool taking root,
 but suddenly his house was cursed.
 4 His children are far from safety,
 crushed in court without a defender.
 5 The hungry consume his harvest,
 taking it even from among thorns,
 and the thirsty pant after his wealth.
 6 For hardship does not spring from the soil,
 nor does trouble sprout from the ground.
 7 Yet man is born to trouble
 as surely as sparks fly upward.
 8 "But if it were I, I would appeal to God;
 I would lay my cause before him.
 9 He performs wonders that cannot be
 fathomed,
 miracles that cannot be counted.
 10 He bestows rain on the earth;
 he sends water upon the countryside.
 11 The lowly he sets on high,
 and those who mourn are lifted to safety.
 12 He thwarts the plans of the crafty,
 so that their hands achieve no success.
 13 He catches the wise in their craftiness,
 and the schemes of the wily are swept away.
 14 Darkness comes upon them in the daytime;
 at noon they grope as in the night.
 15 He saves the needy from the sword in their
 mouth;
 he saves them from the clutches of the
 powerful.
 16 So the poor have hope,
 and injustice shuts its mouth.
 17 "Blessed is the man whom God corrects;
 so do not despise the discipline of the
 Almighty.^b
 18 For he wounds, but he also binds up;
 he injures, but his hands also heal.
 19 From six calamities he will rescue you;

4:13 Appealing to a Vision

The book of Job includes parallels to most modern-day responses to people in pain. To impress the other listeners with his religious authority, Eliphaz appealed to a mysterious vision in which a "spirit" restated Eliphaz's own line of argument. In the next chapter, he hints that Job should turn to God for a miracle (5:8-10).

^a21 Some interpreters end the quotation after verse 17.

^b17 Hebrew *Shaddai*, here and throughout Job

in seven no harm will befall you.
 20In famine he will ransom you from death,
 and in battle from the stroke of the sword.
 21You will be protected from the lash of the
 tongue,
 and need not fear when destruction comes.
 22You will laugh at destruction and famine,
 and need not fear the beasts of the earth.
 23For you will have a covenant with the stones of
 the field,
 and the wild animals will be at peace with
 you
 24You will know that your tent is secure;
 you will take stock of your property and find
 nothing missing.
 25You will know that your children will be many,
 and your descendants like the grass of the
 earth
 26You will come to the grave in full vigor,
 like sheaves gathered in season.
 27"We have examined this, and it is true.
 So hear it and apply it to yourself."

Job

6 Then Job replied

2"If only my anguish could be weighed
 and all my misery be placed on the scales!
 3It would surely outweigh the sand of the
 seas—
 no wonder my words have been impetuous.
 4The arrows of the Almighty are in me,
 my spirit drinks in their poison,
 God's terrors are marshaled against me
 5Does a wild donkey bray when it has grass,
 or an ox bellow when it has fodder?
 6Is tasteless food eaten without salt,
 or is there flavor in the white of an egg?
 7I refuse to touch it,
 such food makes me ill
 8"Oh, that I might have my request,
 that God would grant what I hope for,
 9that God would be willing to crush me,
 to let loose his hand and cut me off!
 10Then I would still have this consolation—
 my joy in unrelenting pain—
 that I had not denied the words of the Holy
 One
 11"What strength do I have, that I should still
 hope?
 12What prospects, that I should be patient?
 13Do I have the strength of stone?

6:9 Why Keep on Living?

Job steadfastly refused to curse God, but he did curse the day he was born. In this speech he asked for a quick death, realizing he could not hold out trusting in God forever. If he died now, at least he would do so believing. His speeches contain some of the most profound expressions of pain and despair in all of literature.

Is my flesh bronze?

13Do I have any power to help myself,
 now that success has been driven from me?

14"A despairing man should have the devotion
 of his friends,
 even though he forsakes the fear of the
 Almighty.

15But my brothers are as undependable as
 intermittent streams,

as the streams that overflow
 16when darkened by thawing ice
 and swollen with melting snow,

17but that cease to flow in the dry season,
 and in the heat vanish from their channels.

18Caravans turn aside from their routes;
 they go up into the wasteland and perish.

19The caravans of Tema look for water,
 the traveling merchants of Sheba look in
 hope.

20They are distressed, because they had been
 confident;

they arrive there, only to be disappointed.

21Now you too have proved to be of no help;
 you see something dreadful and are afraid.

22Have I ever said, 'Give something on my
 behalf,

pay a ransom for me from your wealth,

23deliver me from the hand of the enemy,
 ransom me from the clutches of the
 ruthless'?

24"Teach me, and I will be quiet;
 show me where I have been wrong.

25How painful are honest words!
 But what do your arguments prove?

26Do you mean to correct what I say,
 and treat the words of a despairing man as
 wind?

27You would even cast lots for the fatherless
 and barter away your friend.

28"But now be so kind as to look at me.
 Would I lie to your face?

29Relent, do not be unjust;
 reconsider, for my integrity is at stake.^a

30Is there any wickedness on my lips?
 Can my mouth not discern malice?

7 "Does not man have hard service on earth?
 Are not his days like those of a hired man?

2Like a slave longing for the evening shadows,
 or a hired man waiting eagerly for his wages,

3so I have been allotted months of futility,
 and nights of misery have been assigned to
 me

4When I lie down I think, 'How long before I
 get up?'

The night drags on, and I toss till dawn.

5My body is clothed with worms and scabs,
 my skin is broken and festering.

6"My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle,
 and they come to an end without hope.

7Remember, O God, that my life is but a breath,
 my eyes will never see happiness again.

^a The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain.

^b29 On my righteousness still stands

JOB 7:8

¹The eye that now sees me will see me no longer;
 you will look for me, but I will be no more.
²As a cloud vanishes and is gone,
 so he who goes down to the grave^a does not return.
 He will never come to his house again;
 his place will know him no more.
 Therefore I will not keep silent;
 I will speak out in the anguish of my spirit,
 I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.
³Am I the sea or the monster of the deep,
 that you put me under guard?
⁴When I think my bed will comfort me
 and my couch will ease my complaint,
 then you frighten me with dreams
 and terrify me with visions.
⁵So that I prefer strangling and death,
 rather than this body of mine.
⁶I despise my life; I would not live forever.
 Let me alone; my days have no meaning.
⁷What is a man that you make so much of him,
 that you give him so much attention,
 that you examine him every morning
 and test him every moment?
⁸Will you never look away from me,
 or let me alone even for an instant?
⁹I have sinned; what have I done to you,
 O watcher of men?
 Why have you made me your target?
 Have I become a burden to you?^b
¹⁰Would you not pardon my offenses
 and forgive my sins?
¹¹For I will soon lie down in the dust;
 you will search for me, but I will be no more."

Bildad

8 Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:
¹How long will you say such things?
 Your words are a blustering wind.
²Does God pervert justice?
 Does the Almighty pervert what is right?
³When your children sinned against him,
 he gave them over to the penalty of their sin.
⁴But if you will look to God
 and plead with the Almighty,

8:4 A Mixture of True and False

Although God rejected the overall force of their arguments, Job's three friends said some things that were true and others that were totally false. In this case, Bildad appealed to common sense, ("Surely God does not reject a blameless man"), implying that Job sinned to deserve his suffering. But God specifically had called Job "blameless and upright" (2:3). Elsewhere, a statement by Eliphaz (5:11-13) is quoted approvingly in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 3:19).

if you are pure and upright
 even now he will rouse himself on your behalf
 and restore you to your rightful place
 Your beginnings will seem humble,
 so prosperous will your future be.
¹¹Ask the former generations
 and find out what their fathers learned,
 for we were born only yesterday and know nothing,
 and our days on earth are but a shadow.
¹²Will they not instruct you and tell you?
 Will they not bring forth words from their understanding?
¹³Can papyrus grow tall where there is no marsh?
 Can reeds thrive without water?
¹⁴While still growing and uncut,
 they wither more quickly than grass.
¹⁵Such is the destiny of all who forget God;
 so perishes the hope of the godless.
¹⁶What he trusts in is fragile;
 what he relies on is a spider's web.
¹⁷He leans on his web, but it gives way;
 he clings to it, but it does not hold.
¹⁸He is like a well-watered plant in the sunshine,
 spreading its shoots over the garden,
 it entwines its roots around a pile of rocks
 and looks for a place among the stones.
¹⁹But when it is torn from its spot,
 that place disowns it and says, "I never saw you."
²⁰Surely its life withers away,
 and from the soil other plants grow.
²¹Surely God does not reject a blameless man
 or strengthen the hands of evildoers.
²²He will yet fill your mouth with laughter
 and your lips with shouts of joy.
²³Your enemies will be clothed in shame,
 and the tents of the wicked will be no more."

Job

9 Then Job replied:
¹"Indeed, I know that this is true.
 But how can a mortal be righteous before God?
²Though one wished to dispute with him,
 he could not answer him one time out of a thousand.
³His wisdom is profound, his power is vast.
 Who has resisted him and come out unscathed?
⁴He moves mountains without their knowing it
 and overturns them in his anger.
⁵He shakes the earth from its place
 and makes its pillars tremble.
⁶He speaks to the sun and it does not shine;
 he seals off the light of the stars.
⁷He alone stretches out the heavens
 and treads on the waves of the sea.

^a Hebrew: Sheol. ^b 20. A few manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, an ancient Hebrew scribal tradition and Septuagint, most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text have become a burden to myself.
¹¹ 11. It is surely all the joy it has is that

14 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain

9He is the Maker of the Bear and Orion,
the Pleiades and the constellations of the
south
10He performs wonders that cannot be
fathomed,
miracles that cannot be counted
11When he passes me, I cannot see him;
when he goes by, I cannot perceive him.
12If he snatches away, who can stop him?
Who can say to him, "What are you doing?"
13God does not restrain his anger;
even the cohorts of Rahab covered at his
feet

14"How then can I dispute with him?
How can I find words to argue with him?
15Though I were innocent, I could not answer
him;
I could only plead with my Judge for
mercy
16Even if I summoned him and he responded,
I do not believe he would give me a hearing.
17He would crush me with a storm
and multiply my wounds for no reason.
18He would not let me regain my breath
but would overwhelm me with misery.
19If it is a matter of strength, he is mighty!

INSIGHT

What Not to Say to a Hurting Person

Job's friends only made it worse

"Now you too have proved to be of no help." 6:21

You are sitting in a hospital room, where the faint smell of antiseptic lingers and the sound of lowered voices rustles all around you. The doctor's prediction for your friend is bad. You've listened to your friend's anger and despair, and many other emotions. Now it's your turn to reply. Everyone in the room waits for your response.

What do you say to a suffering person? The book of Job gives page after page of examples. Job's three friends, finding him in despair, filled the air with high-sounding advice. But unfortunately they offer models of what *not* to say. Their main argument only made Job feel worse, and at the end God dismissed them all.

Who Were Job's Friends?

This book gives few details on time and place, but it presents Job as a very wealthy "sheik" of the Middle East. His three friends, from neighboring lands, were also prosperous and well respected. When they first saw Job, they wept aloud and sat with him on the ground, silent, for seven days and nights, overcome with grief (2:13).

After Job finally broke the silence, each friend delivered a flowery speech on Job's dilemma. There are three cycles of speeches in all, with Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar taking turns, allowing Job to respond to each. Eliphaz, who led off, had strong and noble ideas. Bildad was briefer and slightly less sympathetic. Zophar (who did not speak in the third cycle) showed passion and fire.

The friends seemed to crescendo in emotional intensity. In the first cycle (chapters 4-14), they showed hope of winning Job over to their point of view. In the second cycle (chapters 15-21), the speeches grew more severe and threatening. And by the time of the concluding speeches (chapters 22-25), Job's friends were making direct accusations against him.

A Flawed Theory about Suffering

Job's friends believed in a God of love and fairness; their arguments started from that fact. Surely a just God would not allow an *innocent* man to suffer so much, they reasoned. Most of their comments boil down to one simple theory: Job must have committed some great crime for which God was punishing him. All three believed that good people prosper and bad people suffer; therefore, suffering must betray some hidden sin.

"Surely God does not reject a blameless man or strengthen the hands of evildoers," they said to Job (8:20). Repent, they admonished him, and God will forgive and restore you. Their words got this response from Job: "You . . . smear me with lies; you are worthless physicians, all of you!" (13:4). Job also believed in a loving God, but he knew he was innocent.

When God finally made his appearance, he dismissed the three friends in one sentence to Eliphaz, "I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has" (42:7).

Although the Bible elsewhere gives examples of suffering that resulted from a person's sin, Job clearly shows that such a theory cannot be applied in every case. (For a related discussion, see "Healthier, Wealthier, and Wiser," page 156.) It is not for us to try to reason out the specific cause of a person's suffering; God reserves that knowledge for himself.

Life Questions What is the most "unfair" thing that has ever happened to you? How did it affect the way you thought about God?

JOB 9:20

And if it is a matter of justice, who will
summon him?^a
 20Even if I were innocent, my mouth would
condemn me;
 if I were blameless, it would pronounce me
guilty
 21"Although I am blameless,
I have no concern for myself;
I despise my own life.
 22It is all the same; that is why I say,
'He destroys both the blameless and the
wicked.'
 23When a scourge brings sudden death,
he mocks the despair of the innocent.
 24When a land falls into the hands of the wicked,
he blindfolds its judges
If it is not he, then who is it?
 25"My days are swifter than a runner;
they fly away without a glimpse of joy.
 26They skim past like boats of papyrus,
like eagles swooping down on their prey.
 27If I say, 'I will forget my complaint,
I will change my expression, and smile,'
 28I still dread all my sufferings,
for I know you will not hold me innocent.
 29Since I am already found guilty,
why should I struggle in vain?
 30Even if I washed myself with soap^b
and my hands with washing soda,
 31you would plunge me into a slime pit
so that even my clothes would detest me.
 32"He is not a man like me that I might answer
him,
that we might confront each other in court.
 33If only there were someone to arbitrate
between us,
to lay his hand upon us both,
 34someone to remove God's rod from me,
so that his terror would frighten me no
more.
 35Then I would speak up without fear of him,
but as it now stands with me, I cannot.

10 "I loathe my very life;
therefore I will give free rein to my
complaint
and speak out in the bitterness of my soul.
 2I will say to God: Do not condemn me,
but tell me what charges you have against
me.
 3Does it please you to oppress me,
to spurn the work of your hands,

while you smile on the schemes of the
wicked?

4Do you have eyes of flesh?
Do you see as a mortal sees?
 5Are your days like those of a mortal
or your years like those of a man,
 6that you must search out my faults
and probe after my sin—
 7though you know that I am not guilty
and that no one can rescue me from your
hand?
 8"Your hands shaped me and made me.
Will you now turn and destroy me?
 9Remember that you molded me like clay.
Will you now turn me to dust again?
 10Did you not pour me out like milk
and curdle me like cheese,
 11clothe me with skin and flesh
and knit me together with bones and
sinews?
 12You gave me life and showed me kindness,
and in your providence watched over my
spirit.
 13"But this is what you concealed in your heart,
and I know that this was in your mind:
 14If I sinned, you would be watching me
and would not let my offense go
unpunished.
 15If I am guilty—woe to me!
Even if I am innocent, I cannot lift my head,
for I am full of shame
and drowned in^c my affliction.
 16If I hold my head high, you stalk me like a lion
and again display your awesome power
against me.
 17You bring new witnesses against me
and increase your anger toward me;
your forces come against me wave upon
wave.
 18"Why then did you bring me out of the womb?
I wish I had died before any eye saw me.
 19If only I had never come into being,
or had been carried straight from the womb
to the grave!
 20Are not my few days almost over?
Turn away from me so I can have a
moment's joy
 21before I go to the place of no return,
to the land of gloom and deep shadow,^d
 22to the land of deepest night,
of deep shadow and disorder,
where even the light is like darkness."

Zophar

11 Then Zophar the Naamathite replied:
 2"Are all these words to go unanswered?
Is this talker to be vindicated?
 3Will your idle talk reduce men to silence?
Will no one rebuke you when you mock?
 4You say to God, 'My beliefs are flawless
and I am pure in your sight.'
 5Oh, how I wish that God would speak,
that he would open his lips against you

9:33 Looking for an Arbitrator

Job recognized the enormous gulf between God and people. He poignantly asked for an arbitrator "to lay his hand upon us both." A few such comments of Job, expressing great longing for an advocate, found their full realization in Jesus, who was called the "one mediator between God and men" (1 Timothy 2:5).

^a19 See Septuagint, Hebrew *me*.^b30 Or *snow*^c15 Or *and aware of*^d21 Or *and the shadow of death*; also in verse 22

and disclose to you the secrets of wisdom,
for true wisdom has two sides
Know this: God has even forgotten some of
your sin.

Can you fathom the mysteries of God?
Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?
They are higher than the heavens—what can
you do?

They are deeper than the depths of the
grave—what can you know?
Their measure is longer than the earth
and wider than the sea.

¹⁰If he comes along and confines you in prison
and convenes a court, who can oppose him?

¹¹Surely he recognizes deceitful men;
and when he sees evil, does he not take
note?

¹²But a witless man can no more become wise
than a wild donkey's colt can be born a
man.^b

¹³Yet if you devote your heart to him
and stretch out your hands to him,
¹⁴if you put away the sin that is in your hand
and allow no evil to dwell in your tent,
¹⁵then you will lift up your face without shame;
you will stand firm and without fear.

¹⁶You will surely forget your trouble,
recalling it only as waters gone by.
¹⁷Life will be brighter than noonday,
and darkness will become like morning.

¹⁸You will be secure, because there is hope;
you will look about you and take your rest in
safety.

¹⁹You will lie down, with no one to make you
afraid,
and many will court your favor.

²⁰But the eyes of the wicked will fail,
and escape will elude them;
their hope will become a dying gasp."

Job

12 Then Job replied:

²"Doubtless you are the people,
and wisdom will die with you!

³But I have a mind as well as you;
I am not inferior to you.
Who does not know all these things?

⁴"I have become a laughingstock to my friends,

though I called upon God and he
answered—
a mere laughingstock, though righteous and
blameless!

⁵Men at ease have contempt for misfortune
as the fate of those whose feet are slipping.

⁶The tents of marauders are undisturbed,
and those who provoke God are secure—
those who carry their god in their hands.^c

⁷"But ask the animals, and they will teach you,
or the birds of the air, and they will tell you;
⁸or speak to the earth, and it will teach you,
or let the fish of the sea inform you.

⁹Which of all these does not know
that the hand of the Lord has done this?

¹⁰In his hand is the life of every creature
and the breath of all mankind.

¹¹Does not the ear test words
as the tongue tastes food?

¹²Is not wisdom found among the aged?
Does not long life bring understanding?

¹³"To God belong wisdom and power;
counsel and understanding are his.

¹⁴What he tears down cannot be rebuilt;
the man he imprisons cannot be released.

¹⁵If he holds back the waters, there is drought;
if he lets them loose, they devastate the
land.

¹⁶To him belong strength and victory;
both deceived and deceiver are his.

¹⁷He leads counselors away stripped
and makes fools of judges.

¹⁸He takes off the shackles put on by kings
and ties a loincloth^d around their waist.

¹⁹He leads priests away stripped
and overthrows men long established.

²⁰He silences the lips of trusted advisers
and takes away the discernment of elders.

²¹He pours contempt on nobles
and disarms the mighty.

²²He reveals the deep things of darkness
and brings deep shadows into the light.

²³He makes nations great, and destroys them;
he enlarges nations, and disperses them.

²⁴He deprives the leaders of the earth of their
reason;

he sends them wandering through a
trackless waste.

²⁵They grope in darkness with no light;
he makes them stagger like drunkards.

13 "My eyes have seen all this,
my ears have heard and understood it.

²What you know, I also know;
I am not inferior to you.

³But I desire to speak to the Almighty
and to argue my case with God.

⁴You, however, smear me with lies;
you are worthless physicians, all of you!

⁵If only you would be altogether silent!
For you, that would be wisdom.

⁶Hear now my argument;
listen to the plea of my lips.

11:14 Unfair Accusation

Zophar, the least tactful of the three friends, made direct accusations against Job, repeating the common refrain that Job was being punished for some sin. In a speech recorded in chapter 12, Job agreed in principle that God rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked. But in his own case he knew he was innocent. No matter how convincing their arguments, he had to protest against them.

^a Hebrew than Shool
kings / and ties a belt

^b12 Or wild donkey can be born tame

^c6 Or secure / in what God's hand brings them

^d18 Or shackles of

JOB 13:7

- 7Will you speak wickedly on God's behalf?
Will you speak deceitfully for him?
8Will you show him partiality?
Will you argue the case for God?
9Would it turn out well if he examined you?
Could you deceive him as you might deceive men?
10He would surely rebuke you
if you secretly showed partiality.
11Would not his splendor terrify you?
Would not the dread of him fall on you?
12Your maxims are proverbs of ashes;
your defenses are defenses of clay.
13"Keep silent and let me speak;
then let come to me what may.
14Why do I put myself in jeopardy
and take my life in my hands?
15Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him;
I will surely^a defend my ways to his face.
16Indeed, this will turn out for my deliverance,
for no godless man would dare come before him!
17Listen carefully to my words;
let your ears take in what I say.
18Now that I have prepared my case,
I know I will be vindicated.
19Can anyone bring charges against me?
If so, I will be silent and die
20"Only grant me these two things, O God,
and then I will not hide from you:
21Withdraw your hand far from me,
and stop frightening me with your terrors.
22Then summon me and I will answer,
or let me speak, and you reply.
23How many wrongs and sins have I committed?
Show me my offense and my sin.
24Why do you hide your face
and consider me your enemy?
25Will you torment a windblown leaf?
Will you chase after dry chaff?
26For you write down bitter things against me
and make me inherit the sins of my youth.
27You fasten my feet in shackles;
you keep close watch on all my paths
by putting marks on the soles of my feet.
28"So man wastes away like something rotten,
like a garment eaten by moths.

14 "Man born of woman
is of few days and full of trouble.

²He springs up like a flower and withers away;
like a fleeting shadow, he does not endure.

13:15 A Desperate Hope

This statement more than any other shows the depth of Job's faith, and the reason he made good on God's challenge against Satan. He valued his faith in God even above his own life. He asked only for a "day in court," a chance to confront God personally and hear an explanation.

- ³Do you fix your eye on such a one?
Will you bring him^b before you for judgment?
4Who can bring what is pure from the impure?
No one!
5Man's days are determined;
you have decreed the number of his months
and have set limits he cannot exceed.
6So look away from him and let him alone,
till he has put in his time like a hired man.
7"At least there is hope for a tree:
If it is cut down, it will sprout again,
and its new shoots will not fail.
8Its roots may grow old in the ground
and its stump die in the soil,
9yet at the scent of water it will bud
and put forth shoots like a plant.
10But man dies and is laid low;
he breathes his last and is no more.
11As water disappears from the sea
or a riverbed becomes parched and dry,
12so man lies down and does not rise;
till the heavens are no more, men will not
awake
or be roused from their sleep.
13"If only you would hide me in the grave^c
and conceal me till your anger has passed!
If only you would set me a time
and then remember me!
14If a man dies, will he live again?
All the days of my hard service
I will wait for my renewal^d to come.
15You will call and I will answer you;
you will long for the creature your hands
have made
16Surely then you will count my steps
but not keep track of my sin.
17My offenses will be sealed up in a bag;
you will cover over my sin.
18"But as a mountain erodes and crumbles
and as a rock is moved from its place,
19as water wears away stones
and torrents wash away the soil,
so you destroy man's hope.
20You overpower him once for all, and he is
gone;
you change his countenance and send him
away.
21If his sons are honored, he does not know it;
if they are brought low, he does not see it.
22He feels but the pain of his own body
and mourns only for himself."

Eliphaz

15 Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:

- ²"Would a wise man answer with empty
notions
or fill his belly with the hot east wind?
3Would he argue with useless words,
with speeches that have no value?
4But you even undermine piety
and hinder devotion to God.

^a15 Or He will surely slay me, I have no hope — I yet I will

^b14 Or release

^c13 Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; Hebrew me

^d13 Hebrew Shoot

17 ~~As you pervert your mouth~~
 you adopt the tongue of the crafty;
 your own mouth condemns you, not mine,
 and your lips are set against you.

18 Are you the first man ever born?
 Were you brought forth before the hills?
 Did you listen in on God's council?
 Did you get wisdom to yourself?
 What do you know that we do not know?
 What insights do you have that we do not have?

19 The gray-haired and the aged are on our side,
 men even older than your father;
 are not their consolations not enough for you,
 words spoken gently to you?
 Why has your heart carried you away,
 and why do your eyes flash
 so that you vent your rage against God
 and pour out such words from your
 mouth?

20 What is man, that he could be pure,
 or one born of woman, that he could be
 righteous?

21 If God places no trust in his holy ones,
 if even the heavens are not pure in his eyes,
 how much less man, who is vile and corrupt,
 who drinks up evil like water!

22 Listen to me and I will explain to you
 let me tell you what I have seen,
 what wise men have declared,
 hiding nothing received from their fathers
 (to whom alone the land was given
 when no alien passed among them).
 23 All his days the wicked man suffers torment,
 the ruthless through all the years stored up
 for him.
 24 Terrifying sounds fill his ears,
 when all seems well, marauders attack
 him.
 25 He despairs of escaping the darkness;
 he is marked for the sword.
 26 He wanders about—food for vultures,
 he knows the day of darkness is at hand.
 27 Distress and anguish fill him with terror;
 they overwhelm him, like a king poised to
 attack.
 28 Because he shakes his fist at God
 and vaunts himself against the Almighty,
 29 defiantly charging against him
 with a thick, strong shield.
 30 Though his face is covered with fat
 and his waist bulges with flesh,

31 he will inhabit ruined towns
 and houses where no one lives,
 houses crumbling to rubble.
 32 He will no longer be rich and his wealth will
 not endure,
 nor will his possessions spread over the
 land.

33 He will not escape the darkness,
 a flame will wither his shoots,
 and the breath of God's mouth will carry
 him away.

34 Let him not deceive himself by trusting what is
 worthless,
 for he will get nothing in return.

35 Before his time he will be paid in full,
 and his branches will not flourish.

36 He will be like a vine stripped of its unripe
 grapes,
 like an olive tree shedding its blossoms.

37 For the company of the godless will be barren,
 and fire will consume the tents of those who
 love bribes.

38 They conceive trouble and give birth to evil;
 their womb fashions deceit."

Job

16 Then Job replied:

2 "I have heard many things like these,
 miserable comforters are you all!
 3 Will your long-winded speeches never end?
 What ails you that you keep on arguing?
 4 I also could speak like you,
 if you were in my place;
 I could make fine speeches against you
 and shake my head at you.
 5 But my mouth would encourage you;
 comfort from my lips would bring you
 relief.
 6 "Yet if I speak, my pain is not relieved;
 and if I refrain, it does not go away.
 7 Surely, O God, you have worn me out;
 you have devastated my entire household.
 8 You have bound me—and it has become a
 witness;
 my gauntness rises up and testifies against
 me.
 9 God assails me and tears me in his anger
 and gnashes his teeth at me;
 my opponent fastens on me his piercing
 eyes.
 10 Men open their mouths to jeer at me;
 they strike my cheek in scorn
 and unite together against me.

15:4 Job's Moods

Job minced no words in his complaints against God. As a result, his friends criticized him for undermining piety and hindering devotion to God. Notably, in his summing-up speech God did not condemn Job's varying moods; he instead dismissed the pious words of Job's friends.

16:9 When God Seems Angry

In his trauma, Job could not help feeling that he was the object of God's anger. Many people who undergo great pain feel the same. In Job's case, however, we know that God was not angry with him. He had held him up before Satan as "a man who fears God and shuns evil" (1:8).

*23 Or about looking for food

JOB 16:11

God has turned me over to evil men
and thrown me into the clutches of the
wicked
All was well with me but he shattered me,
he seized me by the neck and crushed me
He has made me his target,
his archers surround me
Without pity he pierces my kidneys
and spills my gall on the ground
Again and again he bursts upon me,
he rushes at me like a warrior
I have sewed sackcloth over my skin
and buried my brow in the dust.
My face is red with weeping,
deep shadows ring my eyes;
Yet my hands have been free of violence
and my prayer is pure.

O earth, do not cover my blood;
may my cry never be laid to rest!
Even now my witness is in heaven;
my advocate is on high
My intercessor is my friend^a
as my eyes pour out tears to God;
On behalf of a man he pleads with God
as a man pleads for his friend.
Only a few years will pass
before I go on the journey of no return.

17 My spirit is broken
my days are cut short,
the grave awaits me
Surely mockers surround me;
my eyes must dwell on their hostility.

Give me, O God, the pledge you demand.
Who else will put up security for me?
You have closed their minds to understanding;
therefore you will not let them triumph.
If a man denounces his friends for reward,
the eyes of his children will fail.

God has made me a byword to everyone,
a man in whose face people spit.
My eyes have grown dim with grief;
my whole frame is but a shadow.
Upright men are appalled at this;
the innocent are aroused against the
ungodly
Nevertheless, the righteous will hold to their
ways,
and those with clean hands will grow
stronger

But come on, all of you, try again!
I will not find a wise man among you.
My days have passed, my plans are shattered,
and so are the desires of my heart.
These men turn night into day;
in the face of darkness they say, 'Light is
near.'
If the only home I hope for is the grave,^b
if I spread out my bed in darkness,
If I say to corruption, 'You are my father,'
and to the worm, 'My mother' or 'My sister,'

Where then is my hope?

Who can see any hope for me?

Will it go down to the gates of death?^c
Will we descend together into the dust?"

Bildad

18 Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:

"When will you end these speeches?
Be sensible, and then we can talk.

Why are we regarded as cattle
and considered stupid in your sight?

You who tear yourself to pieces in your anger,
is the earth to be abandoned for your sake?
Or must the rocks be moved from their
place?

The lamp of the wicked is snuffed out;
the flame of his fire stops burning.

The light in his tent becomes dark;
the lamp beside him goes out.

The vigor of his step is weakened;
his own schemes throw him down.

His feet thrust him into a net
and he wanders into its mesh.

A trap seizes him by the heel;
a snare holds him fast.

A noose is hidden for him on the ground;
a trap lies in his path.

Terrors startle him on every side
and dog his every step.

Calamity is hungry for him;
disaster is ready for him when he falls.

It eats away parts of his skin;
death's firstborn devours his limbs.

He is torn from the security of his tent
and marched off to the king of terrors.

Fire resides in his tent;
burning sulfur is scattered over his dwelling.

His roots dry up below
and his branches wither above.

The memory of him perishes from the earth;
he has no name in the land.

He is driven from light into darkness
and is banished from the world.

He has no offspring or descendants among his
people,
no survivor where once he lived.

Men of the west are appalled at his fate;
men of the east are seized with horror.

Surely such is the dwelling of an evil man;
such is the place of one who knows not
God."

17:12 A Wrong Time for Cheer

Falsely cheerful advice can actually make a suffering person even more discouraged. Job's sentiments in this passage are echoed in a verse from Proverbs: "Like one who takes away a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar poured on soda, is one who sings songs to a heavy heart" (25:20).

^a20 Or My friends treat me with scorn

^b13,16 Hebrew Shool

^c15 Or Nothing he had remains

Job

19 Then Job replied

¹How long will you torment me
and crush me with words?
²Ten times now you have reproached me,
shamelessly you attack me.
³If it is true that I have gone astray,
my error remains my concern alone.
⁴If indeed you would exalt yourselves above me
and use my humiliation against me,
then know that God has wronged me
and drawn his net around me.

⁵"Though I cry, 'I've been wronged!' I get no
response,

though I call for help, there is no justice.

⁶He has blocked my way so I cannot pass,
he has shrouded my paths in darkness.

⁷He has stripped me of my honor
and removed the crown from my head.

⁸He tears me down on every side till I am gone;
he uproots my hope like a tree.

⁹His anger burns against me;
he counts me among his enemies.

¹⁰His troops advance in force;
they build a siege ramp against me
and encamp around my tent.

¹¹He has alienated my brothers from me,
my acquaintances are completely estranged
from me.

¹²My kinsmen have gone away;
my friends have forgotten me.

¹³My guests and my maidservants count me a
stranger,

they look upon me as an alien.

¹⁴I summon my servant, but he does not
answer,

though I beg him with my own mouth.

¹⁵My breath is offensive to my wife;
I am loathsome to my own brothers.

¹⁶Even the little boys scorn me;
when I appear, they ridicule me.

¹⁷All my intimate friends detest me;
those I love have turned against me.

¹⁸I am nothing but skin and bones;
I have escaped with only the skin of my
teeth.^a

¹⁹"Have pity on me, my friends, have pity,
for the hand of God has struck me.

²⁰Why do you pursue me as God does?
Will you never get enough of my flesh?

²¹"Oh, that my words were recorded,
that they were written on a scroll,

²²that they were inscribed with an iron tool on^b
lead,

or engraved in rock forever!

²³I know that my Redeemer^c lives,
and that in the end he will stand upon the
earth.^d

²⁴And after my skin has been destroyed,^e
yet in^f my flesh I will see God,

²⁵I myself will see him
with my own eyes—I, and not another.
I know my heart yearns within me!

²⁶"If you say, 'How we will hound him,
since the root of the trouble lies in him,'^g

²⁷you should fear the sword yourselves;
for wrath will bring punishment by the
sword,

and then you will know that there is
judgment.^h

Zophar

20 Then Zophar the Naamathite replied.

¹"My troubled thoughts prompt me to
answer

because I am greatly disturbed.

²I hear a rebuke that dishonors me,
and my understanding inspires me to reply.

³"Surely you know how it has been from of old,
ever since manⁱ was placed on the earth,

⁴that the mirth of the wicked is brief,
the joy of the godless lasts but a moment.

⁵Though his pride reaches to the heavens
and his head touches the clouds,

⁶he will perish forever, like his own dung,
those who have seen him will say, 'Where is
he?'

⁷Like a dream he flies away, no more to be
found,

banished like a vision of the night.

⁸The eye that saw him will not see him again;
his place will look on him no more.

⁹His children must make amends to the poor;
his own hands must give back his wealth.

¹⁰The youthful vigor that fills his bones
will lie with him in the dust.

¹¹Though evil is sweet in his mouth
and he hides it under his tongue,

¹²though he cannot bear to let it go
and keeps it in his mouth,

¹³yet his food will turn sour in his stomach;
it will become the venom of serpents within
him.

¹⁴He will spit out the riches he swallowed;
God will make his stomach vomit them up.

¹⁵He will suck the poison of serpents;
the fangs of an adder will kill him.

¹⁶He will not enjoy the streams,
the rivers flowing with honey and cream.

19:25 An Outburst of Hope

In the midst of his deepest agony, Job expressed astonishing words of hope. This prophecy expands on two other flashes of hope (9:33; 16:19-21). Job did not try to hide his despair and anguish, but, as this verse shows, the trials never crushed all of his hope.

^a20 Or only my gums
has been destroyed, I then
manuscripts me

^b24 Or and

^c25 Or defender

^d25 Or upon my grace

^e26 Or And after I awake, though this body

^f26 Or I apart from

^g28 Many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint and Vulgate; most Hebrew

^h29 Or I that you may come to know the Almighty

ⁱ4 Or Adam

What he toiled for he must give back uneaten;
he will not enjoy the profit from his trading.
For he has oppressed the poor and left them
destitute,
he has seized houses he did not build.

But surely he will have no respite from his
craving;
he cannot save himself by his treasure.

Nothing is left for him to devour;
his prosperity will not endure.

In the midst of his plenty, distress will
overtake him.

The full force of misery will come upon him.
When he has filled his belly,

God will vent his burning anger against him
and rain down his blows upon him.

Though he flees from an iron weapon,
a bronze-tipped arrow pierces him.

He pulls it out of his back,
the piercing point out of his liver.

Terror will come over him.

Darkness lies in wait for his treasures;
a fire untanned will consume him

and devour what is left in his tent.

The heavens will expose his guilt;
the earth will rise up against him.

A flood will carry off his house;
rushing waters on the day of God's wrath.
Such is the fate God allots the wicked,
the heritage appointed for them by God.

Job

21 Then Job replied:

"Listen carefully to my words,
let this be the consolation you give me.

Bear with me while I speak,
and after I have spoken, mock on.

"Is my complaint directed to man?
Why should I not be impatient?

Look at me and be astonished,
clap your hand over your mouth.

When I think about this, I am terrified;
trembling seizes my body.

Why do the wicked live on,
growing old and increasing in power?

They see their children established around
them,

their offspring before their eyes.

Their homes are safe and free from fear;
the rod of God is not upon them.

Their bulls never fail to breed;
their cows calve and do not miscarry.

INSIGHT

What Job Teaches about Suffering

The problem of pain and the book of Job

But those who suffer he delivers in their suffering; he speaks to them in their affliction." 36:15

"Why me?" Almost everyone asks this question when terrible suffering strikes. Lack of food, sickness, no work—each of these raises intense questions about why God allows pain.

Over the centuries, suffering Christians have gained help and comfort from studying the book of Job. The book gives no compact theory of why good people suffer. Nevertheless, the following insights into the problem of suffering do come out of the book of Job.

Principles from Job

1. *Some suffering is caused by Satan.* Chapters 1 and 2 make the important distinction that God did not cause Job's problems. He allowed them, but Satan actually caused the pain.

2. *God is all-powerful and good.* Nowhere does the book of Job suggest that God lacks power or goodness. Some people say that God is weak and powerless to prevent human suffering. Others, called deists, assume he runs the world at a distance, without personal involvement. But in Job, God's power is never questioned; only his fairness. And in his final summation speech, God used splendid illustrations from nature to prove his power.

3. *Suffering doesn't always come as a result of sin.* The Bible supports the general principle that "a man reaps what he sows" even in this life (see Psalms 1:3; 37:25). But other people have no right to apply that general principle to a particular person. Job's friends tried with all their persuasive power. However, when God rendered the final verdict, he said simply, "You have not spoken of me what is right as my servant Job has" (42:7). The Old Testament includes other examples of people who suffered through no fault of their own, such as Abel (Genesis 4) and Uriah (2 Samuel 11). And Jesus spoke out against the notion that suffering implies sin (see John 9:1-5 and Luke 13:1-5).

4. *God will reward and punish fairly in a final judgment after death.* Job's friends, along with most Old Testament folk, did not have a clearly formed belief in an afterlife. Therefore, they expected that God's fairness—his approval or disapproval of people—had to be shown in this life. Other parts of the Bible teach that God will reward and punish fairly after death.

11 They send forth their children as a flock
their little ones, free about.
12 They sing to the noise of tambourine and
harp.
13 They make merry to the sound of the flute.
14 They spend their years in prosperity
and go down to the grave in peace.^a
15 Yet they say to God, "Leave us alone!
We have no desire to know your ways.
16 Who is the Almighty, that we should serve
him?
17 What would we gain by praying to him?"
18 But their prosperity is not in their own hands,

21:7 Some Wicked People Do Prosper

In most of his speeches Job accepted the general principle that evil people suffer punishment in this life. But in this speech he began to question that theory. He cited examples of wicked people who lived comfortable, successful lives. His meandering thoughts proved so convincing to him that he concluded his friends' advice was "nonsense" (verse 34).

but I stand aloof from the counsel of the wicked.

17 "Yet how often is the lamp of the wicked
extinguished?
18 How often does calamity come upon them
the fate God allots in his anger?
19 How often are they like straw before the wind,
like chaff swept away by a gale?
20 It is said, "God stores up a man's iniquity
for his evil."
21 Let him repay the man himself, so that he
will know it!
22 Let his own eyes see his destruction,
let him drink of the wrath of the Almighty.
23 For what does he care about the family he
leaves behind
when his allotted months come to an end?

22 "Can anyone teach knowledge to God,
since he judges even the highest?
23 One man dies in full vigor,
completely secure and at ease,
24 His body well nourished,
his bones rich with marrow.
25 Another man dies in bitterness of soul,
never having enjoyed anything good.

^a11 Hebrew *sheol*. ^b13 Or in an instant. ^c17, 20 Verses 17 and 18 may be taken as exclamations and 19 and 21 as hortatory.
^d24 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

5. *God does not condemn doubt and despair.* God did not condemn Job's anguished responses, only his ignorance. Job did not take his pain meekly; he cried out in anguish to God. His strong remarks scandalized his friends (see, for example, 15:1-16), but not God. Ironically, despite his bitter speeches, Job earned God's praise, while his pious friends were soundly rebuked.

6. *No one person has all the facts about suffering.* Neither Job nor his friends had enough facts. Job concluded God was unfair, treating him like an enemy. His friends maintained that God opposed Job because of his sin. All of them later learned they had been viewing the situation from a very limited perspective, blind to the real struggle being waged in heaven.

7. *God is never totally silent.* Elihu made that point convincingly, reminding Job of dreams, visions, past blessings, even the daily works of God in nature (chapter 33). God also appealed to nature as giving evidence of his wisdom and power. Although he may seem silent, some evidence of him can be found. One contemporary author expressed that truth this way, "Remember in the darkness what you have learned in the light."

8. *Well-intentioned advice can sometimes do more harm than good.* Job's friends were classic examples of people who let their pride and sense of being right interfere with their compassion. They repeated pious phrases and argued theology with Job. His response: "If only you would be altogether silent! For you, that would be wisdom" (13:5).

9. *God asks for faith.* God refocused the central issue from the cause of Job's suffering to his response. Mysteriously, God never gave an explanation for the problem of suffering. He did not even inform Job of the reason behind it: the contest recorded in chapters 1 and 2. He concentrated instead on Job's response. The real issue at stake was Job's faith, whether he would continue to trust God even when everything went wrong.

10. *Suffering can be used for a higher good.* In Job's case, God used a time of very great pain to win an important, even cosmic, victory over Satan. Looking backward, but only looking backward, we can see the "advantage" Job gained by continuing to trust God. Job is often cited as an Old Testament picture of Jesus Christ, who lived a perfectly innocent life but endured great pain and death. The terrible event of Christ's death was also transformed into a great victory.

Thousands of years later, Job's questions have not gone away. People who suffer still find themselves borrowing Job's own words as they cry out against God's seeming lack of concern. But Job affirms that God is not deaf to our cries and is in control of this world no matter how it looks. God did not answer all Job's questions, but his very appearance caused Job's doubts to melt away. Job learned that God cared about him and that God rules the world. It was enough.

Life Questions Do these principles from Job match up with what you have heard about suffering from other Christians?

JOB 21:26

- 26Side by side they lie in the dust,
and worms cover them both.
- 27I know full well what you are thinking,
the schemes by which you would wrong me.
- 28You say, 'Where now is the great man's house,
the tents where wicked men lived?'
- 29Have you never questioned those who travel?
Have you paid no regard to their accounts—
30that the evil man is spared from the day of
calamity,
that he is delivered from^a the day of wrath?
- 31Who denounces his conduct to his face?
Who repays him for what he has done?
- 32He is carried to the grave,
and watch is kept over his tomb
- 33The soil in the valley is sweet to him;
all men follow after him,
and a countless throng goes^b before him.
- 34'So how can you console me with your
nonsense?
Nothing is left of your answers but
falsehood!'

Eliphaz

- 22** Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied
- 2'Can a man be of benefit to God?
Can even a wise man benefit him?
- 3What pleasure would it give the Almighty if
you were righteous?
What would he gain if your ways were
blameless?
- 4'Is it for your piety that he rebukes you
and brings charges against you?
- 5Is not your wickedness great?
Are not your sins endless?
- 6You demanded security from your brothers for
no reason,
you stripped men of their clothing, leaving
them naked
- 7You gave no water to the weary
and you withheld food from the hungry,
- 8though you were a powerful man, owning
land—
an honored man, living on it.
- 9And you sent widows away empty-handed
and broke the strength of the fatherless.
- 10That is why snares are all around you,
why sudden peril terrifies you,
- 11why it is so dark you cannot see,
and why a flood of water covers you.
- 12'Is not God in the heights of heaven?
And see how lofty are the highest stars!

22:6 The Attacks Get Personal

Unable to convince Job through philosophizing, Eliphaz shifted to more personal attacks against Job's behavior. These arguments were perhaps the unkindest of all, and Job specifically refuted each one in his closing speech (chapters 29-31).

- 13Yet you say, 'What does God know?
Does he judge through such darkness?
- 14Thick clouds veil him, so he does not see us
as he goes about in the vaulted heavens.'
- 15Will you keep to the old path
that evil men have trod?
- 16They were carried off before their time,
their foundations washed away by a flood.
- 17They said to God, 'Leave us alone!
What can the Almighty do to us?'
- 18Yet it was he who filled their houses with good
things,
so I stand aloof from the counsel of the
wicked
- 19'The righteous see their ruin and rejoice;
the innocent mock them, saying,
- 20'Surely our foes are destroyed,
and fire devours their wealth.'
- 21'Submit to God and be at peace with him;
in this way prosperity will come to you.
- 22Accept instruction from his mouth
and lay up his words in your heart.
- 23If you return to the Almighty, you will be
restored:
If you remove wickedness far from your tent
- 24and assign your nuggets to the dust,
your gold of Ophir to the rocks in the
ravines,
- 25then the Almighty will be your gold,
the choicest silver for you.
- 26Surely then you will find delight in the
Almighty
and will lift up your face to God.
- 27You will pray to him, and he will hear you,
and you will fulfill your vows.
- 28What you decide on will be done,
and light will shine on your ways.
- 29When men are brought low and you say, 'Lift
them up!'
then he will save the downcast.
- 30He will deliver even one who is not innocent,
who will be delivered through the cleanness
of your hands."

Job

- 23** Then Job replied:
- 2'Even today my complaint is bitter;
his hand^c is heavy in spite of^d my groaning.
- 3If only I knew where to find him;
if only I could go to his dwelling!
- 4I would state my case before him
and fill my mouth with arguments.
- 5I would find out what he would answer me,
and consider what he would say.
- 6Would he oppose me with great power?
No, he would not press charges against me.
- 7There an upright man could present his case
before him,
and I would be delivered forever from my
judge.
- 8'But if I go to the east, he is not there;
if I go to the west, I do not find him.

^a30 Or man is reserved for the day of calamity, / that he is brought forth to
Synac, Hebrew the hand on me ^b2 Or heavy on me in

^c33 Or / as a countless throng went

^d2 Septuagint and

9When he is at work in the north, I do not see him;
when he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him.
10But he knows the way that I take;
when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.
11My feet have closely followed his steps,
I have kept to his way without turning aside.
12I have not departed from the commands of his lips,
I have treasured the words of his mouth
more than my daily bread.

13"But he stands alone, and who can oppose him?

He does whatever he pleases.
14He carries out his decree against me,
and many such plans he still has in store.
15That is why I am terrified before him;
when I think of all this, I fear him.
16God has made my heart faint;
the Almighty has terrified me.
17Yet I am not silenced by the darkness,
by the thick darkness that covers my face.

24 "Why does the Almighty not set times for judgment?
Why must those who know him look in vain
for such days?

2Men move boundary stones;
they pasture flocks they have stolen.
3They drive away the orphan's donkey
and take the widow's ox in pledge.
4They thrust the needy from the path
and force all the poor of the land into hiding.
5Like wild donkeys in the desert,
the poor go about their labor of foraging
— food;
the wasteland provides food for their children.
6They gather fodder in the fields
and glean in the vineyards of the wicked.
7Lacking clothes, they spend the night naked;
they have nothing to cover themselves in the cold.
8They are drenched by mountain rains
and hug the rocks for lack of shelter.
9The fatherless child is snatched from the breast;
the infant of the poor is seized for a debt.
10Lacking clothes, they go about naked;
they carry the sheaves, but still go hungry.
11They crush olives among the terraces;
they tread the winepresses, yet suffer thirst.
12The groans of the dying rise from the city,
and the souls of the wounded cry out for help.
But God charges no one with wrongdoing.
13"There are those who rebel against the light,
who do not know its ways
or stay in its paths.
14When daylight is gone, the murderer rises up
and kills the poor and needy;

in the night he steals forth like a thief,
15The eye of the adulterer watches for dusk;
he thinks, 'No eye will see me,'
and he keeps his face concealed.
16In the dark, men break into houses,
but by day they shut themselves in;
they want nothing to do with the light.
17For all of them, deep darkness is their morning^a;
they make friends with the terrors of darkness.^c

18"Yet they are foam on the surface of the water;
their portion of the land is cursed,
so that no one goes to the vineyards.
19As heat and drought snatch away the melted snow,
so the grave^d snatches away those who have sinned.

20The womb forgets them,
the worm feasts on them;
evil men are no longer remembered
but are broken like a tree.
21They prey on the barren and childless woman,
and to the widow show no kindness.
22But God drags away the mighty by his power;
though they become established, they have no assurance of life.
23He may let them rest in a feeling of security,
but his eyes are on their ways.
24For a little while they are exalted, and then they are gone;
they are brought low and gathered up like all others;
they are cut off like heads of grain.

25"Is this not so, who can prove me false
and reduce my words to nothing?"

Bildad

25 Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:

2"Dominion and awe belong to God;
he establishes order in the heights of heaven.

3Can his forces be numbered?

Upon whom does his light not rise?

4How then can a man be righteous before God?
How can one born of woman be pure?

5If even the moon is not bright
and the stars are not pure in his eyes,

25:6 Where Is God?

In the speech recorded in chapters 23-24, Job movingly described the feeling of God's absence at his time of greatest need. God must also seem absent to the poor, the fatherless, and all those suffering without relief, he said. Bildad replied with the shortest speech in the book (chapter 25). He questioned whether any person ("who is but a maggot . . . a worm") had the right to challenge God so boldly.

^a11 Or olives between the millstones, the meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.
^c17 Or of the shadow of death

^d19 Hebrew Sheol

^b17 Or them, their morning is like the

⁶how much less man, who is but a maggot—
a son of man, who is only a worm!”

Job

26 Then Job replied:

²“How you have helped the powerless!
How you have saved the arm that is feeble!

³What advice you have offered to one without
wisdom!

And what great insight you have displayed!

⁴Who has helped you utter these words?

And whose spirit spoke from your mouth?

⁵“The dead are in deep anguish,
those beneath the waters and all that live in
them

⁶Death^a is naked before God;
Destruction^b lies uncovered.

⁷He spreads out the northern [skies] over empty
space,

he suspends the earth over nothing

⁸He wraps up the waters in his clouds,
yet the clouds do not burst under their
weight

⁹He covers the face of the full moon,
spreading his clouds over it

¹⁰He marks out the horizon on the face of the
waters

for a boundary between light and darkness.

¹¹The pillars of the heavens quake,
aghast at his rebuke

¹²By his power he churned up the sea;
by his wisdom he cut Rahab to pieces.

¹³By his breath the skies became fair;
his hand pierced the gliding serpent.

¹⁴And these are but the outer fringe of his
works;

how faint the whisper we hear of him!

Who then can understand the thunder of his
power?”

27 And Job continued his discourse

²“As surely as God lives, who has denied
me justice,

the Almighty, who has made me taste
bitterness of soul,

³as long as I have life within me,
the breath of God in my nostrils,

⁴my lips will not speak wickedness,
and my tongue will utter no deceit.

⁵I will never admit you are in the right;
till I die, I will not deny my integrity

⁶I will maintain my righteousness and never let
go of it;

my conscience will not reproach me as long
as I live.

⁷“May my enemies be like the wicked,
my adversaries like the unjust!

⁸For what hope has the godless when he is cut
off,

when God takes away his life?

⁹Does God listen to his cry
when distress comes upon him?

¹⁰Will he find delight in the Almighty?
Will he call upon God at all times?

¹¹“I will teach you about the power of God;
the ways of the Almighty I will not conceal.

¹²You have all seen this yourselves.
Why then this meaningless talk?

¹³Here is the fate God allots to the wicked,
the heritage a ruthless man receives from the
Almighty:

¹⁴However many his children, their fate is the
sword;

his offspring will never have enough to eat.

¹⁵The plague will bury those who survive him,
and their widows will not weep for them.

¹⁶Though he heaps up silver like dust
and clothes like piles of clay,

¹⁷what he lays up the righteous will wear,
and the innocent will divide his silver.

¹⁸The house he builds is like a moth's cocoon,
like a hut made by a watchman.

¹⁹He lies down wealthy, but will do so no more;
when he opens his eyes, all is gone.

²⁰Terrors overtake him like a flood,
a tempest snatches him away in the night.

²¹The east wind carries him off, and he is gone;
it sweeps him out of his place.

²²It hurls itself against him without mercy
as he flees headlong from its power.

²³It claps its hands in derision
and hisses him out of his place.

28 “There is a mine for silver
and a place where gold is refined.

²Iron is taken from the earth,
and copper is smelted from ore.

³Man puts an end to the darkness;
he searches the farthest recesses
for ore in the blackest darkness.

⁴Far from where people dwell he cuts a shaft,
in places forgotten by the foot of man;
far from men he dangles and sways.

26:14 A Faint Whisper of God

The book of Job contains some of the best nature poetry ever written; it frequently cites nature as one of the proofs of God's existence. Job himself never denied God's power. All the wonders of nature, he said, are “but the outer fringe of his works,” a faint whisper of God. His complaint was not about power, but about justice. How could a God so powerful treat him so unfairly?

28:1 A Poem on Wisdom

In the midst of one of his most beautiful speeches, Job included a self-contained poem on wisdom. It uses the analogy of mining precious metals to make the point that wisdom cannot be found by any amount of searching (28:1-19). God alone knows where it dwells. In the rest of the poem, Job admitted some things were beyond his understanding, then lapsed into a reminiscence of what life was like before his time of trials.

1The earth, from which food comes,
 is transformed below as by fire.
 2Sapphires^a come from its rocks
 and its dust contains nuggets of gold.
 No bird of prey knows that hidden path,
 no falcon's eye has seen it.
 3Proud beasts do not set foot on it,
 and no lion prowls there.
 4Man's hand assaults the flinty rock
 and lays bare the roots of the mountains.
 5He tunnels through the rock,
 his eyes see all its treasures.
 6He searches^b the sources of the rivers
 and brings hidden things to light.
 7"But where can wisdom be found?
 Where does understanding dwell?
 8Man does not comprehend its worth;
 it cannot be found in the land of the living.
 9The deep says, 'It is not in me';
 the sea says, 'It is not with me.'
 10It cannot be bought with the finest gold,
 nor can its price be weighed in silver.
 11It cannot be bought with the gold of Ophir,
 with precious onyx or sapphires.
 12Neither gold nor crystal can compare with it,
 nor can it be had for jewels of gold.
 13Coral and jasper are not worthy of mention;
 the price of wisdom is beyond rubies.
 14The topaz of Cush cannot compare with it;
 it cannot be bought with pure gold.
 15"Where then does wisdom come from?
 Where does understanding dwell?
 16It is hidden from the eyes of every living thing,
 concealed even from the birds of the air.
 17Destruction^c and Death say,
 'Only a rumor of it has reached our ears.'
 18God understands the way to it
 and he alone knows where it dwells,
 19for he views the ends of the earth
 and sees everything under the heavens.
 20When he established the force of the wind
 and measured out the waters,
 21when he made a decree for the rain
 and a path for the thunderstorm,
 22then he looked at wisdom and appraised it;
 he confirmed it and tested it.
 23And he said to man,
 'The fear of the Lord—that is wisdom,
 and to shun evil is understanding.'"

29 Job continued his discourse:

1"How I long for the months gone by,
 for the days when God watched over me,
 2when his lamp shone upon my head
 and by his light I walked through darkness!
 3Oh, for the days when I was in my prime,
 when God's intimate friendship blessed my house,
 4when the Almighty was still with me
 and my children were around me,
 5when my path was drenched with cream
 and the rock poured out for me streams of olive oil

6"When I went to the gate of the city
 and took my seat in the public square,
 7the young men saw me and stepped aside
 and the old men rose to their feet,
 8the chief men refrained from speaking
 and covered their mouths with their hands;
 9the voices of the nobles were hushed,
 and their tongues stuck to the roof of their mouths.
 10Whoever heard me spoke well of me,
 and those who saw me commended me,
 11because I rescued the poor who cried for help,
 and the fatherless who had none to assist him.
 12The man who was dying blessed me;
 I made the widow's heart sing.
 13I put on righteousness as my clothing;
 justice was my robe and my turban.
 14I was eyes to the blind
 and feet to the lame.
 15I was a father to the needy;
 I took up the case of the stranger.
 16I broke the fangs of the wicked
 and snatched the victims from their teeth.
 17"I thought, 'I will die in my own house,
 my days as numerous as the grains of sand.
 18My roots will reach to the water,
 and the dew will lie all night on my branches.
 19My glory will remain fresh in me,
 the bow ever new in my hand.'
 20Men listened to me expectantly,
 waiting in silence for my counsel.
 21After I had spoken, they spoke no more;
 my words fell gently on their ears.
 22They waited for me as for showers
 and drank in my words as the spring rain.
 23When I smiled at them, they scarcely believed it;
 the light of my face was precious to them.
 24I chose the way for them and sat as their chief;
 I dwelt as a king among his troops;
 I was like one who comforts mourners.

30 "But now they mock me,
 men younger than I,
 whose fathers I would have disdained
 to put with my sheep dogs.
 2Of what use was the strength of their hands to me,
 since their vigor had gone from them?
 3Haggard from want and hunger,
 they roamed^d the parched land
 in desolate wastelands at night.
 4In the brush they gathered salt herbs,
 and their food^e was the root of the broom tree.
 5They were banished from their fellow men,
 shouted at as if they were thieves.
 6They were forced to live in the dry stream beds,
 among the rocks and in holes in the ground.
 7They brayed among the bushes

^a6 Or lapis lazuli, also in verse 16

^b11 Septuagint, Aquila and Vulgate, Hebrew He dams up

^c22 Hebrew Abaddon

^d24 The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain

^e3 Or gnawed

^f4 Or fuel

JOB 30:8

- and huddled in the undergrowth.
 8A base and nameless brood,
 they were driven out of the land.
 9And now their sons mock me in song;
 I have become a byword among them.
 10They detest me and keep their distance;
 they do not hesitate to spit in my face.
 11Now that God has unstrung my bow and
 afflicted me,
 they throw off restraint in my presence.
 12On my right the tribe^a attacks;
 they lay snares for my feet,
 they build their siege ramps against me.
 13They break up my road;
 they succeed in destroying me—
 without anyone's helping them.^b
 14They advance as through a gaping breach;
 amid the ruins they come rolling in.
 15Terrors overwhelm me;
 my dignity is driven away as by the wind,
 my safety vanishes like a cloud.
 16And now my life ebbs away;
 days of suffering grip me.
 17Night pierces my bones;
 my gnawing pains never rest.
 18In his great power God becomes like clothing
 to me;
 he binds me like the neck of my garment.
 19He throws me into the mud,
 and I am reduced to dust and ashes.
 20I cry out to you, O God, but you do not
 answer;
 I stand up, but you merely look at me.
 21You turn on me ruthlessly;
 with the might of your hand you attack me.
 22You snatch me up and drive me before the
 wind;
 you toss me about in the storm.
 23I know you will bring me down to death,
 to the place appointed for all the living.
 24Surely no one lays a hand on a broken man
 when he cries for help in his distress.
 25Have I not wept for those in trouble?
 Has not my soul grieved for the poor?
 26Yet when I hoped for good, evil came;
 when I looked for light, then came darkness.
 27The churning inside me never stops;
 days of suffering confront me.
 28I go about blackened, but not by the sun;
 I stand up in the assembly and cry for help.
 29I have become a brother of jackals,
 a companion of owls.
 30My skin grows black and peels;
 my body burns with fever.
 31My harp is tuned to mourning,
 and my flute to the sound of wailing.
- 31** "I made a covenant with my eyes
 not to look lustfully at a girl.
 2For what is man's lot from God above,
 his heritage from the Almighty on high?
 3Is it not ruin for the wicked,

- disaster for those who do wrong?
 4Does he not see my ways
 and count my every step?
 5If I have walked in falsehood
 or my foot has hurried after deceit—
 6let God weigh me in honest scales
 and he will know that I am blameless—
 7if my steps have turned from the path,
 if my heart has been led by my eyes,
 or if my hands have been defiled,
 8then may others eat what I have sown,
 and may my crops be uprooted.
 9If my heart has been enticed by a woman,
 or if I have lurked at my neighbor's door,
 10then may my wife grind another man's grain,
 and may other men sleep with her.
 11For that would have been shameful,
 a sin to be judged.
 12It is a fire that burns to Destruction^d;
 it would have uprooted my harvest.
 13If I have denied justice to my menservants
 and maidservants
 when they had a grievance against me,
 14what will I do when God confronts me?
 What will I answer when called to account?
 15Did not he who made me in the womb make
 them?
 Did not the same one form us both within
 our mothers?
 16If I have denied the desires of the poor
 or let the eyes of the widow grow weary,
 17if I have kept my bread to myself,
 not sharing it with the fatherless—
 18but from my youth I reared him as would a
 father,
 and from my birth I guided the widow—
 19if I have seen anyone perishing for lack of
 clothing,
 or a needy man without a garment,
 20and his heart did not bless me
 for warming him with the fleece from my
 sheep,
 21if I have raised my hand against the fatherless,
 knowing that I had influence in court,
 22then let my arm fall from the shoulder,
 let it be broken off at the joint.
 23For I dreaded destruction from God,

31:1 Binding Oaths

This chapter, Job's final line of defense, is written in a form that had legal significance to his hearers. Job was solemnly swearing his innocence in response to a whole series of accusations. He called down curses on himself if he could be proved wrong. The oaths were somewhat like our modern custom of swearing on the Bible "to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth." Job's oaths impressed his three friends and effectively ended the debate. Then a new character, Elihu, joined in.

^a12 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain. Septuagint God grasps my clothing ^b12 Hebrew Abaddon

^c13 Or me. / 'No one can help him,' they say,

^d14 Hebrew;

and for fear of his splendor I could not do such things

- 24 "If I have put my trust in gold
or said to pure gold, 'You are my security,'
25 If I have rejoiced over my great wealth,
the fortune my hands had gained,
26 If I have regarded the sun in its radiance
or the moon moving in splendor,
27 so that my heart was secretly enticed
and my hand offered them a kiss of homage,
28 then these also would be sins to be judged,
for I would have been unfaithful to God on high
29 "If I have rejoiced at my enemy's misfortune
or gloated over the trouble that came to him—
30 I have not allowed my mouth to sin
by invoking a curse against his life—
31 if the men of my household have never said,
'Who has not had his fill of Job's meat?'—
32 but no stranger had to spend the night in the street,
for my door was always open to the traveler—
33 if I have concealed my sin as men do,^a
by hiding my guilt in my heart

^a33 Or as Adam did

34 because I so feared the crowd
and so dreaded the contempt of the clans
that I kept silent and would not go outside

- 35 ("Oh, that I had someone to hear me!
I sign now my defense—let the Almighty
answer me;
let my accuser put his indictment in writing.
36 Surely I would wear it on my shoulder,
I would put it on like a crown.
37 I would give him an account of my every step;
like a prince I would approach him.)—
38 "if my land cries out against me
and all its furrows are wet with tears,
39 if I have devoured its yield without payment
or broken the spirit of its tenants,
40 then let briars come up instead of wheat
and weeds instead of barley."

The words of Job are ended.

Elihu

32 So these three men stopped answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. ²But Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, became very angry with Job for justifying himself rather than God. ³He was also angry with

INSIGHT

A Silent Friend Decides to Speak Up

Elihu, out of nowhere, proposes new ideas about suffering

"Not one of you has proved Job wrong; none of you has answered his arguments." 32:12

Up to this point in Job, the action has revolved around Job and his three friends. The debate among them, growing ever more heated, finally breaks off. They have reached a standoff. Job will not admit to any sin deserving of terrible punishment, and his three friends will not back down from their ideas about suffering.

Suddenly, a new voice is heard. Elihu, a young man, has been listening in silence all this time. He can restrain himself no longer. He flares up, first at Job for being so self-righteous and then at the three friends for not coming up with an answer to Job's questions. He refutes all four of them, turning their own words against them.

Is Elihu Right?

Elihu is shocked at Job's vigorous self-defense. Surely God cannot be unjust, he insists. Submit to the pain, even if you don't understand it. Don't blame God; praise him. God has shown too much of his wisdom and perfection, especially in nature, for anyone to doubt him.

Elihu offers a new explanation for Job's pain. Perhaps, he suggests, God gave suffering to Job not as punishment but as a purifying influence. God can use suffering to improve a person, if it is received in the right spirit.

Where did Elihu come from? Who is he? Are his theories right? Mystery surrounds the man. His speeches stand alone, and no one responds to them. As a result, the book of Job gives no clue on whether Elihu expressed a worthy point of view.

Some readers believe Elihu forms a bridge between the flawed theories of Job's three friends and God's own speech. Perhaps his speeches prepare the way for God's. Others see him as repeating the same fine-sounding, but not-quite-true, advice of Job's three friends.

When God does make an entrance, he dismisses Job's friends and has some mild criticism for Job. But he ignores Elihu entirely. Elihu remains a mysterious figure.

Life Questions: Do Elihu's arguments sound familiar? What do you think of friends who have similar thoughts about others who suffer?

the three friends, because they had found no way to refute Job, and yet had condemned him.^a ⁴Now Elihu had waited before speaking to Job because they were older than he. ⁵But when he saw that the three men had nothing more to say, his anger was aroused.

⁶So Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite said.

"I am young in years,
and you are old,
that is why I was fearful,
not daring to tell you what I know.

⁷I thought, 'Age should speak;
advanced years should teach wisdom.'

⁸But it is the spirit^b in a man,
the breath of the Almighty, that gives him
understanding.

⁹It is not only the old^c who are wise,
not only the aged who understand what is
right

¹⁰"Therefore I say: Listen to me;
I too will tell you what I know.

¹¹I waited while you spoke,
I listened to your reasoning;
while you were searching for words,

¹²I gave you my full attention.
But not one of you has proved Job wrong,
none of you has answered his arguments.

¹³Do not say, 'We have found wisdom;
let God refute him, not man.'

¹⁴But Job has not marshaled his words against
me,
and I will not answer him with your
arguments.

¹⁵"They are dismayed and have no more to say;
words have failed them.

¹⁶Must I wait, now that they are silent,
now that they stand there with no reply?

¹⁷I too will have my say;
I too will tell what I know.

¹⁸For I am full of words,
and the spirit within me compels me,

¹⁹inside I am like bottled-up wine,
like new wineskins ready to burst.

²⁰I must speak and find relief;
I must open my lips and reply.

²¹I will show partiality to no one,
nor will I flatter any man;

²²for if I were skilled in flattery,
my Maker would soon take me away.

33 "But now, Job, listen to my words;
pay attention to everything I say

²I am about to open my mouth;
my words are on the tip of my tongue.

³My words come from an upright heart;
my lips sincerely speak what I know.

⁴The Spirit of God has made me;
the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

⁵Answer me then, if you can;
prepare yourself and confront me.

⁶I am just like you before God,

I too have been taken from clay.

⁷No fear of me should alarm you,
nor should my hand be heavy upon you.

⁸"But you have said in my hearing—
I heard the very words—

⁹I am pure and without sin;
I am clean and free from guilt.

¹⁰Yet God has found fault with me;
he considers me his enemy.

¹¹He fastens my feet in shackles;
he keeps close watch on all my paths.^d

¹²"But I tell you, in this you are not right,
for God is greater than man.

¹³Why do you complain to him
that he answers none of man's words?^e

¹⁴For God does speak—now one way, now
another—

though man may not perceive it.

¹⁵In a dream, in a vision of the night,
when deep sleep falls on men
as they slumber in their beds,

¹⁶he may speak in their ears
and terrify them with warnings,

¹⁷to turn man from wrongdoing
and keep him from pride,

¹⁸to preserve his soul from the pit,^f
his life from perishing by the sword.^g

¹⁹Or a man may be chastened on a bed of pain
with constant distress in his bones,

²⁰so that his very being finds food repulsive
and his soul loathes the choicest meal.

²¹His flesh wastes away to nothing,
and his bones, once hidden, now stick out.

²²His soul draws near to the pit,^h
and his life to the messengers of death.ⁱ

²³"Yet if there is an angel on his side
as a mediator, one out of a thousand,
to tell a man what is right for him,

²⁴to be gracious to him and say,
'Spare him from going down to the pit';
I have found a ransom for him'—

²⁵then his flesh is renewed like a child's;
it is restored as in the days of his youth.

²⁶He prays to God and finds favor with him,
he sees God's face and shouts for joy;
he is restored by God to his righteous state.

²⁷Then he comes to men and says,
'I sinned, and perverted what was right,
but I did not get what I deserved.

²⁸He redeemed my soul from going down to the
pit,^j
and I will live to enjoy the light.'

²⁹"God does all these things to a man—
twice, even three times—

³⁰to turn back his soul from the pit,^k
that the light of life may shine on him .

³¹"Pay attention, Job, and listen to me;
be silent, and I will speak.

³²If you have anything to say, answer me;
speak up, for I want you to be cleared.

^a3 Masoretic Text, an ancient Hebrew scribal tradition Job, and so had condemned God

or great ⁴13 Or that he does not answer for any of his actions

¹²² Or He draws near to the grave

³⁰ Or turn him back from the grave

²² Or to the dead

²⁴ Or grave

¹⁸ Or preserve him from the grave

²⁸ Or Spirit, also in verse 18

²⁹ Or many.

¹⁵ Or from crossing the River

¹²⁸ Or redeemed me from going down to the grave

13But if not, then listen to me,
be silent, and I will teach you wisdom."

34 Then Elihu said:

1Hear my words, you wise men;
listen to me, you men of learning;
2For the ear tests words
as the tongue tastes food.
3Let us discern for ourselves what is right;
4let us learn together what is good.

5Job says, "I am innocent
but God denies me justice."
6Although I am right,
I am considered a liar,
although I am guiltless,
his arrow inflicts an incurable wound."

7What man is like Job,
who drinks scorn like water?

8He keeps company with evildoers;
he associates with wicked men.

9For he says, "It profits a man nothing
when he tries to please God."

10"So listen to me, you men of understanding.
Far be it from God to do evil,
from the Almighty to do wrong.
He repays a man for what he has done;
he brings upon him what his conduct
deserves.

11It is unthinkable that God would do wrong,
that the Almighty would pervert justice.

12Who appointed him over the earth?
Who put him in charge of the whole world?

13If it were his intention
and he withdrew his spirit¹⁴ and breath,

14all mankind would perish together
and man would return to the dust.

15If you have understanding, hear this;
listen to what I say.

16Can he who hates justice govern?

Will you condemn the just and mighty One?

17Is he not the One who says to kings, "You are
worthless,"

and to nobles, "You are wicked,"

18who shows no partiality to princes
and does not favor the rich over the poor,
for they are all the work of his hands?

19They die in an instant, in the middle of the
night,

the people are shaken and they pass away;

the mighty are removed without human
hand.

21"His eyes are on the ways of men,
he sees their every step."

22There is no dark place, no deep shadow,
where evildoers can hide.

23God has no need to examine men further,
that they should come before him for
judgment.

24Without inquiry he shatters the mighty
and sets up others in their place.

25Because he takes note of their deeds,
he overthrows them in the night and they
are crushed.

26He punishes them for their wickedness
where everyone can see them,

27because they turned from following him
and had no regard for any of his ways.

28They caused the cry of the poor to come before
him,
so that he heard the cry of the needy.
29But if he remains silent, who can condemn
him?

If he hides his face, who can see him?

Yet he is over man and nation alike,

30 to keep a godless man from ruling,
from laying snares for the people.

31"Suppose a man says to God,
"I am guilty but will offend no more."

32Teach me what I cannot see;
if I have done wrong, I will not do so again."

33Should God then reward you on your terms,
when you refuse to repent?

You must decide, not I;
so tell me what you know.

34"Men of understanding declare,
wise men who hear me say to me,

35"Job speaks without knowledge;
his words lack insight."

36Oh, that Job might be tested to the utmost
for answering like a wicked man!

37To his sin he adds rebellion;
scornfully he claps his hands among us
and multiplies his words against God."

35 Then Elihu said:

2"Do you think this is just?

You say, "I will be cleared by God."

3Yet you ask him, "What profit is it to me,"
and what do I gain by not sinning?"

4"I would like to reply to you
and to your friends with you.

5Look up at the heavens and see;
gaze at the clouds so high above you.

6If you sin, how does that affect him?

If your sins are many, what does that do to
him?

7If you are righteous, what do you give to him,
or what does he receive from your hand?

8Your wickedness affects only a man like
yourself,

33:30 Pain as a Warning

Elihu did not defend Job as innocent. But his arguments shifted the emphasis of suffering from punishment to warning. Perhaps, he suggested, God allows a man to suffer in order "to turn back his soul from the pit." Primarily, however, Elihu defended God's actions. "It is unthinkable that God would do wrong, that the Almighty would pervert justice" (34:12).

¹⁴ Or Spirit

¹² Or My righteousness is more than God's

¹³ Or you

and your righteousness only the sons of men

⁹Men cry out under a load of oppression; they plead for relief from the arm of the powerful

¹⁰But no one says, "Where is God my Maker, who gives songs in the night,

¹¹who teaches more to us than to^a the beasts of the earth and makes us wiser than^b the birds of the air?"

¹²He does not answer when men cry out because of the arrogance of the wicked.

¹³Indeed, God does not listen to their empty plea; the Almighty pays no attention to it.

¹⁴How much less, then, will he listen when you say that you do not see him, that your case is before him and you must wait for him,

¹⁵and further, that his anger never punishes and he does not take the least notice of wickedness.^c

¹⁶So Job opens his mouth with empty talk; without knowledge he multiplies words."

36 Elihu continued:

²"Bear with me a little longer and I will show you

that there is more to be said in God's behalf

³I get my knowledge from afar; I will ascribe justice to my Maker.

⁴Be assured that my words are not false; one perfect in knowledge is with you.

⁵"God is mighty, but does not despise men; he is mighty, and firm in his purpose.

⁶He does not keep the wicked alive but gives the afflicted their rights.

⁷He does not take his eyes off the righteous; he enthrones them with kings and exalts them forever.

⁸But if men are bound in chains, held fast by cords of affliction,

⁹he tells them what they have done—that they have sinned arrogantly.

¹⁰He makes them listen to correction and commands them to repent of their evil.

35:14 Is God Really Listening?

Readers differ on how true Elihu's words were. But in this chapter he seems to say Job had no right to argue before God or to ask for a personal appearance. Why should God be concerned about one man's wickedness or righteousness? he asks (verse 8). The opening chapters of the book, however, revealed how much hung on Job's responses. And ultimately God did step in and reveal himself. In fact, he made an entrance just as Elihu was explaining why God would not appear.

¹¹If they obey and serve him, they will spend the rest of their days in prosperity and their years in contentment.

¹²But if they do not listen, they will perish by the sword^d and die without knowledge.

¹³"The godless in heart harbor resentment; even when he fetters them, they do not cry for help.

¹⁴They die in their youth, among male prostitutes of the shrines.

¹⁵But those who suffer he delivers in their suffering; he speaks to them in their affliction.

¹⁶"He is wooing you from the jaws of distress to a spacious place free from restriction, to the comfort of your table laden with choice food.

¹⁷But now you are laden with the judgment due the wicked; judgment and justice have taken hold of you.

¹⁸Be careful that no one entices you by riches; do not let a large bribe turn you aside.

¹⁹Would your wealth or even all your mighty efforts sustain you so you would not be in distress?

²⁰Do not long for the night, to drag people away from their homes.^e

²¹Beware of turning to evil, which you seem to prefer to affliction.

²²"God is exalted in his power. Who is a teacher like him?

²³Who has prescribed his ways for him, or said to him, "You have done wrong?"

²⁴Remember to extol his work, which men have praised in song.

²⁵All mankind has seen it; men gaze on it from afar.

²⁶How great is God—beyond our understanding! The number of his years is past finding out.

²⁷"He draws up the drops of water, which distill as rain to the streams/;

²⁸the clouds pour down their moisture and abundant showers fall on mankind.

²⁹Who can understand how he spreads out the clouds,

how he thunders from his pavilion?

³⁰See how he scatters his lightning about him, bathing the depths of the sea.

³¹This is the way he governs^g the nations and provides food in abundance.

³²He fills his hands with lightning and commands it to strike its mark.

³³His thunder announces the coming storm; even the cattle make known its approach.^h

37 "At this my heart pounds and leaps from its place.

²Listen! Listen to the roar of his voice,

^a11 Or teaches us by ^b11 Or us wise by
uncertain.

^c12 Or will cross the River

^d12 Or will cross the River

^e13 Or nourishes

^f15 Symmachus, Theodotion and Vulgate, the meaning of the Hebrew for this word is

^g20 The meaning of the Hebrew for verses 18-20 is uncertain

^h33 Or announces his coming— / the One zealous against evil

ⁱ27 Or distill from the

to the rumbling that comes from his mouth
 He unleashes his lightning beneath the whole
 heaven

and sends it to the ends of the earth
 After that comes the sound of his roar,
 he thunders with his majestic voice
 When his voice resounds
 he holds nothing back

God's voice thunders in marvelous ways;
 he does great things beyond our
 understanding

He says to the snow, "Fall on the earth,"
 and to the rain shower, "Be a mighty
 downpour

So that all men he has made may know his
 work

he stops every man from his labor.^a

The animals take cover
 they remain in their dens

The tempest comes out from its chamber,
 the cold from the driving winds

The breath of God produces ice,
 and the broad waters become frozen.

He loads the clouds with moisture,
 he scatters his lightning through them

At his direction they swirl around
 over the face of the whole earth
 to do whatever he commands them

He brings the clouds to punish men,
 or to water his earth^b and show his love.

"Listen to this, Job,
 stop and consider God's wonders.

Do you know how God controls the clouds
 and makes his lightning flash?

Do you know how the clouds hang poised,
 those wonders of him who is perfect in
 knowledge?

You who swelter in your clothes
 when the land lies hushed under the south
 wind,

can you join him in spreading out the skies,
 hard as a mirror of cast bronze?

Tell us what we should say to him;
 we cannot draw up our case because of our
 darkness

Should he be told that I want to speak?
 Would any man ask to be swallowed up?

Now no one can look at the sun,
 bright as it is in the skies
 after the wind has swept them clean.

Out of the north he comes in golden splendor;
 God comes in awesome majesty.

The Almighty is beyond our reach and exalted
 in power,
 in his justice and great righteousness, he
 does not oppress.

Therefore, men revere him,
 for does he not have regard for all the wise
 in heart?^c

The Lord Speaks

38 Then the Lord answered Job out of the
 storm. He said:

"Who is this that darkens my counsel
 with words without knowledge?

Brace yourself like a man;
 I will question you,
 and you shall answer me.

"Where were you when I laid the earth's
 foundation?

Tell me, if you understand.

Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you
 know!

Who stretched a measuring line across it?

On what were its footings set,
 or who laid its cornerstone—

while the morning stars sang together
 and all the angels^d shouted for joy?

"Who shut up the sea behind doors
 when it burst forth from the womb,

when I made the clouds its garment
 and wrapped it in thick darkness,

when I fixed limits for it
 and set its doors and bars in place,

when I said, "This far you may come and no
 farther;

here is where your proud waves halt?"

"Have you ever given orders to the morning,
 or shown the dawn its place,

that it might take the earth by the edges
 and shake the wicked out of it?

The earth takes shape like clay under a seal;
 its features stand out like those of a garment.

The wicked are denied their light,
 and their upraised arm is broken.

"Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea
 or walked in the recesses of the deep?

Have the gates of death been shown to you?
 Have you seen the gates of the shadow of
 death?

Have you comprehended the vast expanses of
 the earth?

Tell me, if you know all this.

37:7 The Message of a Blizzard

Anyone who has lived in a northern city can identify with Elihu's comment about a snowstorm. A blizzard "stops every man from his labor," as schools, businesses, and buses shut down. It's a reminder, says Elihu, of God's undeniable power.

38:21 God Pulls Out the Stops

God is not above using sarcasm, as this barb directed at Job clearly shows. His entire speech stressed the vast difference between a God of all creation and one puny man like Job. "Do you have an arm like God's?" he asked (40:9).

^a7 Or, he fills all men with fear by his power

^b13 Or to favor them

^c7 Hebrew the sons of God

^d17 Or gates of deep shadows

^e24 Or for he does not have regard for any who think they are wise.

19 "What is the way to the abode of light?
And where does darkness reside?
20 Can you take them to their places?
Do you know the paths to their dwellings?
21 Surely you know, for you were already
born!
You have lived so many years!

22 "Have you entered the storehouses of the
snow
or seen the storehouses of the hail,
23 which I reserve for times of trouble,
for days of war and battle?

24 What is the way to the place where the
lightning is dispersed,
or the place where the east winds are
scattered over the earth?
25 Who cuts a channel for the torrents of rain,
and a path for the thunderstorm,
26 to water a land where no man lives,
a desert with no one in it,
27 to satisfy a desolate wasteland
and make it sprout with grass?
28 Does the rain have a father?
Who fathers the drops of dew?
29 From whose womb comes the ice?

INSIGHT

God Speaks to Job

At last, Job gets what he demanded

"Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!" 40:2

In the span of a few days Job experienced more tragedy than most people encounter in a lifetime. He scratched himself with shards of pottery and mourned the day he was born. He could not even suffer with dignity; he had to endure his wife's taunts and his friends' ramblings. Nothing anyone said helped him.

Through it all, Job steadfastly refused to turn his back on God. He had only one request. He wanted to hear from God in person. He wanted an explanation straight from the Source.

At last Job got his wish. God answered Job with a speech often quoted for its majesty and beauty. In a touch of irony, God made his entrance just as Elihu was explaining why Job could not expect a direct answer from him.

Not the Expected Message

God's reply resembled a nature lesson more than an explanation of the problem of suffering. He pointed out, one by one, all the creations that gave him greatest pride. In short, God asked Job, "Do you want to try running the universe for a while? Go ahead, try designing an ostrich, or a mountain goat, or even a snowflake."

Astonishingly, the question of suffering itself did not even come up. Yet somehow Job seemed satisfied—humiliated, actually. "Surely I spoke of things I did not understand," he confessed, "things too wonderful for me to know" (42:3).

Job Passes the Test

Job had endured his terrible sufferings in the dark. When he needed God most, God had stayed silent. And that was exactly the point of the contest begun at the beginning of the book, back in chapter 1. Satan had promised God that Job would "surely curse you to your face." He lost the challenge. Despite everything that happened, Job did not curse God. He clung to his belief in a just God, even when everything in his experience seemed to contradict it.

God had some words of correction for Job. No one, not Job and especially not his friends, had the evidence needed to make judgments about how he runs the world. But mainly, God had praise for Job. He called him "my servant," and, in an ironic twist, told the three friends to go to Job and ask for his mercy (42:7-8). Much later, in the book of Ezekiel (14:14), God included Job in a list of the finest human examples of righteousness.

The book of Job ends on a note of surprise. Job's friends, who had spouted all the right pieties and clichés, ask for forgiveness. Job, who had raged and cried out, is given twice as much as he ever had before. "And so he died, old and full of years" (42:17).

Life Questions: In Job's place, what kind of answer would you have wanted from God? Does God's reply to Job surprise you?

- 8^a Would you discredit my justice?^a
 Would you condemn me to justify yourself?
 9 Do you have an arm like God's,
 and can your voice thunder like his?
 10 Then adorn yourself with glory and splendor
 and clothe yourself in honor and majesty.
 11 Unleash the fury of your wrath;
 look at every proud man and bring him low.
 12 Look at every proud man and humble him,
 crush the wicked where they stand.
 13 Bury them all in the dust together;
 shroud their faces in the grave.
 14 Then I myself will admit to you
 that your own right hand can save you.
- 15 Look at the behemoth^b
 which I made along with you
 and which feeds on grass like an ox.
 16 What strength he has in his loins,
 what power in the muscles of his belly!
 17 His tail^b sways like a cedar;
 the sinews of his thighs are close-knit.
 18 His bones are tubes of bronze,
 his limbs like rods of iron.
 19 He ranks first among the works of God,
 yet his Maker can approach him with his
 sword.
 20 The bulls bring him their produce,
 and all the wild animals play nearby.
 21 Under the lotus plants he lies,
 hidden among the reeds in the marsh.
 22 The lotuses conceal him in their shadow;
 the poplars by the stream surround him.
 23 When the river rages, he is not alarmed;
 he is secure, though the Jordan should surge
 against his mouth.
 24 Can anyone capture him by the eyes,^c
 or trap him and pierce his nose?
- 41** Can you pull in the leviathan^d with a
 fishhook
 or tie down his tongue with a rope?
 2 Can you put a cord through his nose
 or pierce his jaw with a hook?
 3 Will he keep begging you for mercy?
 Will he speak to you with gentle words?
 4 Will he make an agreement with you

- for you to take him as your slave for life?
 5 Can you make a pet of him like a bird
 or put him on a leash for your girls?
 6 Will he defer to you for hire?
 Will he shake his tail up among the
 merchants?
 7 Can you fill his hide with harpoons
 or his head with fishing spears?
 8 If you lay a hand on him,
 you will remember the struggle and never do
 it again!
 9 Any hope of subduing him is false;
 the mere sight of him is overpowering.
 10 No one is fierce enough to rouse him.
 Who then is able to stand against me?
 11 Who has a claim against me that I must pay?
 Everything under heaven belongs to me.
- 12 I will not fail to speak of his limbs,
 his strength and his graceful form.
 13 Who can strip off his outer coat?
 Who would approach him with a bridle?
 14 Who dares open the doors of his mouth,
 ringed about with his fearsome teeth?
 15 His back has rows of shields
 tightly sealed together;
 16 each is so close to the next
 that no air can pass between.
 17 They are joined fast to one another,
 they cling together and cannot be parted.
 18 His snorting throws out flashes of light;
 his eyes are like the rays of dawn.
 19 Firebrands stream from his mouth,
 sparks of fire shoot out.
 20 Smoke pours from his nostrils
 as from a boiling pot over a fire of reeds.
 21 His breath sets coals ablaze,
 and flames dart from his mouth.
 22 Strength resides in his neck;
 dismay goes before him.
 23 The folds of his flesh are tightly joined;
 they are firm and immovable.
 24 His chest is hard as rock,
 hard as a lower millstone.
 25 When he rises up, the mighty are terrified;
 they retreat before his thrashing.
 26 The sword that reaches him has no effect,
 nor does the spear or the dart or the javelin.
 27 Iron he treats like straw
 and bronze like rotten wood.
 28 Arrows do not make him flee;
 slingstones are like chaff to him.
 29 A club seems to him but a piece of straw;
 he laughs at the rattling of the lance.
 30 His undersides are jagged potsherds,
 leaving a trail in the mud like a threshing
 sledge.
 31 He makes the depths churn like a boiling
 caldron
 and stirs up the sea like a pot of ointment.
 32 Behind him he leaves a glistening wake,
 one would think the deep had white hair.
 33 Nothing on earth is his equal—
 a creature without fear.

40:15 What Are Behemoth and Leviathan?

No one is quite sure what is meant by these two words, so the English Bible leaves them untranslated. The behemoth resembles a hippopotamus or elephant. The leviathan has some features of a crocodile and some of a dragon. In other places, the Bible refers to the leviathan as either a whale-like creature (Psalm 104:26) or a serpent or monster of the sea (Isaiah 27:1). God used the leviathan as a symbol of something powerful and uncontrollable. Job got the message: if you can't take on one of God's fearsome creatures, don't attempt to take on God.

^a15 Possibly by the hippopotamus or the elephant

^b16 Or His pride is his

^c17 Possibly trunk

^d24 Or by a water hole

^e25 Possibly the crocodile

⁴He looks down on all that are haughty;
he is king over all that are proud."

Job

42 Then Job replied to the Lord:

²"I know that you can do all things;
no plan of yours can be thwarted

³You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my
counsel without knowledge?'

Surely I spoke of things I did not
understand,

things too wonderful for me to know

⁴"You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak;
I will question you,
and you shall answer me.'

⁵My ears had heard of you
but now my eyes have seen you.

⁶Therefore I despise myself
and repent in dust and ashes."

Epilogue

⁷After the Lord had said these things to Job, he
said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "I am angry with you
and your two friends, because you have not
spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.
⁸So now take seven bulls and seven rams and go to
my servant Job and sacrifice a burnt offering for

yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you, and I
will accept his prayer and not deal with you ac-
cording to your folly. You have not spoken of me
what is right, as my servant Job has." ⁹So Eliphaz
the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the
Naamathite did what the Lord told them; and the
Lord accepted Job's prayer.

¹⁰After Job had prayed for his friends, the Lord
made him prosperous again and gave him twice as
much as he had before. ¹¹All his brothers and sis-
ters and everyone who had known him before
came and ate with him in his house. They comfort-
ed and consoled him over all the trouble the Lord
had brought upon him, and each one gave him a
piece of silver and a gold ring.

¹²The Lord blessed the latter part of Job's life
more than the first. He had fourteen thousand
sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of
oxen and a thousand donkeys. ¹³And he also had
seven sons and three daughters. ¹⁴The first daugh-
ter he named Jemimah, the second Keziah and the
third Keren-Happuch. ¹⁵Nowhere in all the land
were there found women as beautiful as Job's
daughters, and their father granted them an inher-
itance along with their brothers.

¹⁶After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years;
he saw his children and their children to the fourth
generation. ¹⁷And so he died, old and full of years.

⁴¹¹ Hebrew *him a kesitah*; a kesitah was a unit of money of unknown weight and value

PSALMS

INTRODUCTION

Cries from the Heart

Songs for sorrow as well as joy

You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance. 32

Here at the very center of the Bible are songs rising up like a tune from its heart. They capture the innermost thoughts and prayers of Old Testament people—and they still speak directly to our needs.

For every emotion and mood, you can find a psalm to match. The psalms wrestle with the deepest sorrow and ask God the hardest questions about suffering and injustice. Their voice is refreshingly spontaneous. They do not tip flowers, compliments toward God; they cry out to him, or shout for joy before him.

After you read these poems, you can't think of the Old Testament as dry and rule-bound. Nor is the Old Testament God distant and impersonal. In almost every psalm you find the presence of God, not as a philosophical principle, but as an active, strong, and loving ruler—a God who makes a difference in life.

How Did the Psalms Come Together?

While almost half of the psalms are credited to David—at least one was written 500 years after his birth. A number of poets and writers contributed, and about a third of the psalms are completely anonymous.

How did the psalms come together? They seem to have been compiled as a hymnbook for use in temple worship. Some psalms were written from an individual's experiences, but were adapted for congregational use. Directions for musicians were added, along with a few verses to widen the psalms' meaning to everybody.

The psalms show tremendous variation, reflecting the many personalities who contributed their poems and prayers over several centuries. Yet readers have found an inner consistency in the whole book, so they can move from one psalm to the next without being particularly aware that one poem is centuries older than another. Some have called the psalms a Bible within the Bible—different books telling a single story.

Others have compared the book of Psalms to a beautiful cathedral built over centuries. Each wing and each window show the individual genius of its designers, yet all the parts are somehow harmonious. This harmony comes not merely from a common sense of style, but from unity of purpose: the whole cathedral is made for the worship of one and the same God. Just so, the psalms reflect, in a hundred moods and experiences, the never-changing reality of a strong and loving God, who cares for his people.

The Presence of Real Enemies

God is not the only reality in the psalms. Equally persistent are enemies who sneer and hurt and plot violence. They, too, appear in nearly every psalm. For the psalmists, faith in God was a struggle against powerful forces that often seemed more real than God.

The psalm writers frequently asked, "Where are you, God? Why don't you help me?" Despite the love of God, they often felt abandoned, misused, betrayed. They found no guarantee of safety in their closeness to God. The joy and praise that saturate these prayers came, not from an absence of problems, but from a deep conviction that a great God would overcome them.

Jesus, dying on the cross, twice expressed himself in the words of psalms (22:1 and 31:5), and his disciples, in trying to explain his life, quoted from Psalms more than any other book. They appear to have meditated on the psalms often as they considered the meaning of Jesus' life. In the psalms they could see that even the best men—even David, the great king—suffer agony and feel abandoned.

Living by faith is not easy. It was not for David; it was not for Jesus either. These psalms of praise, praise and worship, some of the most beautiful ever written, offer no suggestions or hints as to how to live by faith. Yet while read the questions, struggles and discouragements have a strong voice in these psalms, more powerful still is the voice of joy and victory. In the strength and beauty of God, the Lord himself.

How to Read Psalms

The best way to read the psalms is just the most common way: to make these ancient poems your own and sing them out loud. As many of the psalms catch deep human feelings that you can help being moved by them.

But in all the psalms seem alike, some about such with congratulations or having you will not find it easy to pray these under your understanding of them.

And there are so many psalms. This is the longest book in the Bible. To compensate many people read only selected psalms, skimming over the others. But then they miss the deeper messages found there, including the messages that the New Testament writers use when they quoted Psalms more than any other Old Testament book. The richest lessons many Psalms may come from particularly difficult poems you must read again and again until you begin to see what the author had in mind.

The original Hebrew of these poems probably used no rhyme or strict rhythm as traditional English poems do. Instead the psalmists wrote with parallelism, making one thought by a rhyming thought or by its opposite. For more on this, see *Understanding the Bible: Parallelism*, page 44. Fortunately, this kind of poem can be translated into almost any language without loss.

Readers may be confused by the psalms' frequent change of voice. In a single poem the psalmist may talk to God, then talk about him, and then return to talking to him, all in rapid succession. This would be strange English prose, but was common in Hebrew poetry.

Because so many of the psalm titles refer to David, you may find it helpful to refer to his life story. It is found in 1 Samuel 16-11, the whole book of 2 Samuel, and the first two chapters of 1 Kings. However, most of the psalms can make perfect sense without reference to any outside information. They merely ask—and reward—time and close attention. Read and reread them. They grow richer with careful study.

PLANS FOR READING PSALMS

PLAN 1: An Overview of Psalms in 7 Days

- Day 1 Read the Introduction to Psalms, and Psalm 19: Perfect Harmony
- Day 2 Read Psalm 23: The Shepherd Song
- Day 3 Read Psalm 27: Confidence in Trouble
- Day 4 Read Psalm 51: The Great Confession
- Day 5 Read Psalm 84: The Delight of Worshipping God
- Day 6 Read Psalm 103: God's Benefits
- Day 7 Read Psalm 139: God's Care

PLAN 2: All of Psalms in Two Two-Month Periods (122 days)

Part I

- 1-2 — 3-4 — 5 — 6 — 8 — 9 — 10 — 11-12 — 13-14 — 15-16 — 17 — 18 — 19
- 20-21 — 22 — 23-24 — 25 — 26 — 27 — 28-29 — 30 — 31 — 32 — 33 — 34 — 35
- 36 — 37 — 38 — 39 — 40 — 41 — 42-43 — 44 — 45 — 46-47 — 48 — 49 — 50 — 51
- 52 — 53-54 — 55 — 56 — 57 — 58 — 59 — 60-61 — 62 — 63-64 — 65 — 66 — 67
- 68 — 69 — 70 — 71 — 72 — 73 — 74 — 75

Part II

- 76 — 77 — 78 — 79 — 80 — 81 — 82 — 83 — 84 — 85 — 86 — 87 — 88 — 89
- 90 — 91 — 92-93 — 94 — 95 — 96 — 97 — 98-99 — 100-101 — 102 — 103 — 104
- 105 — 106 — 107 — 108 — 109 — 110-111 — 112-113 — 114 — 115 — 116-117
- 118 — 119:1-48 — 119:49-96 — 119:97-144 — 119:145-176 — 120-121 — 122-123
- 124-125 — 126-128 — 129-130 — 131-132 — 133-134 — 135 — 136 — 137-138 — 139
- 140 — 141-142 — 143 — 144 — 145 — 146 — 147 — 148 — 149-150

BOOK I

Psalms 1-41

Psalm 1

¹Blessed is the man
who does not walk in the counsel of the
wicked
or stand in the way of sinners
or sit in the seat of mockers.
²But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditates day and night.
³He is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither.
Whatever he does prospers.
⁴Not so the wicked!
They are like chaff
that the wind blows away.
⁵Therefore the wicked will not stand in the
judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
⁶For the LORD watches over the way of the
righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

Psalm 2

¹Why do the nations conspire^a
and the peoples plot in vain?
²The kings of the earth take their stand
and the rulers gather together
against the LORD
and against his Anointed One.^b

1:4 Blowing in the Wind

The opposite of "a tree planted by streams" (verse 3) should be a tree withered by drought—and so it is in Jeremiah 17:5-8, which paints a similar contrast between good and bad people. This image of the wicked as "chaff," however, is far more absolute—for chaff, utterly worthless even for a fire, is blown away by the wind. God's judgment day is what finally makes the wicked seem like chaff.

2:2 The Messiah in the Psalms

Israelite kings and priests were anointed with oil when they took office. The "Anointed One" probably originally meant "king." It came, however, to stand for more. The Hebrew word is *masiah*, which became *Messiah* and translated into Greek as *Christos* or *Christ*. This psalm was understood in the New Testament as referring to Jesus—for no Old Testament king ever gained the control of the nations implied here. You can find quotations in Acts 4:25-26; 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; 5:5; and Revelation 2:27; 12:5; and 19:15.

³"Let us break their chains," they say,
"and throw off their fetters."

⁴The One enthroned in heaven laughs;
the Lord scoffs at them.
⁵Then he rebukes them in his anger
and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,
⁶"I have installed my King^c
on Zion, my holy hill."

⁷I will proclaim the decree of the LORD:

He said to me, "You are my Son^d;
today I have become your Father."^e

⁸Ask of me,
and I will make the nations your inheritance,
the ends of the earth your possession.
⁹You will rule them with an iron scepter;
you will dash them to pieces like pottery."

¹⁰Therefore, you kings, be wise;
be warned, you rulers of the earth.
¹¹Serve the LORD with fear
and rejoice with trembling.
¹²Kiss the Son, lest he be angry
and you be destroyed in your way,
for his wrath can flare up in a moment.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Psalm 3

A psalm of David. When he fled from
his son Absalom.

¹O LORD, how many are my foes!
How many rise up against me!
²Many are saying of me,
"God will not deliver him."^a *Selah*

³But you are a shield around me, O LORD;
you bestow glory on me and lift^b up my
head.

⁴To the LORD I cry aloud,
and he answers me from his holy hill. *Selah*

⁵I lie down and sleep;
I wake again, because the LORD sustains me.

⁶I will not fear the tens of thousands
drawn up against me on every side.

⁷Arise, O LORD!
Deliver me, O my God!
Strike all my enemies on the jaw;
break the teeth of the wicked.

⁸From the LORD comes deliverance.
May your blessing be on your people. *Selah*

Psalm 4

For the director of music With stringed
instruments A psalm of David

¹Answer me when I call to you,
O my righteous God.
Give me relief from my distress,

^a1 Hebrew Septuagint rage

^b2 Or anointed one

^c3 Or king

^d4 Or son, also in verse 12

^e5 Or have begotten you

^f6 I will break them with a rod of iron

^g7 A word of uncertain meaning, occurring frequently in the Psalms, possibly a musical term

^h8 Or Lord, I my Glorious One who lifts

be merciful to me and hear my prayer.

¹How long, O men, will you turn my glory into shame?

²How long will you love delusions and seek false gods? *Selah*

³Know that the Lord has set apart the godly for himself,

the Lord will hear when I call to him

⁴in your anger do not sin,
when you are on your beds,
search your hearts and be silent *Selah*
⁵utter right sacrifices
and trust in the Lord

⁶Many are asking, "Who can show us any good?"

Let the light of your face shine upon us,
O Lord

⁷You have filled my heart with greater joy
than when their grain and new wine
abound

⁸I will lie down and sleep in peace,
for you alone, O Lord,
make me dwell in safety

Psalm 5

For the director of music For flutes
A psalm of David

¹Give ear to my words, O Lord,
consider my sighing

²Listen to my cry for help,
my King and my God,
for to you I pray

³In the morning, O Lord, you hear my voice;
in the morning I lay my requests before you
and wait in expectation.

⁴You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil,
with you the wicked cannot dwell

⁵The arrogant cannot stand in your presence;
you hate all who do wrong

⁶You destroy those who tell lies;
bloodthirsty and deceitful men
the Lord abhors.

⁷But I, by your great mercy,
will come into your house;
in reverence will I bow down
toward your holy temple

⁸Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness
because of my enemies—
make straight your way before me.

⁹Not a word from their mouth can be trusted,
their heart is filled with destruction
Their throat is an open grave;
with their tongue they speak deceit.

¹⁰Declare them guilty, O God!

Let their intrigues be their downfall
Banish them for their many sins,
for they have rebelled against you

¹¹But let all who take refuge in you be glad,

let them ever sing for joy
Spread your protection over them,
that those who love your name may rejoice
in you

¹²For surely, O Lord, you bless the righteous;
you surround them with your favor as with a
shield

Psalm 6

For the director of music With stringed
instruments According to sheminith
A psalm of David

¹O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger
or discipline me in your wrath

²Be merciful to me, Lord, for I am faint,
O Lord, heal me, for my bones are in agony.

³My soul is in anguish.
How long, O Lord, how long?

⁴Turn, O Lord, and deliver me;
save me because of your unfailing love.

⁵No one remembers you when he is dead.
Who praises you from the grave?

⁶I am worn out from groaning,
all night long I flood my bed with weeping
and drench my couch with tears.

⁷My eyes grow weak with sorrow;
they fail because of all my foes.

⁸Away from me, all you who do evil,
for the Lord has heard my weeping.

⁹The Lord has heard my cry for mercy;
the Lord accepts my prayer.

¹⁰All my enemies will be ashamed and
dismayed;
they will turn back in sudden disgrace.

Psalm 7

A *shiggaon* of David, which he sang to the Lord
concerning Cush, a Benjamite.

¹O Lord my God, I take refuge in you;
save and deliver me from all who pursue
me,

²for they will tear me like a lion
and rip me to pieces with no one to rescue
me

³O Lord my God, if I have done this
and there is guilt on my hands—

⁴if I have done evil to him who is at peace with
me

or without cause have robbed my foe—

⁵then let my enemy pursue and overtake me;
let him trample my life to the ground
and make me sleep in the dust. *Selah*

⁶Arise, O Lord, in your anger,
rise up against the rage of my enemies.
Awake, my God, decree justice

⁷Let the assembled peoples gather around you.
Rule over them from on high.

¹² Or you dishonor my Glorious One
a literary or musical term

¹² Or seek her

¹² Title Probably a musical term

¹⁵ Hebrew Shem

¹² Title Probably

3. Let the Lord judge the peoples
 Judge me O Lord according to my
righteousness
 according to my integrity O Most High
 4. righteous God
 who searches minds and hearts
 bring to an end the violence of the wicked
 and make the righteous secure

[illegible]

1. I have been thinking of you very much lately.
 2. I have been thinking of you very much lately.
 3. I have been thinking of you very much lately.
 4. I have been thinking of you very much lately.
 5. I have been thinking of you very much lately.
 6. I have been thinking of you very much lately.
 7. I have been thinking of you very much lately.
 8. I have been thinking of you very much lately.
 9. I have been thinking of you very much lately.
 10. I have been thinking of you very much lately.

Psalm 8

1. The first of these is the fact that the
the first of these is the fact that the

1:28-30 And
 how precious is your name in all the earth!
 1:31 Have not your days
 been long before
 1:32 From the age of children and infants
 you have increased praises
 because of your enemies
 1:33 to subvert the foe and the avenger.
 1:34 When you consider your heavens
 the work of your fingers
 the moon and the stars
 which you have set in place,
 what is man that you are mindful of him,
 the son of man that you care for him?
 1:35 You made him a little lower than the heavenly
 beings
 and crowned him with glory and honor.
 1:36 You made him ruler over the works of your
 hands
 you put everything under his feet:
 1:37 all flocks and herds,
 and the beasts of the field,
 1:38 the birds of the air,
 and the fish of the sea,
 all that swim the paths of the seas

Lord our Lord
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Psalm 9

For the director of music To the tune of, The
Death of the Son A psalm of David

1) I will praise you, O Lord, with all my heart,
I will tell of all your wonders

2) I will be glad and rejoice in you
I will sing praise to your name O Most
High

3 My enemies turn back;
they stumble and perish before you.

4 For you have upheld my right and my cause;
you have sat on your throne, judging
righteously.

5 You have rebuked the nations and destroyed
the wicked,
you have blotted out their name for ever and
ever.

6 Endless ruin has overtaken the enemy,
you have uprooted their cities,
even the memory of them has perished

*The LORD reigns forever.
 He has established his throne for judgment.
 *He will judge the world in righteousness,
 he will govern the peoples with justice.
 *The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed,
 a stronghold in times of trouble.
 *Those who know your name will trust in you,
 for you, LORD, have never forsaken those
 who seek you.

11 Sing praises to the LORD, enthroned in Zion;
proclaim among the nations what he has
done.

12 For he who avenges blood remembers;
he does not ignore the cry of the afflicted.

13 O LORD, see how my enemies persecute me!
Have mercy and lift me up from the gates of
death,

14 that I may declare your praises
in the gates of the Daughter of Zion
and there rejoice in your salvation.

15 The nations have fallen into the pit they have
dug;
their feet are caught in the net they have
hidden

16 The LORD is known by his justice;
the wicked are ensnared by the work of their
hands

17 The wicked return to the grave,^h
all the nations that forget God

18 But the needy will not always be forgotten,
nor the hope of the afflicted ever perish.

19 Arise, O LORD, let not man triumph;
let the nations be judged in your presence

20 Strike them with terror, O LORD;
let the nations know they are but men

Title: Probably a musical term
 1) Or strength
 2) Or than I and
 3) Or the
 4) Or the
 5) Or the
 6) Or the
 7) Or the
 8) Or the
 9) Or the
 10) Or the
 11) Or the
 12) Or the
 13) Or the
 14) Or the
 15) Or the
 16) Or the
 17) Or the
 18) Or the
 19) Or the
 20) Or the
 21) Or the
 22) Or the
 23) Or the
 24) Or the
 25) Or the
 26) Or the
 27) Or the
 28) Or the
 29) Or the
 30) Or the
 31) Or the
 32) Or the
 33) Or the
 34) Or the
 35) Or the
 36) Or the
 37) Or the
 38) Or the
 39) Or the
 40) Or the
 41) Or the
 42) Or the
 43) Or the
 44) Or the
 45) Or the
 46) Or the
 47) Or the
 48) Or the
 49) Or the
 50) Or the
 51) Or the
 52) Or the
 53) Or the
 54) Or the
 55) Or the
 56) Or the
 57) Or the
 58) Or the
 59) Or the
 60) Or the
 61) Or the
 62) Or the
 63) Or the
 64) Or the
 65) Or the
 66) Or the
 67) Or the
 68) Or the
 69) Or the
 70) Or the
 71) Or the
 72) Or the
 73) Or the
 74) Or the
 75) Or the
 76) Or the
 77) Or the
 78) Or the
 79) Or the
 80) Or the
 81) Or the
 82) Or the
 83) Or the
 84) Or the
 85) Or the
 86) Or the
 87) Or the
 88) Or the
 89) Or the
 90) Or the
 91) Or the
 92) Or the
 93) Or the
 94) Or the
 95) Or the
 96) Or the
 97) Or the
 98) Or the
 99) Or the
 100) Or the

Psalm 10^a

- 1 Why, O LORD, do you stand far off?
Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?
- 2 In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak,
who are caught in the schemes he devises.
- 3 He boasts of the cravings of his heart;
he blesses the greedy and reviles the LORD.
- 4 In his pride the wicked does not seek him;
in all his thoughts there is no room for God.
- 5 His ways are always prosperous,
he is haughty and your laws are far from him.
he sneers at all his enemies.
- 6 He says to himself, "Nothing will shake me,
I'll always be happy and never have trouble."
- 7 His mouth is full of curses and lies and threats;
trouble and evil are under his tongue.
- 8 He lies in wait near the villages;
from ambush he murders the innocent,
watching in secret for his victims.
- 9 He lies in wait like a lion in cover,
he lies in wait to catch the helpless;
he catches the helpless and drags them off in his net.
- 10 His victims are crushed, they collapse;
they fall under his strength.
- 11 He says to himself, "God has forgotten;
he covers his face and never sees."
- 12 Arise, LORD! Lift up your hand, O God.
Do not forget the helpless.
- 13 Why does the wicked man revile God?
Why does he say to himself,
"He won't call me to account?"
- 14 But you, O God, do see trouble and grief;
you consider it to take it in hand.
The victim commits himself to you;
you are the helper of the fatherless.
- 15 Break the arm of the wicked and evil man;
call him to account for his wickedness
that would not be found out.
- 16 The LORD is King for ever and ever;
the nations will perish from his land.
- 17 You hear, O LORD, the desire of the afflicted;
you encourage them, and you listen to their cry.
- 18 defending the fatherless and the oppressed,
in order that man, who is of the earth, may
terrify no more.

Psalm 11

For the director of music. Of David.

- 1 In the LORD I take refuge.
How then can you say to me:
"Flee like a bird to your mountain."

- 2 For look, the wicked bend their bows,
they set their arrows against the strings
to shoot from the shadows
at the upright in heart.
- 3 When the foundations are being destroyed,
what can the righteous do?"
- 4 The LORD is in his holy temple,
the LORD is on his heavenly throne.
He observes the sons of men;
his eyes examine them.
- 5 The LORD examines the righteous,
but the wicked and those who love
violence
his soul hates.
- 6 On the wicked he will rain
fiery coals and burning sulfur;
a scorching wind will be their lot.
- 7 For the LORD is righteous,
he loves justice;
upright men will see his face.

Psalm 12

For the director of music. According to sheminith.^a
A psalm of David.

- 1 Help, LORD, for the godly are no more,
the faithful have vanished from among men.
- 2 Everyone lies to his neighbor;
their flattering lips speak with deception.
- 3 May the LORD cut off all flattering lips
and every boastful tongue.
- 4 that says, "We will triumph with our tongues;
we own our lips—who is our master?"
- 5 "Because of the oppression of the weak
and the groaning of the needy,
I will now arise," says the LORD.
"I will protect them from those who malign them."
- 6 And the words of the LORD are flawless,
like silver refined in a furnace of clay,
purified seven times.
- 7 O LORD, you will keep us safe
and protect us from such people forever.
- 8 The wicked freely strut about
when what is vile is honored among men.

12:4 Who Owns Your Lips?

Repeatedly the Bible stresses that your talk can do tremendous good or evil. One key distinctive is suggested here: wicked people use words to build themselves up over others. They insist that no one has the right to tell them what to say.

^a Psalms 9 and 10 may have been originally a single acrostic poem, the stanzas of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In the Septuagint they constitute one psalm.

^b 3 Or what is the Righteous One doing

^c 5 Or The LORD, the Righteous One, examines the wicked, /

^d Title: Probably a musical term

^e 4 Or / our lips are our plowshares

Psalm 13

For the director of music A psalm of David

¹How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

²How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and every day have sorrow in my heart?
How long will my enemy triumph over me?

³Look on me and answer, O Lord my God.
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death.

⁴My enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

⁵But I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation.

⁶I will sing to the Lord,
for he has been good to me.

Psalm 14

For the director of music Of David

¹The fool^a says in his heart,
"There is no God."

They are corrupt, their deeds are vile;
there is no one who does good.

²The Lord looks down from heaven
on the sons of men
to see if there are any who understand,
any who seek God.

³All have turned aside,
they have together become corrupt;
there is no one who does good,
not even one.

⁴Will evildoers never learn—
those who devour my people as men eat bread
and who do not call on the Lord?

⁵There they are, overwhelmed with dread,
for God is present in the company of the
righteous.

⁶You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor,
but the Lord is their refuge.

⁷Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of
Zion!

When the Lord restores the fortunes of his
people,
let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!

14:3 Who Seeks God?

Though David was called a "man after God's own heart," he is credited with this chilling assessment of humankind—including himself. In God's eyes, nobody—not even David—is good. Paul quoted this in a crucial New Testament passage, Romans 3:10-12.

Psalm 15

A psalm of David

¹Lord, who may dwell in your sanctuary?
Who may live on your holy hill?

²He whose walk is blameless
and who does what is righteous,
who speaks the truth from his heart
³and has no slander on his tongue,
who does his neighbor no wrong
and casts no slur on his fellowman,

⁴who despises a vile man
but honors those who fear the Lord,
who keeps his oath
even when it hurts,

⁵who lends his money without usury
and does not accept a bribe against the
innocent.

He who does these things
will never be shaken.

Psalm 16

A miktam^b of David.

¹Keep me safe, O God,
for in you I take refuge.

²I said to the Lord, "You are my Lord;
apart from you I have no good thing."

³As for the saints who are in the land,
they are the glorious ones in whom is all my
delight.^c

⁴The sorrows of those will increase
who run after other gods.
I will not pour out their libations of blood
or take up their names on my lips.

⁵Lord, you have assigned me my portion and
my cup;
you have made my lot secure.

⁶The boundary lines have fallen for me in
pleasant places;
surely I have a delightful inheritance.

⁷I will praise the Lord, who counsels me;
even at night my heart instructs me.

⁸I have set the Lord always before me.
Because he is at my right hand,
I will not be shaken.

⁹Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue
rejoices;
my body also will rest secure.

¹⁰because you will not abandon me to the
grave,^d

nor will you let your Holy One^e see decay.

¹¹You have made^f known to me the path of life,
you will fill me with joy in your presence,
with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

^aThe Hebrew words rendered fool in Psalms denote one who is morally deficient.

^b Or As for the pagan priests who are in the land / and the nobles in whom all delight, I said
one ^c Or You will make

^c Title Probably literary or musical term

^d Or Hebrew sheol ^e Or your faithful

Psalm 17

A prayer of David

Hear my righteous plea,
 O LORD, my prayer—
 do not rise from deceitful lips.
 May my statement come from you,
 for my eyes see what is right.

Thou shalt probe my heart and examine me
 at night,
 though you test me, you will find nothing.
 I have resolved that my mouth will not sin.

As for the deeds of men—
 by the word of your lips
 I have kept myself
 from the ways of the violent.

My steps have held to your paths,
 my feet have not slipped.

I call on you, O God, for you will answer me;
 give ear to me and hear my prayer.

Show the wonder of your great love,
 you who save by your right hand
 those who take refuge in you from their foes.

Keep me as the apple of your eye;
 hide me in the shadow of your wings
 from the wicked who assail me,
 from my mortal enemies who surround me.

They close up their callous hearts,
 and their mouths speak with arrogance.

They have tracked me down, they now
 surround me,
 with eyes alert, to throw me to the ground.

They are like a lion hungry for prey,
 like a great lion crouching in cover.

Rise up, O LORD, confront them, bring them
 down,
 rescue me from the wicked by your sword.

O LORD, by your hand save me from such
 men,
 from men of this world whose reward is in
 this life.

You still the hunger of those you cherish;
 their sons have plenty,
 and they store up wealth for their children.

And I—in righteousness I will see your face;
 when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing
 your likeness.

17:15 The Face of God

While the psalms often ask God to provide "refuge" in a time of trouble, they also look forward to "seeing his face"—a goal that is valuable only to someone who deeply loves God. To see God's face is to see and know him personally, deeply, and without the clouds of mystery that so often make faith difficult.

Psalm 18

For the director of music Of David the servant of the LORD He sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul He said:

I love you, O LORD, my strength

The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
 my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge.
 He is my shield and the horn^a of my salvation, my stronghold

I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise,
 and I am saved from my enemies.

The cords of death entangled me,
 the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.

The cords of the grave^b coiled around me,
 the snares of death confronted me.

In my distress I called to the LORD;
 I cried to my God for help.
 From his temple he heard my voice;
 my cry came before him, into his ears.

The earth trembled and quaked,
 and the foundations of the mountains shook,
 they trembled because he was angry.

Smoke rose from his nostrils;
 consuming fire came from his mouth,
 burning coals blazed out of it.

He parted the heavens and came down;
 dark clouds were under his feet

He mounted the cherubim and flew;
 he soared on the wings of the wind.

He made darkness his covering, his canopy
 around him—
 the dark rain clouds of the sky.

Out of the brightness of his presence clouds
 advanced,
 with hailstones and bolts of lightning.

The LORD thundered from heaven;
 the voice of the Most High resounded^c

He shot his arrows and scattered the enemies,
 great bolts of lightning and routed them.

The valleys of the sea were exposed
 and the foundations of the earth laid bare
 at your rebuke, O LORD;
 at the blast of breath from your nostrils.

He reached down from on high and took hold
 of me,
 he drew me out of deep waters.

He rescued me from my powerful enemy,
 from my foes, who were too strong for me.

They confronted me in the day of my disaster,
 but the LORD was my support.

He brought me out into a spacious place;
 he rescued me because he delighted in me.

The LORD has dealt with me according to my
 righteousness,
 according to the cleanness of my hands he
 has rewarded me.

^a2 Horn here symbolizes strength. ^b5 Hebrew Sheol. ^c13 Some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint (see also 2 Samuel 22:14); most Hebrew manuscripts resounded, amid hailstones and bolts of lightning.

- 11 For I have kept the ways of the LORD;
 I have not done evil by turning from my
 God.
 12 All his laws are before me,
 I have not turned away from his decrees.
 21 I have been blameless before him
 and have kept myself from sin.
 24 The LORD has rewarded me according to my
 righteousness,
 according to the cleanness of my hands in
 his sight.
 25 To the faithful you show yourself faithful,
 to the blameless you show yourself
 blameless,
 26 to the pure you show yourself pure,
 but to the crooked you show yourself
 shrewd.
 27 You save the humble
 but bring low those whose eyes are
 haughty.
 28 You, O LORD, keep my lamp burning;
 my God turns my darkness into light.
 29 With your help I can advance against a troop;
 with my God I can scale a wall.

30 As for God, his way is perfect;
 the word of the LORD is flawless.

29 Or can run through a barricade

- He is a shield
 for all who take refuge in him.
 11 For who is God beside the LORD?
 And who is the rock except the LORD?
 12 It is God who arms me with strength
 and makes my way perfect.
 13 He makes my feet like the feet of a deer;
 he enables me to stand on the heights.
 14 He trains my hands for battle,
 my arms can bend a bow of bronze.
 15 You give me your shield of victory,
 and your right hand sustains me.
 you stoop down to make me great.
 16 You broaden the path beneath me,
 so that my ankles do not turn.
 37 I pursued my enemies and overtook them;
 I did not turn back till they were destroyed.
 38 I crushed them so that they could not rise,
 they fell beneath my feet.
 39 You armed me with strength for battle;
 you made my adversaries bow at my feet.
 40 You made my enemies turn their backs in
 flight,
 and I destroyed my foes.
 41 They cried for help, but there was no one to
 save them—
 to the LORD, but he did not answer.

INSIGHT

Life after Death

When you die, will it all be over?

You will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. 16:10

What happens to you after you die? People have always wanted an answer to that, and the psalmists were no different. They lived in an age without effective medicine, in an age when wars were fought hand-to-hand. Dead bodies were a familiar reality. Yet death, however familiar, remained mysterious and frightening to them.

Israelites called the dark and shadowy place where dead people go “Sheol.” When you got there, your life seemed thoroughly finished. The psalmists emphatically did not want to go there, and they asked God, when praying for his help, what possible good there might be in death: “Are your wonders known in the place of darkness, or your righteous deeds in the land of oblivion?” (Psalm 88:12). Sheol was the great leveler: it meant the end of plans, of worship, of a relationship with God (Psalms 146:4; 30:9; 88:5). The dead were found there, not the living.

God's Power over Death

Yet some psalms also hint at a happier view. They hold such a strong view of God's authority that they show—vaguely, but unmistakably—God's power over the grave. For instance, God is in Sheol (Psalm 139:8). He—and only he—can redeem a person from there (49:7-9, 15). God will not let his “Holy One” see decay—a claim that both Peter and Paul saw as a clear prediction of Jesus' resurrection from the dead (Psalm 16:10, quoted in Acts 2:27; 13:35).

What did they expect life after death to be like, if God's power redeemed someone from Sheol? You won't find a clearly defined picture of heaven here; only hints. The psalmists' thoughts center on God's face and his presence. For God is the only unchangeable reality: wherever you are, in life or in death, he will be there. He is the ultimate reward to those who love him.

The expectation of God's face shows through in Psalms 16:8-11; 17:15; 49:15; 73:23-26. But for a clearer perspective on life after death, you must read, in the Old Testament, Isaiah 26:19 and Daniel 12:1-3, and in the New Testament, 2 Corinthians 5:1-10, among many other passages.

Life Questions. Describe what you believe happens after you die. Is this a frightening or an encouraging picture to you?

in keeping them there is great reward

- 12 Who can discern his errors?
I forgive my hidden faults.
- 13 Keep your servant also from willful sin,
may they not rule over me
then will I be blameless,
innocent of great transgression.
- 14 May the words of my mouth and the
meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight,
O LORD my Rock and my Redeemer.

Psalm 20

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

- 1 May the LORD answer you when you are in
distress;
may the name of the God of Jacob protect
you.
- 2 May he send you help from the sanctuary
and grant you support from Zion.
- 3 May he remember all your sacrifices
and accept your burnt offerings. *Selah*
- 4 May he give you the desire of your heart
and make all your plans succeed.
- 5 We will shout for joy when you are victorious
and will lift up our banners in the name of
our God.
- May the LORD grant all your requests.
- 6 Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed,
he answers him from his holy heaven
with the saving power of his right hand.
- 7 Some trust in chariots and some in horses,
but we trust in the name of the LORD our
God.
- 8 They are brought to their knees and fall,
but we rise up and stand firm.
- 9 O LORD, save the king!
Answer us when we call!

19:7 The Names of God

After describing the skies as a reflection of God's glory in the first six verses, Psalm 19 switches gears. From the sun, moon, and stars it turns to consider the beauty of God's law. Reflecting that change, the poem in Hebrew uses a different, more personal name for God. The first six verses refer to God with a general name that anyone, of any religion, might use—just like our English word God. But from verse seven onwards, God is called *Yahweh* (translated "the Lord")—the personal name God revealed to Moses from the burning bush (Exodus 3:15). The heavens declare the glory of God, but God's law reveals even more—his personal voice to his chosen people. He introduces himself to them by his first name, as it were.

1 beat them as fine as dust borne on the wind,
I poured them out like mud in the streets.

2 You have delivered me from the attacks of the
people.

You have made me the head of nations,
people I did not know are subject to me.

3 As they hear me they obey me,
they come to me and encamp before me.

4 I have said, and my heart
has heard.

5 I have seen them trembling from their strongholds.

6 Blessed lives! Praise be to my Rock!
Exalted be God my Savior!

7 He is the God who avenges me,
who subdues nations under me,

8 who saves me from my enemies.
You exalted me above my foes;

from violent men you rescued me.

9 Therefore I will praise you among the nations,
O LORD;

I will sing praises to your name.

10 He gives his king great victories,
he shows unfailing kindness to his anointed,
to David and his descendants forever.

Psalm 19

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

The heavens declare the glory of God,
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

2 Day after day they pour forth speech,
night after night they display knowledge.

3 There is no speech or language
where their voice is not heard.

4 Their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.

In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the
sun.

5 which is like a bridegroom coming forth
from his pavilion,

like a champion rejoicing to run his course.

6 It rises at one end of the heavens
and makes its circuit to the other,
nothing is hidden from its heat.

The law of the LORD is perfect,
reviving the soul.

The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.

7 The precepts of the LORD are right,
giving joy to the heart.

The commands of the LORD are radiant,
giving light to the eyes.

8 The fear of the LORD is pure
enduring forever.

The ordinances of the LORD are sure
and altogether righteous.

9 They are more precious than gold,
than much pure gold.

they are sweeter than honey,
than honey from the comb.

By them is your servant warned.

1. "There is no speech, there are no words, no sound is heard from them."
2. "The law of the LORD is perfect."

3. Septuagint, Jerome and Syriac. Hebrew: law.

4. Or

Psalm 21

For the director of music. A psalm of David

- 1 O LORD, the king rejoices in your strength.
How great is his joy in the victories you give!
- 2 You have granted him the desire of his heart
and have not withheld the request of his lips. *Selah*
- 3 You welcomed him with rich blessings
and placed a crown of pure gold on his head.
- 4 He asked you for life, and you gave it to him—
length of days, for ever and ever.
- 5 Through the victories you gave, his glory is great;
you have bestowed on him splendor and majesty
- 6 Surely you have granted him eternal blessings
and made him glad with the joy of your presence.
- 7 For the king trusts in the LORD;
through the unfailing love of the Most High
he will not be shaken.
- 8 Your hand will lay hold on all your enemies;
your right hand will seize your foes.
- 9 At the time of your appearing
you will make them like a fiery furnace.
In his wrath the LORD will swallow them up,
and his fire will consume them.
- 10 You will destroy their descendants from the earth,
their posterity from mankind.
Though they plot evil against you
and devise wicked schemes, they cannot succeed;
- 12 for you will make them turn their backs
when you aim at them with drawn bow.
- 13 Be exalted, O LORD, in your strength;
we will sing and praise your might.

Psalm 22

For the director of music. To the tune of "The Doe of the Morning." A psalm of David

- 1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me,
so far from the words of my groaning?
- 2 O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,
by night, and am not silent.
- 3 Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;
you are the praise of Israel.^a
- 4 In you our fathers put their trust,
they trusted and you delivered them.
- 5 They cried to you and were saved,
in you they trusted and were not disappointed

- 6 But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by men and despised by the people.
- 7 All who see me mock me;
they hurl insults, shaking their heads.
- 8 "He trusts in the LORD;
let the LORD rescue him.
Let him deliver him,
since he delights in him."
- 9 Yet you brought me out of the womb;
you made me trust in you
even at my mother's breast.
- 10 From birth I was cast upon you;
from my mother's womb you have been my God.
- 11 Do not be far from me,
for trouble is near
and there is no one to help.
- 12 Many bulls surround me;
strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.
- 13 Roaring lions tearing their prey
open their mouths wide against me.
- 14 I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint.
My heart has turned to wax;
it has melted away within me.
- 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;
you lay me^b in the dust of death.
- 16 Dogs have surrounded me;
a band of evil men has encircled me,
they have pierced^c my hands and my feet.
- 17 I can count all my bones;
people stare and gloat over me.
- 18 They divide my garments among them
and cast lots for my clothing.
- 19 But you, O LORD, be not far off;
O my Strength, come quickly to help me.
- 20 Deliver my life from the sword,
my precious life from the power of the dogs.
- 21 Rescue me from the mouth of the lions;
save^d me from the horns of the wild oxen.
- 22 I will declare your name to my brothers;
in the congregation I will praise you.
- 23 You who fear the LORD, praise him!
All you descendants of Jacob, honor him!
Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!
- 24 For he has not despised or disdained
the suffering of the afflicted one;
he has not hidden his face from him
but has listened to his cry for help.
- 25 From you comes the theme of my praise in the
great assembly,
before those who fear you^e will I fulfill my vows.
- 26 The poor will eat and be satisfied,
they who seek the LORD will praise him—
may your hearts live forever!

^a Or Yet you are holy, I enthroned on the praises of Israel
^b Or: you have heard

^c Or I am laid

^d Some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint and
^e Hebrew him

Psalm 22

A psalm of David

21 All the ends of the earth
will remember and turn to the Lord,
and all the families of the nations
will bow down before him,
22 for dominion belongs to the Lord
and he rules over the nations.

23 All the rich of the earth will feast and worship,
all who go down to the dust will kneel
before him,
those who cannot keep themselves alive
will serve him;
future generations will be told about the
Lord.
24 They will proclaim his righteousness
to a people yet unborn
for he has done it.

24 Or through the darkest valley

25 When I come to my affliction, I shall call to the Lord
and he will answer me.

26 He makes me hear his voice in great distress,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
27 he restores my soul.
He guides me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.

28 Even though I walk
through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me,
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

INSIGHT

The Song of the Cross

Even the best people sometimes suffer

They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing. 22:18

Sometimes the Old Testament seems like an almost endless stream of stories about good people versus bad people. The good people are the Israelites, and the bad people are the nations around them. The Israelites have moments when they get off track, worshiping idols and acting like their bad neighbors. But when they turn back to God they always seem to win and often win "big." The ending in story after story is happy. God is on their side.

Yet, in Psalm 22, and a few other places, the "good man" story doesn't fit—at all. This poem, credited to David, the great king and man "after God's own heart," tells of tremendous suffering with no relief from God. It sounds like a mob scene, a lynching. The good man's enemies have him. They surround him, jeering, like a pack of dogs. He is helpless and exhausted. All he can do is cry to God.

The psalmist wavers back and forth, first crying out his misery, then taking stock of God's wonderful character, then describing his misery again. The whole poem is a prayer to God. Although this cry has gone up day and night (verse 2), God remains silent.

Whose Humiliations?

Then, at verse 22, the poem takes a dramatic turn, switching from grief to jubilation. Somehow, God has saved the sufferer who, in great excitement, tells others about it. He sees more than his own good fortune: he foresees this deliverance spilling over into the whole world. He predicts the story of God's help told to future generations forever. God will be worshiped by the entire world.

A person might read Psalm 22 as an extravagantly poetic description of David's troubles. But Jesus and the writers of the New Testament saw something more in it. When Jesus was dying on the cross, he had this psalm on his lips (Matthew 27:46). Afterward, when his disciples wanted to explain Jesus' life and sufferings, they turned to this psalm and others like it.

In them the disciples saw a pattern and a foreshadowing. The pattern is redemptive suffering. If good men do not always win, if God seems actually to desert them—if David himself, the great leader and true man of God, knew these pains—then surely no one is exempt. And this suffering has a point. After it (and because of it) come victory and power, and the salvation of the world. This pattern helped Jesus' followers appreciate why Jesus, along with his followers, had to suffer.

A Fulfillment of Prophecy

Psalm 22 also helped the New Testament writers to see Jesus' life as a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Jews had expected a warrior-Messiah, a son of David who, like David, would lead his people to victory through battle. In Psalm 22 they saw that David had left another legacy: victory through suffering. The Messiah would lead his followers in suffering. Only Isaiah had put it more clearly, in his famous "servant" passages (Isaiah 42:1-9; 49:1-7; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12). Psalm 22 stretches beyond the time of David; Jesus fits it perfectly.

Life Questions: Have you ever seen good come out of suffering for your friends or family?

⁵You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil,
my cup overflows.
⁶Surely goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.

Psalm 24

Of David. A psalm.

¹The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it,
²for he founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the waters.
³Who may ascend the hill of the LORD?
Who may stand in his holy place?
⁴He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to an idol
or swear by what is false.^a
⁵He will receive blessing from the LORD
and vindication from God his Savior.
⁶Such is the generation of those who seek
him
who seek your face, O God of Jacob.^b *Selah*
⁷Lift up your heads, O you gates;
be lifted up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
⁸Who is this King of glory?
The LORD strong and mighty,
the LORD mighty in battle.
⁹Lift up your heads, O you gates;
lift them up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
¹⁰Who is he, this King of glory?
The LORD Almighty—
he is the King of glory. *Selah*

Psalm 25:

Of David.

¹To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul;
²in you I trust, O my God.
Do not let me be put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.
³No one whose hope is in you
will ever be put to shame,
but they will be put to shame
who are treacherous without excuse.
⁴Show me your ways, O LORD,
teach me your paths;
⁵guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Savior,
and my hope is in you all day long.
⁶Remember, O LORD, your great mercy and
love,
for they are from of old.
⁷Remember not the sins of my youth

and my rebellious ways;
according to your love remember me,
for you are good, O LORD.

⁸Good and upright is the LORD;
therefore he instructs sinners in his ways.
⁹He guides the humble in what is right
and teaches them his way.
¹⁰All the ways of the LORD are loving and
faithful
for those who keep the demands of his
covenant.
¹¹For the sake of your name, O LORD,
forgive my iniquity, though it is great.
¹²Who, then, is the man that fears the LORD?
He will instruct him in the way chosen for
him.
¹³He will spend his days in prosperity,
and his descendants will inherit the land.
¹⁴The LORD confides in those who fear him;
he makes his covenant known to them.
¹⁵My eyes are ever on the LORD,
for only he will release my feet from the
snare.
¹⁶Turn to me and be gracious to me,
for I am lonely and afflicted.
¹⁷The troubles of my heart have multiplied;
free me from my anguish.
¹⁸Look upon my affliction and my distress
and take away all my sins.
¹⁹See how my enemies have increased
and how fiercely they hate me!
²⁰Guard my life and rescue me;
let me not be put to shame,
for I take refuge in you.
²¹May integrity and uprightness protect me,
because my hope is in you.
²²Redeem Israel, O God,
from all their troubles!

Psalm 26

Of David.

¹Vindicate me, O LORD,
for I have led a blameless life;
I have trusted in the LORD
without wavering.
²Test me, O LORD, and try me,
examine my heart and my mind;
³for your love is ever before me,
and I walk continually in your truth.
⁴I do not sit with deceitful men,
nor do I consort with hypocrites;
⁵I abhor the assembly of evildoers
and refuse to sit with the wicked.
⁶I wash my hands in innocence,
and go about your altar, O LORD,
⁷proclaiming aloud your praise
and telling of all your wonderful deeds.
⁸I love the house where you live, O LORD,
the place where your glory dwells.

^a Or swear falsely.^b Two Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac (see also Septuagint); most Hebrew manuscripts have Jacob. This psalm is an acrostic poem: the verses of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

- ⁹Do not take away my soul along with sinners,
my life with bloodthirsty men,
¹⁰in whose hands are wicked schemes,
whose right hands are full of bribes.
¹¹But I lead a blameless life,
redeem me and be merciful to me.
¹²My feet stand on level ground;
in the great assembly I will praise the LORD.

Psalm 27

Of David

- The LORD is my light and my salvation—
whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life—
whom shall I be afraid?
²When evil men advance against me
to devour my flesh,^a
when my enemies and my foes attack me,
they will stumble and fall.
³Though an army besiege me,
my heart will not tear;
though war break out against me,
even then will I be confident.
⁴One thing I ask of the LORD,
this is what I seek
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD
and to seek him in his temple.
⁵For in the day of trouble
he will keep me safe in his dwelling,
he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle
and set me high upon a rock.
⁶Then my head will be exalted
above the enemies who surround me,

26:1 Self-Righteous?

This claim to be blameless or righteous—repeated many times in other psalms—should not be stretched too far. Whenever the psalmists examined themselves before God, they acknowledged their deep need for forgiveness (see 143:2; 19:12; 32:1-5; and 130:3).

Here, though, the issue is God's fairness. Knowing little about life after death, the psalmists expected that good people would do better in this life than bad people. They were deeply puzzled when they did not. Didn't God control every event? In calling for justice, they emphasized that they had been more faithful to God than their enemies.

Compared to the people plotting murder and betrayal against him, the psalmist was blameless. In a wholehearted, sincere way he had followed God. He was no hypocrite. He responds like a person swearing in court about his traffic accident: "My driving is blameless." He doesn't mean he never makes a mistake. He means only that he doesn't deserve punishment.

at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy;

I will sing and make music to the LORD.

⁷Hear my voice when I call, O LORD;
be merciful to me and answer me.

⁸My heart says of you, "Seek his face!"
Your face, LORD, I will seek.

⁹Do not hide your face from me,
do not turn your servant away in anger;
you have been my helper.
Do not reject me or forsake me,
O God my Savior.

¹⁰Though my father and mother forsake me,
the LORD will receive me.

¹¹Teach me your way, O LORD;
lead me in a straight path
because of my oppressors.

¹²Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes,
for false witnesses rise up against me,
breathing out violence.

¹³I am still confident of this:
I will see the goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living.

¹⁴Wait for the LORD;
be strong and take heart
and wait for the LORD.

Psalm 28

Of David.

¹To you I call, O LORD my Rock;
do not turn a deaf ear to me.
For if you remain silent,
I will be like those who have gone down to the pit.

²Hear my cry for mercy
as I call to you for help,
as I lift up my hands
toward your Most Holy Place.

³Do not drag me away with the wicked,
with those who do evil,
who speak cordially with their neighbors
but harbor malice in their hearts.

⁴Repay them for their deeds
and for their evil work;
repay them for what their hands have done
and bring back upon them what they
deserve.

⁵Since they show no regard for the works of the
LORD
and what his hands have done,
he will tear them down
and never build them up again.

⁶Praise be to the LORD,
for he has heard my cry for mercy.

⁷The LORD is my strength and my shield,
my heart trusts in him, and I am helped.
My heart leaps for joy
and I will give thanks to him in song.

⁸The LORD is the strength of his people,
a fortress of salvation for his anointed one.

^a Or to slander me^b Or To you, O my heart, he has said, "Seek my

⁹Save your people and bless your inheritance;
be their shepherd and carry them forever.

Psalm 29

A psalm of David

- ¹Ascribe to the LORD, O mighty ones,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
²Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
worship the LORD in the splendor of his^a
holiness.
³The voice of the LORD is over the waters;
the God of glory thunders,
the LORD thunders over the mighty waters.
⁴The voice of the LORD is powerful;
the voice of the LORD is majestic.
⁵The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars;
the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of
Lebanon.
⁶He makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
Sirion^b like a young wild ox.
⁷The voice of the LORD strikes
with flashes of lightning
⁸The voice of the LORD shakes the desert;
the LORD shakes the Desert of Kadesh.
⁹The voice of the LORD twists the oaks^c
and strips the forests bare
And in his temple all cry, "Glory!"
¹⁰The LORD sits^d enthroned over the flood;
the LORD is enthroned as King forever.
¹¹The LORD gives strength to his people;
the LORD blesses his people with peace.

Psalm 30

A psalm. A song For the dedication of the
temple.^e Of David

- ¹I will exalt you, O LORD,
for you lifted me out of the depths
and did not let my enemies gloat over me.
²O LORD my God, I called to you for help
and you healed me.
³O LORD, you brought me up from the grave;
you spared me from going down into the pit.
⁴Sing to the LORD, you saints of his;
praise his holy name.
⁵For his anger lasts only a moment,
but his favor lasts a lifetime;
weeping may remain for a night,
but rejoicing comes in the morning.
⁶When I felt secure, I said,
"I will never be shaken."
⁷O LORD, when you favored me,
you made my mountains^f stand firm;
but when you hid your face,
I was dismayed.
⁸To you, O LORD, I called;
to the Lord I cried for mercy:
⁹"What gain is there in my destruction,^g

in my going down into the pit?
Will the dust praise you?
Will it proclaim your faithfulness?
¹⁰Hear, O LORD, and be merciful to me;
O LORD, be my help."

- ¹¹You turned my wailing into dancing;
you removed my sackcloth and clothed me
with joy,
¹²that my heart may sing to you and not be
silent.
O LORD my God, I will give you thanks
forever.

Psalm 31

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

- ¹In you, O LORD, I have taken refuge,
let me never be put to shame;
deliver me in your righteousness.
²Turn your ear to me,
come quickly to my rescue;
be my rock of refuge,
a strong fortress to save me.
³Since you are my rock and my fortress,
for the sake of your name lead and guide
me.
⁴Free me from the trap that is set for me,
for you are my refuge.
⁵Into your hands I commit my spirit;
redeem me, O LORD, the God of truth.
⁶I hate those who cling to worthless idols;
I trust in the LORD.
⁷I will be glad and rejoice in your love,
for you saw my affliction
and knew the anguish of my soul.
⁸You have not handed me over to the enemy
but have set my feet in a spacious place.
⁹Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I am in distress;
my eyes grow weak with sorrow,
my soul and my body with grief.
¹⁰My life is consumed by anguish
and my years by groaning;
my strength fails because of my affliction,ⁱ
and my bones grow weak.
¹¹Because of all my enemies,
I am the utter contempt of my neighbors;
I am a dread to my friends—
those who see me on the street flee from me.
¹²I am forgotten by them as though I were dead;
I have become like broken pottery.
¹³For I hear the slander of many;
there is terror on every side;
they conspire against me
and plot to take my life.
¹⁴But I trust in you, O LORD;
I say, "You are my God."
¹⁵My times are in your hands;
deliver me from my enemies
and from those who pursue me.
¹⁶Let your face shine on your servant;

^a2 Or LORD with the splendor of
palace

^b3 Hebrew Sheol

^c6 That is, Mount Hermon

^d7 Or hill country

^e9 Or LORD makes the deer give birth

^f9 Or there if I am silenced

^g10 Or guilt

^h10 Or set

ⁱTitle Or

save me in your unfailing love.
 17 Let me not be put to shame O Lord,
 for I have cried out to you,
 but let the wicked be put to shame
 and be silent in the grave.^a
 18 Let their living lips be silenced,
 for with pride and contempt
 they speak arrogantly against the righteous.

19 How great is your goodness,
 which you have stored up for those who fear
 you.

which you bestow in the sight of men
 on those who take refuge in you.
 20 In the shelter of your presence you hide them
 from the intrigues of men;
 in your dwelling you keep them safe
 from accusing tongues.

21 Praise be to the LORD.
 for he showed his wonderful love to me
 when I was in a besieged city.

22 In my alarm I said,
 I am cut off from your sight!"
 Yet you heard my cry for mercy
 when I called to you for help

23 Love the LORD, all his saints!
 The LORD preserves the faithful,
 but the proud he pays back in full.

24 Be strong and take heart,
 all you who hope in the LORD.

Psalm 32

Of David. A *maskil*.^b

1 Blessed is he
 whose transgressions are forgiven,
 whose sins are covered
 2 Blessed is the man
 whose sin the LORD does not count against
 him
 and in whose spirit is no deceit.

3 When I kept silent,
 my bones wasted away
 through my groaning all day long.

4 For day and night
 your hand was heavy upon me;
 my strength was sapped
 as in the heat of summer.

5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you
 and did not cover up my iniquity.

I said, "I will confess
 my transgressions to the LORD"—

Selah

and you forgave
 the guilt of my sin. *Selah*
 6 Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to
 you
 while you may be found;
 surely when the mighty waters rise,
 they will not reach him.
 7 You are my hiding place;
 you will protect me from trouble
 and surround me with songs of deliverance *Selah*

8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way
 you should go;

I will counsel you and watch over you.
 9 Do not be like the horse or the mule,
 which have no understanding
 but must be controlled by bit and bridle
 or they will not come to you.

10 Many are the woes of the wicked,
 but the LORD's unfailing love
 surrounds the man who trusts in him.

11 Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you
 righteous;
 sing, all you who are upright in heart!

Psalm 33

1 Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous;
 it is fitting for the upright to praise him.

2 Praise the LORD with the harp;
 make music to him on the ten-stringed
 lyre.

3 Sing to him a new song;
 play skillfully, and shout for joy.

4 For the word of the LORD is right and true;
 he is faithful in all he does.

5 The LORD loves righteousness and justice;
 the earth is full of his unfailing love.

6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens
 made,
 their starry host by the breath of his mouth.

7 He gathers the waters of the sea into jars;
 he puts the deep into storehouses.

8 Let all the earth fear the LORD;
 let all the people of the world revere him.

9 For he spoke, and it came to be;
 he commanded, and it stood firm.

10 The LORD foils the plans of the nations;
 he thwarts the purposes of the peoples.

11 But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever,
 the purposes of his heart through all
 generations.

12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,
 the people he chose for his inheritance.

13 From heaven the LORD looks down
 and sees all mankind;

14 from his dwelling place he watches
 all who live on earth—

32:2 The Benefits of Faith

Paul quoted this verse in Romans 4:6-8, while making his case that we do not earn status in God's eyes: God must credit righteousness on the basis of faith.

^a17 Hebrew *Sheol*

^bTitle: Probably a literary or musical term

^c7 Or *see as into a heap*

¹⁵He who forms the hearts of all,
who considers everything they do.
¹⁶No king is saved by the size of his army;
no warrior escapes by his great strength.
¹⁷A horse is a vain hope for deliverance,
despite all its great strength it cannot save.
¹⁸But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear
him,
on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,
¹⁹to deliver them from death
and keep them alive in famine.

²⁰We wait in hope for the LORD;
he is our help and our shield.
²¹In him our hearts rejoice,
for we trust in his holy name.
²²May your unfailing love rest upon us, O LORD,
even as we put our hope in you.

^aThis psalm is an acrostic poem: the verses of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

Psalm 34^a

Of David. When he pretended to be insane before
Abimelech, who drove him away, and he left.

¹I will extol the LORD at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.
²My soul will boast in the LORD,
let the afflicted hear and rejoice.
³Glorify the LORD with me;
let us exalt his name together.
⁴I sought the LORD, and he answered me;
he delivered me from all my fears.
⁵Those who look to him are radiant;
their faces are never covered with shame.
⁶This poor man called, and the LORD heard him;
he saved him out of all his troubles.

INSIGHT

Lyrics for the Living God

The psalms were meant to be sung—and shouted

Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy. 33:3

William Booth, believing the 19th-century English church had become too refined to reach the cities' poor, took the gospel into the streets. He organized his workers into a "salvation army," complete with uniforms and military rank.

With hecklers and drunks abounding, the "army" didn't always find preaching easy or safe. A local builder, Charles William Fry, offered himself and his three sons as bodyguards. As it happened all four played brass instruments, which they carried along to accompany singing.

Booth's rowdier supporters were soon dragging along concertinas, bells, hunting horns, banjos, tambourines, and drums to praise the Lord. Said one leader, "It sounds as if a brass band's gone out of its mind."

Salvation Army recruits did not stick to traditional hymns but invented their own words for rousing popular tunes. "Here's to Good Old Whiskey" became "Storm the Forts of Darkness." Booth had his doubts about this trend until one night, hearing a beautiful rendition of "Bless His Name, He Sets Me Free," he asked about the tune. "Why, Mr. Booth, that's 'Champagne Charlie Is My Name,'" the embarrassed singer replied.

"That settles it," Booth said. "Why *should* the devil have all the best tunes?" Soon 400 bands were crashing about England, playing hit tunes with Christian words.

The Best Music Available

David and his people would have liked that spirit. Many of the psalms were meant to be sung, and sung joyfully. Modern church formality seems far removed from their frequent command: "Sing for joy! Shout aloud!" Their instruments included cymbals, tambourines, trumpets, ram's horns, harps, and lyres. Sometimes dancing erupted. The world, in the psalmist's imagination, can't contain the delight God inspires. A new song must be sung. "Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth, burst into jubilant song" (98:4).

First Chronicles 15:16 and 23:5 report that David appointed 4,000 professional musicians to provide their services to the temple. They offered the best music available, and the congregation joined in. Nobody knows exactly what it sounded like, but scholars doubt it was all soft and soothing. Musicians improvised. Most of the instruments used suggest rousing, rhythmic sound.

Every generation of Christians renews the discovery of this "new song," sometimes through the music of their forebears, sometimes in a form that shocks their solemn elders. The Salvation Army did, and so did the Jesus Movement of the 60's. David would not have been surprised. He jolted his own wife with spontaneous dancing (see 1 Chronicles 15:29). When people know God, they come to life with a jubilant song on their lips.

Life Questions: When you sing to God, what kind of emotions do you hope to feel? What kind of music contributes to that?

11 Come, my children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD

and deliver you from all your troubles;
and your eyes shall see the LORD
and your heart shall find him.
and your heart shall find him.
and your heart shall find him.

12 The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears
and his anger is kindled against those who do
evil.
and he will deliver them from all their troubles.
and he will deliver them from all their troubles.

13 The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears
them,

he delivers them from all their troubles.

14 The LORD is close to the brokenhearted
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

15 A righteous man may have many troubles,
but the LORD delivers him from them all;

16 the LORD protects all his bones,
not one of them will be broken.

17 Evil will slay the wicked;
the foes of the righteous will be condemned.

18 The LORD redeems his servants;
no one will be condemned who takes refuge
in him.

Psalm 35

Of David.

1 Contend, O LORD, with those who contend
with me;

fight against those who fight against me.

2 Take up shield and buckler;
arise and come to my aid.

44:9 Is God Frightening?

"Fear of the Lord" is a phrase you find frequently in the Old Testament. Does it mean that we should be frightened of God? Apparently not. "Fear of the Lord" gradually became a standard phrase for a good relationship with God. A good relationship begins with a reverent sense that God is so powerful and righteous that we dare not take him lightly. But it goes on from awe to a sense of deep security, as this psalm fully demonstrates.

Brandish spear and javelin
against those who pursue me
Save to my soul
I am your salvation

4 May those who seek my life
be disgraced and put to shame
may those who plot my ruin
be turned back in dismay

5 May they be like chaff before the wind
with the angel of the Lord driving them
away

6 May their path be dark and slippery
with the angel of the Lord pursuing them
Since they hid their net for me without cause
and without cause dug a pit for me

7 May ruin overtake them by surprise
may the net they hid entangle them,
may they fall into the pit to their ruin

8 Then my soul will rejoice in the Lord
and delight in his salvation

9 My whole being will exclaim,
'Who is like you, O Lord?'

You rescue the poor from those too strong for
them,
the poor and needy from those who rob
them "

11 Ruthless witnesses come forward,
they question me on things I know nothing
about

12 They repay me evil for good
and leave my soul forlorn.

13 Yet when they were ill, I put on sackcloth
and humbled myself with fasting
When my prayers returned to me unanswered,

14 I went about mourning
as though for my friend or brother
I bowed my head in grief
as though weeping for my mother

15 But when I stumbled, they gathered in glee,
attackers gathered against me when I was
unaware

They slandered me without ceasing

16 Like the ungodly they maliciously mocked,
they gnashed their teeth at me

17 O Lord, how long will you look on?

Rescue my life from their ravages,
my precious life from these lions

18 I will give you thanks in the great assembly,
among throngs of people I will praise you

19 Let not those gloat over me
who are my enemies without cause,
let not those who hate me without reason
maliciously wink the eye

20 They do not speak peaceably,
but devise false accusations
against those who live quietly in the land

21 They gape at me and say "Aha! Aha!"
With our own eyes we have seen it

22 O LORD, you have seen this—be not silent
Do not be far from me—O Lord

23 Awake and rise to my defense!
Contend for me—my God and Lord

43 On and back the way

44 Septuagint, Hebrew may mean ungodly circle of mockers

²⁴Vindicate me in your righteousness, O LORD
my God,
do not let them gloat over me.
²⁵Do not let them think, "Aha, just what we
wanted!"
or say, "We have swallowed him up."

²⁶May all who gloat over my distress
be put to shame and confusion;
may all who exalt themselves over me
be clothed with shame and disgrace.
²⁷May those who delight in my vindication
shout for joy and gladness;
may they always say, "The LORD be exalted,
who delights in the well-being of his
servant."
²⁸My tongue will speak of your
righteousness
and of your praises all day long.

Psalm 36

For the director of music. Of David the servant of
the LORD

¹An oracle is within my heart
concerning the sinfulness of the wicked:^a
There is no fear of God
before his eyes.
²For in his own eyes he flatters himself
too much to detect or hate his sin.
³The words of his mouth are wicked and
deceitful;
he has ceased to be wise and to do
good.
⁴Even on his bed he plots evil;
he commits himself to a sinful course
and does not reject what is wrong.
⁵Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the skies.
⁶Your righteousness is like the mighty
mountains,
your justice like the great deep.
O LORD, you preserve both man and beast.
⁷How priceless is your unfailing love!
Both high and low among men
find^b refuge in the shadow of your wings.
⁸They feast on the abundance of your house;
you give them drink from your river of
delights.
⁹For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light we see light.
¹⁰Continue your love to those who know you,
your righteousness to the upright in heart.
¹¹May the foot of the proud not come against
me,
nor the hand of the wicked drive me
away.
¹²See how the evildoers lie fallen—
thrown down, not able to rise!

Psalm 37^c

Of David

¹Do not fret because of evil men
or be envious of those who do wrong;
²for like the grass they will soon wither,
like green plants they will soon die away.
³Trust in the LORD and do good,
dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.
⁴Delight yourself in the LORD
and he will give you the desires of your
heart.
⁵Commit your way to the LORD;
trust in him and he will do this:
⁶He will make your righteousness shine like the
dawn,
the justice of your cause like the noonday
sun.
⁷Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for
him;
do not fret when men succeed in their ways,
when they carry out their wicked schemes.
⁸Refrain from anger and turn from wrath;
do not fret—it leads only to evil.
⁹For evil men will be cut off,
but those who hope in the LORD will inherit
the land.
¹⁰A little while, and the wicked will be no more;
though you look for them, they will not be
found.
¹¹But the meek will inherit the land
and enjoy great peace.
¹²The wicked plot against the righteous
and gnash their teeth at them;
¹³but the LORD laughs at the wicked,
for he knows their day is coming.
¹⁴The wicked draw the sword
and bend the bow
to bring down the poor and needy,
to slay those whose ways are upright.
¹⁵But their swords will pierce their own hearts,
and their bows will be broken.
¹⁶Better the little that the righteous have
than the wealth of many wicked;
¹⁷for the power of the wicked will be broken,
but the LORD upholds the righteous.
¹⁸The days of the blameless are known to the
LORD,
and their inheritance will endure forever.
¹⁹In times of disaster they will not wither;
in days of famine they will enjoy plenty.
²⁰But the wicked will perish:
The LORD's enemies will be like the beauty of
the fields,
they will vanish—vanish like smoke.
²¹The wicked borrow and do not repay,
but the righteous give generously.
²²Those the LORD blesses will inherit the land,

^a1 Or heart. Sin proceeds from the wicked.

^b7 Or love. O God! Men find, or love! Both heavenly beings and men find.

This psalm is an acrostic poem: the stanzas of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

^cThis psalm

but those he curses will be cut off.

²³If the LORD delights in a man's way,
he makes his steps firm;

²⁴though he stumble, he will not fall,
for the LORD upholds him with his hand.

²⁵I was young and now I am old,
yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken
or their children begging bread.

²⁶They are always generous and lend freely;
their children will be blessed.

²⁷Turn from evil and do good;
then you will dwell in the land forever.

²⁸For the LORD loves the just
and will not forsake his faithful ones.

They will be protected forever,
but the offspring of the wicked will be cut
off;

²⁹the righteous will inherit the land
and dwell in it forever.

³⁰The mouth of the righteous man utters
wisdom,
and his tongue speaks what is just.

³¹The law of his God is in his heart;
his feet do not slip.

³²The wicked lie in wait for the righteous,
seeking their very lives;

³³but the LORD will not leave them in their
power
or let them be condemned when brought to
trial.

³⁴Wait for the LORD
and keep his way
He will exalt you to inherit the land;
when the wicked are cut off, you will see it.

³⁵I have seen a wicked and ruthless man
flourishing like a green tree in its native soil,

³⁶but he soon passed away and was no more;
though I looked for him, he could not be
found

³⁷Consider the blameless, observe the upright;
there is a future^a for the man of peace.

³⁸But all sinners will be destroyed;
the future^b of the wicked will be cut off

³⁹The salvation of the righteous comes from the
LORD,

he is their stronghold in time of trouble.

⁴⁰The LORD helps them and delivers them;
he delivers them from the wicked and saves
them.

because they take refuge in him.

Psalm 38

A psalm of David A petition

¹O LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger
or discipline me in your wrath
²For your arrows have pierced me,
and your hand has come down upon me.

^{a,27} Or there will be posterity

^{b,38} Or posterity

³Because of your wrath there is no health in my
body,

my bones have no soundness because of my
sin

⁴My guilt has overwhelmed me
like a burden too heavy to bear

⁵My wounds fester and are loathsome
because of my sinful folly.

⁶I am bowed down and brought very low,
all day long I go about mourning

⁷My back is filled with searing pain;
there is no health in my body.

⁸I am feeble and utterly crushed;
I groan in anguish of heart.

⁹All my longings lie open before you, O LORD;
my sighing is not hidden from you.

¹⁰My heart pounds, my strength fails me;
even the light has gone from my eyes.

¹¹My friends and companions avoid me because
of my wounds;

my neighbors stay far away.

¹²Those who seek my life set their traps,
those who would harm me talk of my ruin;
all day long they plot deception.

¹³I am like a deaf man, who cannot hear,
like a mute, who cannot open his mouth;

¹⁴I have become like a man who does not hear,
whose mouth can offer no reply.

¹⁵I wait for you, O LORD;
you will answer, O Lord my God.

¹⁶For I said, "Do not let them gloat
or exalt themselves over me when my foot
slips."

¹⁷For I am about to fall,
and my pain is ever with me.

¹⁸I confess my iniquity;
I am troubled by my sin.

¹⁹Many are those who are my vigorous enemies;
those who hate me without reason are
numerous.

²⁰Those who repay my good with evil
slander me when I pursue what is good.

²¹O LORD, do not forsake me;
be not far from me, O my God.

²²Come quickly to help me,
O Lord my Savior.

Psalm 39

For the director of music. For Jeduthun.
A psalm of David.

¹I said, "I will watch my ways
and keep my tongue from sin;
I will put a muzzle on my mouth
as long as the wicked are in my presence."

²But when I was silent and still,
not even saying anything good,
my anguish increased.

³My heart grew hot within me,
and as I meditated, the fire burned;
then I spoke with my tongue:

4 "Show me, O LORD, my life's end,
 and the number of my days;
 let me know how fleeting is my life.
 5 You have made my days a mere handbreadth;
 the span of my years is as nothing before
 you.
 6 Each man's life is but a breath. *Selah*
 7 Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and fro:
 He bustles about, but only in vain;
 he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will
 get it.
 8 But now, LORD, what do I look for?
 My hope is in you.
 9 Save me from all my transgressions;
 do not let me make the scorn of fools.
 10 I was silent, I would not open my mouth,
 for you are the one who has done this.
 Remove your scourge from me;
 I am overcome by the blow of your hand.
 11 You rebuke and discipline men for their sin;
 you consume their wealth like a moth—
 each man is but a breath. *Selah*
 12 "Hear my prayer, O LORD,
 listen to my cry for help;
 be not deaf to my weeping.
 For I dwell with you as an alien,
 a stranger, as all my fathers were.
 13 Look away from me, that I may rejoice again
 before I depart and am no more."

Psalm 40

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm

1 I waited patiently for the LORD;
 he turned to me and heard my cry.
 2 He lifted me out of the slimy pit,
 out of the mud and mire;
 he set my feet on a rock
 and gave me a firm place to stand.
 3 He put a new song in my mouth,
 a hymn of praise to our God.
 Many will see and fear
 and put their trust in the LORD.
 4 Blessed is the man
 who makes the LORD his trust,
 who does not look to the proud,
 to those who turn aside to false gods.⁴

39:10 Wrestling with God

Not all the psalms have a happy ending. Some, such as this one and Psalms 44 and 88, are intensely sad. They try to make sense out of suffering, and fail. They ask God for help and receive none. The Bible's inclusion of such hopeless cries eloquently testifies to God's acceptance of human struggles. These psalms are not the final word on suffering. They show, however, that wrestling with God has value even when you fail to find answers.

5 Many, O LORD my God,
 are the wonders you have done.
 The things you planned for us
 no one can recount to you,
 were I to speak and tell of them,
 they would be too many to declare.

6 Sacrifice and offering you did not desire,
 but my ears you have pierced;⁶
 burnt offerings and sin offerings
 you did not require.

7 Then I said, "Here I am, I have come—
 it is written about me in the scroll."⁴

8 I desire to do your will, O my God;
 your law is within my heart."

9 I proclaim righteousness in the great assembly;
 I do not seal my lips,
 as you know, O LORD.

10 I do not hide your righteousness in my heart;
 I speak of your faithfulness and salvation.
 I do not conceal your love and your truth
 from the great assembly.

11 Do not withhold your mercy from me, O LORD;
 may your love and your truth always protect
 me.

12 For troubles without number surround me,
 my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot
 see.

They are more than the hairs of my head,
 and my heart fails within me.

13 Be pleased, O LORD, to save me,
 O LORD, come quickly to help me.

14 May all who seek to take my life
 be put to shame and confusion;
 may all who desire my ruin
 be turned back in disgrace.

15 May those who say to me, "Aha! Aha!"
 be appalled at their own shame.

16 But may all who seek you
 rejoice and be glad in you;
 may those who love your salvation always say,
 "The LORD be exalted!"

17 Yet I am poor and needy;
 may the Lord think of me.
 You are my help and my deliverer;
 O my God, do not delay.

Psalm 41

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

1 Blessed is he who has regard for the weak;
 the LORD delivers him in times of trouble.

2 The LORD will protect him and preserve his
 life,
 he will bless him in the land
 and not surrender him to the desire of his
 foes.

3 The LORD will sustain him on his sickbed
 and restore him from his bed of illness.

4 I said, "O LORD, have mercy on me;

⁴ Or to falsehood
 opened

⁶ Hebrew Septuagint but a body you have prepared for me (see also Symmachus and Theodotion)
⁷ Or come I with the scroll written for me

⁸ Or

heal me, for I have sinned against you."
 5My enemies say of me in malice,
 "When will he die and his name perish?"
 6Whenever one comes to see me,
 he speaks falsely, while his heart gathers
 slander,
 then he goes out and spreads it abroad.
 7All my enemies whisper together against me;
 they imagine the worst for me, saying,
 8"A vile disease has beset him,
 he will never get up from the place where he
 lies."
 9Even my close friend, whom I trusted,
 he who shared my bread,
 has lifted up his heel against me.
 10But you, O LORD, have mercy on me;
 raise me up, that I may repay them.
 11I know that you are pleased with me,
 for my enemy does not triumph over me.
 12In my integrity you uphold me
 and set me in your presence forever.

13Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel,
 from everlasting to everlasting.
 Amen and Amen.

BOOK II

Psalms 42–72

Psalm 42^a

For the director of music. A *maskil*^b of the Sons
 of Korah

1As the deer pants for streams of water,
 so my soul pants for you, O God.
 2My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
 When can I go and meet with God?
 3My tears have been my food
 day and night,
 while men say to me all day long,
 "Where is your God?"
 4These things I remember
 as I pour out my soul:
 how I used to go with the multitude,

leading the procession to the house of God,
 with shouts of joy and thanksgiving
 among the festive throng.

5Why are you downcast, O my soul?
 Why so disturbed within me?
 Put your hope in God,
 for I will yet praise him,
 my Savior and my God.

My soul is downcast within me;
 therefore I will remember you
 from the land of the Jordan,
 the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar
 7Deep calls to deep
 in the roar of your waterfalls;
 all your waves and breakers
 have swept over me.

8By day the LORD directs his love,
 at night his song is with me—
 a prayer to the God of my life.

9I say to God my Rock,
 "Why have you forgotten me?
 Why must I go about mourning,
 oppressed by the enemy?"
 10My bones suffer mortal agony
 as my foes taunt me,
 saying to me all day long,
 "Where is your God?"

11Why are you downcast, O my soul?
 Why so disturbed within me?
 Put your hope in God,
 for I will yet praise him,
 my Savior and my God.

Psalm 43

1Vindicate^a me, O God,
 and plead my cause against an ungodly
 nation;
 rescue me from deceitful and wicked men.
 2You are God my stronghold.
 Why have you rejected me?
 Why must I go about mourning,
 oppressed by the enemy?
 3Send forth your light and your truth,
 let them guide me;
 let them bring me to your holy mountain,
 to the place where you dwell.
 4Then will I go to the altar of God,
 to God, my joy and my delight.
 I will praise you with the harp,
 O God, my God.

5Why are you downcast, O my soul?
 Why so disturbed within me?
 Put your hope in God,
 for I will yet praise him,
 my Savior and my God.

41:1 A Key Characteristic

The psalmist was severely ill. Enemies and rivals—and even a close friend, verse 9—whispered that he was dying. What made him so confident that God would heal him? He knew that God helps those who show "regard for the weak." Since he had shown integrity in this, he confidently expected God to show mercy to him. Jesus reflected this value when he said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy" (Matthew 5:7).

^aIn many Hebrew manuscripts Psalms 42 and 43 constitute one psalm.
^bHebrew manuscripts: Septuagint and Syriac: most Hebrew manuscripts praise him for his saving help.

^aTitle: Probably a literary or musical term.

5:7 A key

Psalm 44

For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah.
A *maskil*.^a

- 1 We have heard with our ears, O God;
our fathers have told us
what you did in their days,
in days long ago.
2 With your hand you drove out the nations
and planted our fathers;
you crushed the peoples
and made our fathers flourish.
3 It was not by their sword that they won the
land
nor did their arm bring them victory;
it was your right hand, your arm,
and the light of your face, for you loved
them.
4 You are my King and my God,
who decrees^b victories for Jacob.
5 Through you we push back our enemies;
through your name we trample our foes.
6 I do not trust in my bow,
my sword does not bring me victory;
7 but you give us victory over our enemies,
you put our adversaries to shame.
8 In God we make our boast all day long,
and we will praise your name forever. *Selah*
9 But now you have rejected and humbled us;
you no longer go out with our armies.
10 You made us retreat before the enemy,
and our adversaries have plundered us.
11 You gave us up to be devoured like sheep
and have scattered us among the nations.
12 You sold your people for a pittance,
gaining nothing from their sale.
13 You have made us a reproach to our
neighbors,
the scorn and derision of those around us.
14 You have made us a byword among the
nations,
the peoples shake their heads at us.
15 My disgrace is before me all day long,
and my face is covered with shame.
16 At the taunts of those who reproach and revile
me,
because of the enemy, who is bent on
revenge.
17 All this happened to us,
though we had not forgotten you
or been false to your covenant.
18 Our hearts had not turned back;
our feet had not strayed from your path.
19 But you crushed us and made us a haunt for
jackals
and covered us over with deep darkness.
20 If we had forgotten the name of our God
or spread out our hands to a foreign god,
21 would not God have discovered it,
since he knows the secrets of the heart?

22 Yet for your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be
slaughtered.

23 Awake, O Lord! Why do you sleep?
Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever.

24 Why do you hide your face
and forget our misery and oppression?

25 We are brought down to the dust;
our bodies cling to the ground.

26 Rise up and help us;
redeem us because of your unfailing love.

Psalm 45

For the director of music. To the tune of "Lilies."
Of the Sons of Korah. A *maskil*.^a A wedding song.

- 1 My heart is stirred by a noble theme
as I recite my verses for the king;
my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer.
2 You are the most excellent of men
and your lips have been anointed with grace,
since God has blessed you forever.
3 Gird your sword upon your side, O mighty
one;
clothe yourself with splendor and majesty.
4 In your majesty ride forth victoriously
in behalf of truth, humility and
righteousness;
let your right hand display awesome deeds.
5 Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of the
king's enemies;
let the nations fall beneath your feet.
6 Your throne, O God, will last for ever and
ever;
a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your
kingdom.
7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has set you above
your companions
by anointing you with the oil of joy.
8 All your robes are fragrant with myrrh and
aloes and cassia;
from palaces adorned with ivory
the music of the strings makes you glad.
9 Daughters of kings are among your honored
women;
at your right hand is the royal bride in gold
of Ophir.
10 Listen, O daughter, consider and give ear:
Forget your people and your father's house.
11 The king is enthralled by your beauty;
honor him, for he is your lord.
12 The Daughter of Tyre will come with a gift,^c
men of wealth will seek your favor.
13 All glorious is the princess within her
chamber;
her gown is interwoven with gold.
14 In embroidered garments she is led to the king,
her virgin companions follow her
and are brought to you.

^aTel: Probably a literary or musical term
refer to among the gifts.

^bSeptuagint, Aquila and Syriac, Hebrew King (1) God (1) command

^cOr A Tyrann

17 They are led in with joy and gladness,
they enter the palace of the king.

18 Your sons will take the place of your fathers,
you will make them princes throughout the
land.

19 I will perpetuate your memory through all
generations;
therefore the nations will praise you for ever
and ever.

Psalm 46

For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah.
According to almon. A song.

1 God is our refuge and strength,
an ever present help in trouble.

2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth
give way.

*Title: Probably a musical term.

*9: (Or charuto)

and the mountains fall into the heart of the
sea,
though the waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their seething
waves.

3 There is a river whose streams make glad the
city of God,

the holy place where the Most High dwells.
God is within her; she will not fall.

God will help her at break of day;
when nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall,
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

4 The Lord Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Selah

5 Come and see the works of the Lord,
the devastations he has brought on the earth:

6 he makes wars cease to the ends of the earth;
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear,
he burns the shield with fire.

7 Be still, and know that I am God.

INSIGHT

A Wedding Fit for a King

Why should this poem be found in a book of prayers?

Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever. 45:6

In the middle of a book of heartfelt prayers, a wedding poem suddenly appears. Does Psalm 45 belong here? Its "noble theme" (verse 1) is not God's kindness, but the excellence of his majesty the king as he prepares to take a bride. While most of the psalms express an intimacy with God that could have been written yesterday, "thrones," "scepters," and royal robes make us think of an old world.

To understand why this psalm was included we need to know, first, that the king in biblical times was more than just a symbol. He was the president and the commanding general and the chief justice of the Supreme Court, all rolled into one. An unjust or cowardly king could cost his people their lives. A clever, successful king, on the other hand, could assure them of prosperity.

When the Israelites wished the king well, therefore, they wished themselves well. Seeing their king decked out in finery was like looking at a picture of their own success. And when their king made a happy and fruitful marriage, it assured them of stable leadership for years to come. The king's welfare represented the welfare of God's people.

The Promise to David

David was the first good king Israel had known. God had told David that his "house" would endure forever (2 Samuel 7:16). This meant that Israel would endure, too. When David's people combined this promise with the other benefits God had promised to Abraham and Moses, they could foresee a great future for their small, poor, war-weary nation.

Yet David's descendants disappointed these hopes. Israel remained a small, hemmed-in nation. Gradually, Israelites began to expect another king who would live up to the Bible's praises and promises. They called him "the Anointed," (for kings and priests took office through an official anointing with oil, like our swearing in). When they read psalms that mentioned the king, they thought of this coming ruler.

As the years went by and Israel's kings failed miserably, Israel's longing grew stronger and stronger. People looked for "the consolation of Israel" (Luke 2:25). The word for "the Anointed" became *Messiah*, or (in Greek) *Christ*.

Only when "the Anointed" came—in Jesus—did the extravagant language of Psalm 45:6-7 (along with unusual descriptions in Psalms 2 and 110) make sense. These verses were quoted in Hebrews 1:8-9 to show that the king the Jews had long expected could be no ordinary man. The long turned out to be God—as verse 6 had suggested. The poem that seemed to be only about a king's marriage turned out, in the end, to be about God's marriage to humanity.

I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."

¹¹The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Selah

Psalm 47

For the director of music Of the Sons of Korah.
A psalm

¹Clap your hands, all you nations;
shout to God with cries of joy.

²How awesome is the LORD Most High,
the great King over all the earth!

³He subdued nations under us,
peoples under our feet.

⁴He chose our inheritance for us,
the pride of Jacob, whom he loved.

Selah

⁵God has ascended amid shouts of joy,
the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets.

⁶Sing praises to God, sing praises;
sing praises to our King, sing praises.

⁷For God is the King of all the earth;
sing to him a psalm^a of praise.

⁸God reigns over the nations;
God is seated on his holy throne.

⁹The nobles of the nations assemble
as the people of the God of Abraham,
for the kings^b of the earth belong to God;
he is greatly exalted.

Psalm 48

A song. A psalm of the Sons of Korah.

¹Great is the LORD, and most worthy of praise,
in the city of our God, his holy mountain.

²It is beautiful in its loftiness,
the joy of the whole earth.

Like the utmost heights of Zaphon^c is Mount
Zion,

the city of the Great King.

³God is in her citadels,
he has shown himself to be her fortress

⁴When the kings joined forces,
when they advanced together,

⁵they saw her, and were astounded;
they fled in terror.

⁶Trembling seized them there,
pain like that of a woman in labor.

47:9 Who Are God's People?

While the Israelites often thought of themselves as exclusively God's people, Psalms contains frequent references to a day when "the nations"—that is, all ethnic groups—will exultantly praise God. In this psalm they not only join in, they do so as "the people of the God of Abraham"—that is, as insiders included in God's covenant with the Jews.

⁷You destroyed them like ships of Tarshish
shattered by an east wind

⁸As we have heard,
so have we seen
in the city of the LORD Almighty,
in the city of our God
God makes her secure forever

Selah

⁹Within your temple, O God,
we meditate on your unfailing love

¹⁰Like your name, O God,
your praise reaches to the ends of the earth,
your right hand is filled with righteousness.

¹¹Mount Zion rejoices,
the villages of Judah are glad
because of your judgments.

¹²Walk about Zion, go around her,
count her towers,

¹³consider well her ramparts,
view her citadels,
that you may tell of them to the next
generation

¹⁴For this God is our God for ever and ever,
he will be our guide even to the end.

Psalm 49

For the director of music Of the Sons of Korah
A psalm.

¹Hear this, all you peoples;
listen, all who live in this world,

²both low and high,
rich and poor alike:

³My mouth will speak words of wisdom;
the utterance from my heart will give
understanding

⁴I will turn my ear to a proverb,
with the harp I will expound my riddle:

⁵Why should I fear when evil days come,
when wicked deceivers surround me—

⁶those who trust in their wealth
and boast of their great riches?

⁷No man can redeem the life of another
or give to God a ransom for him—

⁸the ransom for a life is costly,
no payment is ever enough—

⁹that he should live on forever
and not see decay.

¹⁰For all can see that wise men die;
the foolish and the senseless alike perish
and leave their wealth to others.

¹¹Their tombs will remain their houses^d forever,
their dwellings for endless generations,
though they had/ named lands after
themselves.

¹²But man, despite his riches, does not endure;
he is like the beasts that perish.

¹³Thus is the fate of those who trust in
themselves,

^a Or a meal (probably a literary or musical term) ^b Or shields

north. ^c Or earth, / Mount Zion, on the northern side / of the

will remain ^d Or / for they have ^e 12 Hebrew; Septuagint and Syriac read verse 12 the same as verse 20

^c Zaphon can refer to a sacred mountain or the direction

^d 11 Septuagint and Syriac, Hebrew in their thoughts their houses

and of their followers, who approve their sayings *Selah*

¹⁴Like sheep they are destined for the grave,^a and death will feed on them. The upright will rule over them in the morning; their forms will decay in the grave,^b far from their princely mansions.

¹⁵But God will redeem my life^c from the grave; he will surely take me to himself. *Selah*

¹⁶Do not be overawed when a man grows rich, when the splendor of his house increases,

¹⁷for he will take nothing with him when he dies; his splendor will not descend with him.

¹⁸Though while he lived he counted himself blessed—

and men praise you when you prosper—

¹⁹he will join the generation of his fathers, who will never see the light of life.

²⁰A man who has riches without understanding is like the beasts that perish.

Psalm 50

A psalm of Asaph

¹The Mighty One, God, the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to the place where it sets

²From Zion, perfect in beauty, God shines forth

³Our God comes and will not be silent; a fire devours before him, and around him a tempest rages.

⁴He summons the heavens above, and the earth, that he may judge his people:

⁵"Gather to me my consecrated ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice."

⁶And the heavens proclaim his righteousness, for God himself is judge. *Selah*

⁷"Hear, O my people, and I will speak, O Israel, and I will testify against you: I am God, your God.

⁸I do not rebuke you for your sacrifices or your burnt offerings, which are ever before me.

⁹I have no need of a bull from your stall

or of goats from your pens,
¹⁰for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills.
¹¹I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine.
¹²If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it.
¹³Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?
¹⁴Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfill your vows to the Most High,
¹⁵and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me."

¹⁶But to the wicked, God says:

"What right have you to recite my laws or take my covenant on your lips?

¹⁷You hate my instruction and cast my words behind you.

¹⁸When you see a thief, you join with him; you throw in your lot with adulterers.

¹⁹You use your mouth for evil and harness your tongue to deceit.

²⁰You speak continually against your brother and slander your own mother's son.

²¹These things you have done and I kept silent;

you thought I was altogether like you. But I will rebuke you and accuse you to your face.

²²"Consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you to pieces, with none to rescue.

²³He who sacrifices thank offerings honors me,

and he prepares the way so that I may show him^d the salvation of God."

Psalm 51

For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love;

49:15 Money Can't Buy Life

How do you make sense of a world in which bad people get rich and actually oppress good people? This psalm ponders this riddle and finds the answer on the other side of death. Money can do many things, but it simply cannot buy an escape from the grave. "No man can redeem the life of another . . . no payment is ever enough—that he should live on forever" (verses 7-9). But "God will redeem my soul from the grave," says verse 15, "he will surely take me to himself."

50:9 Does God Need Our Gifts?

People often try to bargain with God, thinking that by their good deeds they can get God to do what they want. Old Testament people sometimes viewed their animal sacrifices this way: not as an act of commitment and fellowship with God, but as a way to manipulate God into putting his stamp of approval on their plans. These majestic words from God scorn such a view. He is rich beyond their dreams; he has no need of their offerings. What matters to him is the attitude they take toward him.

^a14 Hebrew Sheol, also in verse 15 will show

^b15 Or soul

^c21 Or thought the 'I Am' was

^d23 Or and to him who considers his way / I

11 ~~Against you, O Lord, I have sinned~~
 12 ~~and my iniquity is before me~~
 13 ~~and I know my transgressions~~
 14 ~~and my sin is always before me~~
 15 ~~Against you, you only, have I sinned~~
 16 ~~and done what is evil in your sight~~
 17 ~~so that you are proved right when you~~
 18 ~~speak~~
 19 ~~and win when you judge~~
 20 ~~because I was sinful at birth~~
 21 ~~and from the time my mother conceived me~~
 22 ~~Does not you desire truth in the inner parts?~~
 23 ~~You teach me wisdom in the inmost~~
 24 ~~place.~~
 25 ~~Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be~~
 26 ~~clean;~~
 27 ~~wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.~~
 28 ~~Let me hear joy and gladness;~~
 29 ~~let the bones you have crushed rejoice.~~
 30 ~~Hide your face from my sins~~
 31 ~~and blot out all my iniquity~~
 32 ~~Create in me a pure heart, O God~~
 33 ~~and renew a steadfast spirit within me~~

11 Do not cast me from your presence
 or take your Holy Spirit from me
 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation
 and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain
 me
 13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
 and sinners will turn back to you
 14 Save me from bloodguilt, O God,
 the God who saves me
 and my tongue will sing of your
 righteousness
 15 O Lord, open my lips,
 and my mouth will declare your praise.
 16 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would
 bring it;
 you do not take pleasure in burnt
 offerings.
 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
 a broken and contrite heart,
 O God, you will not despise.
 18 In your good pleasure make Zion
 prosper;
 build up the walls of Jerusalem.
 19 Then there will be righteous sacrifices,
 whole burnt offerings to delight you;
 then bulls will be offered on your altar.

¹¹⁻¹³ The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain

¹⁶ Or you desired . . . / you taught

¹⁷ Or My sacrifice, O God, is

INSIGHT

David Caught in the Act

Israel had a strange way to remember its heroes

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight. 51:4

David found a place in the hearts of Israelites something like the one Gandhi found in the hearts of Indians. Both men led their nations through dark hours with courage, wisdom, and deep faith.

But there are essential differences in the way they are remembered. The Bible does not cover up the faults and sins of leaders. Nations tend to cover up the faults of their leaders and even invent stories about their spotless honesty.

For David, no cover-up was attempted. Just the opposite: Psalm 51 publishes David's anguished reaction when he was caught in sin. The story behind the psalm is told in 2 Samuel 11 and 12—a sordid tale of adultery, intrigue, and murder. David, the greatest king in Israel's history, acted like the worst.

David apparently thought nothing of his crime until the prophet Nathan accused him to his face. Then, in tears, David confessed—and this poem was one result. It was recorded (along with the story of David's deeds) in the holy Scriptures. It may well have been used in worship services, as a guide for others' confession.

David's Greatest Legacy

All nations have heroes. Israel may have been alone in making heroic literature about its heroes' failings. In confessing his failures openly, David was certainly unique among all leaders of his day. He knew his place before God, and this humility made him an example for his people.

Ultimately Israel remembered David more for his devotion to God than for his military achievements. In centuries to come, Israel looked for a "son of David" to come and save them. They wanted a truly strong leader—one humble enough to know that God must lead the leaders.

Life Questions: When you fail, what is your response—to cover up your failure, or publicize your confession?

2

The first of these is the fact that the

 second of these is the fact that the

 third of these is the fact that the

1. The first part of the report is the introduction.
2. The second part is the description of the project.
3. The third part is the description of the results.
4. The fourth part is the description of the conclusions.
5. The fifth part is the description of the recommendations.

How much red matter than good
and how much of the same

(1) the first seven numbered words
(2) the numbered phrases

North has not been the same as ever since

The first part of the paper is devoted to the study of the
 asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as
 $t \rightarrow \infty$. It is shown that the solutions of the system
 (1) tend to zero as $t \rightarrow \infty$ if and only if the matrix
 A is stable.

For all experiment runs assume that $\lambda = 0.01$ and $\mu = 0.01$

• The righteous will see and hear
there will laugh at their warnings

"There was a man in the state
who did not make his stronghold
but trusted in his great wealth
and grew strong by destroying others."

that I am like an olive tree
 flourishing in the house of God
 I trust in God's unshaking love
 for ever and ever

I will praise you forever for what you have
done
in your name I will hope for your name is
great

I will praise you in the presence of your

Figure 2

For the director of music: According to musician's
4 month of David

!The fool says in his heart,
There is no God."
They are corrupt, and their ways are vile;
there is no one who does good.

2 God looks down from heaven
on the sons of men
to see if there are any who understand,
any who seek God.

‘Everyone has turned away,
they have together become corrupt,
there is no one who does good,
not even one.’

4 Will the evildoers never learn—
those who devour my people as men eat
bread
and who do not call on God?

⁵There they were overwhelmed with dread.

1. The number of the person who is the subject of the investigation is 1234567890.
 2. The number of the person who is the subject of the investigation is 1234567890.
 3. The number of the person who is the subject of the investigation is 1234567890.
 4. The number of the person who is the subject of the investigation is 1234567890.
 5. The number of the person who is the subject of the investigation is 1234567890.

[Faint handwritten notes at the bottom of the page]

~~There are no other persons named in the~~

22. What is the purpose of the study?

Poster 4

As the Bureau is advised that respondent
has been a member of the Communist Party since 1945
and has been a member of the Communist Party since 1945
and has been a member of the Communist Party since 1945

There are a great many more
 reasons for our night
 there are many a great
 many in the world of us now

Shrimps are attacking the
turtles, they eat the
meat without regard for cost

2004

Quench said is not high
 the level is the one who sustains me

They will reveal in their behavior the
in your extraordinary destiny them

4 I will sacrifice a freewill offering to you
I will praise your name O Lord.
for it is good

For he has delivered me from all my troubles,
and my eyes have looked in triumph on my
Saviour.

Psalm 93

For the derivative of μ with respect to μ is $\frac{d\mu}{d\mu} = 1$

1 Listen to my prayer O God,
 do not ignore my plea,
 2 hear me and answer me
 My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught
 3 at the voice of the enemy
 at the strokes of the wicked.
 for they bring down suffering upon me
 and revile me in their anger

My heart is in anguish within me,
the terrors of death assail me.

Fear and trembling have beset me:
horror has overwhelmed me.

I said, Oh that I had the wings of a dove!
I would fly away and be at rest—

I would flee far away
and stay in the desert.

Soln:

“I would hurry to my place of shelter,
far from the tempest and storm.”

*Confuse the wicked, O Lord, confound their speech.

*Take Probability & Statistics or equivalent course

¹ Taste: Probably a seasonal item.

for I see violence and strife in the city;
 9 Day and night they prowl about on its walls;
 malice and abuse are within it;
 11 Destructive forces are at work in the city;
 threats and lies never leave its streets.
 12 If an enemy were insulting me,
 I could endure it;
 if a foe were raising himself against me,
 I could hide from him.
 13 But it is you, a man like myself,
 my companion, my close friend,
 14 with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship
 as we walked with the throng at the house of
 God.
 15 Let death take my enemies by surprise;
 let them go down alive to the grave,^a
 for evil finds lodging among them.
 16 But I call to God,
 and the LORD saves me.
 17 Evening, morning and noon
 I cry out in distress,
 and he hears my voice.
 18 He ransoms me unharmed
 from the battle waged against me,
 even though many oppose me.
 19 God, who is enthroned forever,
 will hear them and afflict them—
 men who never change their ways
 and have no fear of God.
 20 My companion attacks his friends;
 he violates his covenant.
 21 His speech is smooth as butter,
 yet war is in his heart;
 his words are more soothing than oil,
 yet they are drawn swords.
 22 Cast your cares on the LORD
 and he will sustain you;
 he will never let the righteous fall.
 23 But you, O God, will bring down the wicked
 into the pit of corruption;
 bloodthirsty and deceitful men
 will not live out half their days.
 But as for me, I trust in you

Psalm 56

For the director of music. To the tune of "A Dove
 on Distant Oaks." Of David. A *miktam*.^b When the
 Philistines had seized him in Gath.

1 Be merciful to me, O God, for men hotly
 pursue me,
 all day long they press their attack.
 2 My slanderers pursue me all day long;
 many are attacking me in their pride.
 3 When I am afraid,
 I will trust in you.
 4 In God, whose word I praise,
 in God I trust; I will not be afraid.
 What can mortal man do to me?

Selah

5 All day long they twist my words;
 they are always plotting to harm me.
 6 They conspire, they lurk,
 they watch my steps,
 eager to take my life.
 7 On no account let them escape,
 in your anger, O God, bring down the
 nations.
 8 Record my lament,
 list my tears on your scroll—
 are they not in your record?
 9 Then my enemies will turn back
 when I call for help.
 By this I will know that God is for me.
 10 In God, whose word I praise,
 in the LORD, whose word I praise—
 11 in God I trust; I will not be afraid.
 What can man do to me?
 12 I am under vows to you, O God;
 I will present my thank offerings to you.
 13 For you have delivered me^d from death
 and my feet from stumbling,
 that I may walk before God
 in the light of life.^e

Psalm 57

For the director of music. To the tune of "Do Not
 Destroy." Of David. A *miktam*.^b When he had fled
 from Saul into the cave.

1 Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me,
 for in you my soul takes refuge.
 I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings
 until the disaster has passed.
 2 I cry out to God Most High,
 to God, who fulfills his purpose for me.
 3 He sends from heaven and saves me,
 rebuking those who hotly pursue me; Selah
 God sends his love and his faithfulness.
 4 I am in the midst of lions;
 I lie among ravenous beasts—
 men whose teeth are spears and arrows,
 whose tongues are sharp swords.
 5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
 let your glory be over all the earth.
 6 They spread a net for my feet—
 I was bowed down in distress.
 They dug a pit in my path—
 but they have fallen into it themselves. Selah
 7 My heart is steadfast, O God,
 my heart is steadfast;
 I will sing and make music.
 8 Awake, my soul!
 Awake, harp and lyre!
 I will awaken the dawn.
 9 I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations;
 I will sing of you among the peoples.
 10 For great is your love, reaching to the heavens;

^a15 Hebrew *Sheol* ^bTitle. Probably a literary or musical term.
^c13 Or the land of the living

^d8 Or I put my tears in your wineskin

^e13 Or my soul

your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

¹Be exalted, O God, above the heavens,
let your glory be over all the earth

Psalm 58

For the director of music. To the tune of "Do Not Destroy." Of David. A *miktam*.^a

¹Do you rulers indeed speak justly?
Do you judge uprightly among men?

²No, in your heart you devise injustice,
and your hands mete out violence on the earth.

³Even from birth the wicked go astray;
from the womb they are wayward and speak lies.

⁴Their venom is like the venom of a snake,
like that of a cobra that has stopped its ears,
⁵that will not heed the tune of the charmer,
however skillful the enchanter may be.

⁶Break the teeth in their mouths, O God,
tear out, O Lord, the fangs of the lions!

⁷Let them vanish like water that flows away;
when they draw the bow, let their arrows be blunted.

⁸Like a slug melting away as it moves along,
like a stillborn child, may they not see the sun.

⁹Before your pots can feel the heat of the thorns—
whether they be green or dry—the wicked
will be swept away.^b

¹⁰The righteous will be glad when they are avenged,
when they bathe their feet in the blood of the wicked.

¹¹Then men will say,
"Surely the righteous still are rewarded;
surely there is a God who judges the earth."

Psalm 59

For the director of music. To the tune of "Do Not Destroy." Of David. A *miktam*.^a When Saul had sent men to watch David's house in order to kill him.

¹Deliver me from my enemies, O God;
protect me from those who rise up against me.

²Deliver me from evildoers
and save me from bloodthirsty men.

³See how they lie in wait for me!
Fierce men conspire against me
for no offense or sin of mine, O Lord.

⁴I have done no wrong, yet they are ready to attack me.

Anse to help me; look on my plight!

⁵O Lord God Almighty, the God of Israel,
rouse yourself to punish all the nations;

show no mercy to wicked traitors.

Selah

⁶They return at evening,
snarling like dogs,
and prowl about the city.

⁷See what they spew from their mouths—
they spew out swords from their lips,
and they say, "Who can hear us?"

⁸But you, O Lord, laugh at them;
you scoff at all those nations.

⁹O my Strength, I watch for you;
you, O God, are my fortress, ¹⁰my loving God.

God will go before me
and will let me gloat over those who slander me.

¹¹But do not kill them, O Lord our shield,^c
or my people will forget.
In your might make them wander about,
and bring them down.

¹²For the sins of their mouths,
for the words of their lips,
let them be caught in their pride.

For the curses and lies they utter,

¹³consume them in wrath,
consume them till they are no more.

Then it will be known to the ends of the earth
that God rules over Jacob. *Selah*

¹⁴They return at evening,
snarling like dogs,
and prowl about the city.

¹⁵They wander about for food
and howl if not satisfied.

¹⁶But I will sing of your strength,
in the morning I will sing of your love;
for you are my fortress,
my refuge in times of trouble.

¹⁷O my Strength, I sing praise to you;
you, O God, are my fortress, my loving God.

Psalm 60

For the director of music. To the tune of "The Lily of the Covenant." A *miktam*^d of David. For teaching. When he fought Aram Naharaim^e and Aram Zobah,^e and when Joab returned and struck down twelve thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt.

¹You have rejected us, O God, and burst forth upon us;

you have been angry—now restore us!

²You have shaken the land and torn it open;
mend its fractures, for it is quaking.

³You have shown your people desperate times;
you have given us wine that makes us stagger.

⁴But for those who fear you, you have raised a banner

to be unfurled against the bow. *Selah*

⁵Save us and help us with your right hand,

^aTitle: Probably a literary or musical term.

^bThe meaning of the Hebrew for this verse is uncertain.

^cTitle: That is, Arameans of Northwest Mesopotamia.

^dTitle: That is, Arameans of central Syria.

^eOr sovereign.

that those who have may be delivered
 who has spoken from his sanctuary
 and measure off the Valley of Shittim
 between us and Maradiah is mine
 because I am beloved
 because my power
 because I am victorious
 when I come I pass my sandals
 upon the rock I shout in triumph
 when I come to the fortified city
 when I come to the city of David
 because you, O God, you who have rejected us
 and no longer extend with our armies
 because we are despised the enemy
 because the help of man is worthless
 because we have rejected the nation
 and because we have despised our enemies

Psalm 61

A psalm of David. With stringed
 instruments. Of David.

My soul trusts in God
 because my prayer

from the ends of the earth I call to you
 and as my heart grows faint
 lead me to the rock that is higher than I
 for you have been my refuge
 a strong tower against the foe

because I dwell in your tent forever
 and take refuge in the shelter of your wings. *Selah*

because you have heard my vows, O God,
 you have given me the herbage of those who
 fear your name

increase the days of the king's life,
 his years for many generations
 May he be enthroned in God's presence
 forever
 appoint your love and faithfulness to protect
 him

Then will I ever sing praise to your name
 and fulfill my vows day after day.

Psalm 62

For the director of music. For Jeduthun.
 A psalm of David

My soul finds rest in God alone;
 my salvation comes from him.
 He alone is my rock and my salvation;
 he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.
 How long will you assault a man?
 Would all of you throw him down—
 this leaning wall, this tottering fence?
 They fully intend to topple him
 from his lofty place;
 they take delight in lies.

With their mouths they bless,
 but in their hearts they curse. *Selah*

Find rest, O my soul, in God alone;
 my hope comes from him.
 He alone is my rock and my salvation;
 he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.
 My salvation and my honor depend on God,
 he is my mighty rock, my refuge.
 Trust in him at all times, O people,
 pour out your hearts to him,
 for God is our refuge. *Selah*

Lowborn men are but a breath,
 the highborn are but a lie,
 if weighed on a balance, they are nothing;
 together they are only a breath.
 Do not trust in extortion
 or take pride in stolen goods;
 though your riches increase,
 do not set your heart on them.

One thing God has spoken,
 two things have I heard:
 that you, O God, are strong,
 and that you, O Lord, are loving.
 Surely you will reward each person
 according to what he has done.

Psalm 63

A psalm of David. When he was in the Desert of
 Judah.

O God, you are my God,
 earnestly I seek you;
 my soul thirsts for you,
 my body longs for you,
 in a dry and weary land
 where there is no water.

I have seen you in the sanctuary
 and beheld your power and your glory.

Because your love is better than life,
 my lips will glorify you.

I will praise you as long as I live,
 and in your name I will lift up my hands.

My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of
 foods;
 with singing lips my mouth will praise you.

On my bed I remember you;
 I think of you through the watches of the
 night.

Because you are my help,
 I sing in the shadow of your wings.

62:7 The Hideout

In the years when David was an outlaw from King Saul, his hideouts included a "rock" in the desert (1 Samuel 23:25-28), as well as a "stronghold" (1 Samuel 22:4). As an experienced fighter, David knew the value of such defenses. He recognized, however, that he owed his safety to God, his true rock and fortress.

- My soul clings to you;
your right hand upholds me
- They who seek my life will be destroyed;
they will go down to the depths of the earth
- They will be given over to the sword
and become food for jackals
- But the king will rejoice in God,
all who swear by God's name will praise
him,
while the mouths of liars will be silenced

Psalm 64

For the director of music. A psalm of David

- Hear me, O God, as I voice my complaint,
protect my life from the threat of the enemy
- Hide me from the conspiracy of the wicked,
from that noisy crowd of evildoers
- They sharpen their tongues like swords
and aim their words like deadly arrows
- They shoot from ambush at the innocent man,
they shoot at him suddenly, without fear
- They encourage each other in evil plans,
they talk about hiding their snares;
they say, "Who will see them?"
- They plot injustice and say,
"We have devised a perfect plan!"
Surely the mind and heart of man are
cunning.

- But God will shoot them with arrows;
suddenly they will be struck down
- He will turn their own tongues against them
and bring them to ruin;
all who see them will shake their heads in
scorn

- All mankind will fear,
they will proclaim the works of God
and ponder what he has done.
- Let the righteous rejoice in the Lord
and take refuge in him,
let all the upright in heart praise him!

Psalm 65

For the director of music. A psalm of David.
A song

- Praise awaits^b you, O God, in Zion;
to you our vows will be fulfilled.
- O you who hear prayer,
to you all men will come.
- When we were overwhelmed by sins,
you forgave^c our transgressions.
- Blessed are those you choose
and bring near to live in your courts!
We are filled with the good things of your
house,
of your holy temple.

^a Or us ^b Or befits, the meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.
how you prepare the land

- They shoot them with arrows,
suddenly they are struck down
- He turns their tongues against them
and brings them to ruin
- All who see them shake their heads in scorn
- All mankind will fear,
they will praise your works, O God
- Let the righteous rejoice in the Lord
and take refuge in him
- Let all the upright in heart praise him!

- Shout with joy to God, all the earth!
Sing the glory of his name
make his praise glorious
- Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds!
So great is your power
that your enemies cringe before you
- All the earth bows down to you
they sing praise to you
they sing praise to your name."
- Come and see what God has done
how awesome his works in man's behalf!
- He turned the sea into dry land
they passed through the waters on foot—
come, let us rejoice in him.
- He rules forever by his power
his eyes watch the nations—
let not the rebellious rise up against him.

Psalm 66

For the director of music. A song. A psalm.

- Shout with joy to God, all the earth!
Sing the glory of his name
make his praise glorious
- Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds!
So great is your power
that your enemies cringe before you
- All the earth bows down to you
they sing praise to you
they sing praise to your name."
- Come and see what God has done
how awesome his works in man's behalf!
- He turned the sea into dry land
they passed through the waters on foot—
come, let us rejoice in him.
- He rules forever by his power
his eyes watch the nations—
let not the rebellious rise up against him.

- Praise our God, O peoples,
let the sound of his praise be heard.
- He has preserved our lives
and kept our feet from slipping
- For you, O God, tested us,
you refined us like silver
- You brought us into prison
and laid burdens on our backs
- You let men ride over our heads
we went through fire and water

^c Or make atonement for ^d Or to that is

but you brought us to a place of abundance.

- 11 I will come to your temple with burnt offerings
and fulfill my vows to you—
12 vows my lips promised and my mouth spoke
when I was in trouble.
13 I will sacrifice fat animals to you
and an offering of rams.
I will offer bulls and goats. *Selah*

- 14 Come and listen, all you who fear God;
let me tell you what he has done for me.
15 I cried out to him with my mouth,
his praise was on my tongue.
16 If I had cherished sin in my heart,
the Lord would not have listened;
17 but God has surely listened
and heard my voice in prayer.
18 Praise be to God
who has not rejected my prayer
or withheld his love from me!

Psalms 67

For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A psalm. A song.

- 1 May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face shine upon us,
2 that your ways may be known on earth,
your salvation among all nations.
3 May the peoples praise you, O God;
may all the peoples praise you.
4 May the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you rule the peoples justly
and guide the nations of the earth. *Selah*
5 May the peoples praise you, O God;
may all the peoples praise you.
6 Then the land will yield its harvest,
and God, our God, will bless us.
7 And will bless us
and all the ends of the earth will fear him.

Psalms 68

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.
A song.

- 1 May God arise, may his enemies be scattered,
may his foes flee before him.
2 As smoke is blown away by the wind,
may you blow them away,
as wax melts before the fire,
may the wicked perish before God.
3 But may the righteous be glad
and rejoice before God,
may they be happy and joyful.
4 Sing to God, sing praise to his name,
extol him who rides on the clouds—
his name is the Lord—
and rejoice before him.
5 A father to the fatherless, a defender of
widows,

6 is God in his holy dwelling.
God sets the lonely in families;
he leads forth the prisoners with singing,
but the rebellious live in a sun-scorching
land.

- 7 When you went out before your people,
O God,
when you marched through the wasteland. *Selah*
8 The earth shook,
the heavens poured down rain,
before God, the One of Sinai,
before God, the God of Israel.
9 You gave abundant showers, O God,
you refreshed your weary inheritance.
10 Your people settled in it,
and from your bounty, O God, you provided
for the poor.
11 The Lord announced the word
and great was the company of those who
proclaimed it:
12 "Kings and armies flee in haste;
in the camps men divide the plunder.
13 Even while you sleep among the campfires,
the wings of my dove are sheathed with
silver,
its feathers with shining gold."
14 When the Almighty^a scattered the kings in the
land,
it was like snow fallen on Zalmon.
15 The mountains of Bashan are majestic
mountains,
rugged are the mountains of Bashan.
16 Why gaze in envy, O rugged mountains
at the mountain where God chooses to reign,
where the Lord himself will dwell forever?
17 The chariots of God are tens of thousands
and thousands of thousands;
the Lord has come, from Sinai into his
sanctuary.
18 When you ascended on high
you led captives in your train,
you received gifts from men,
even from the rebellious—
that you, O Lord God, might dwell there.
19 Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior,
who daily bears our burdens. *Selah*
20 Our God is a God who saves,
from the Sovereign Lord comes escape from
death.
21 Surely God will crush the heads of his
enemies,
the hairy crowns of those who go on in their
sin.
22 The Lord says, "I will bring them from Bashan,
I will bring them from the depths of the sea.
23 That you may plunge your feet in the blood of
your foes
while the tongues of your dogs have their
share.
24 Your procession has come into view, O God,

^a 6 1b = prepare the way for him who rides through the depths of the clouds. ² 18 1b gifts for men, / even ³ 18 1b they

^b 6 1b the dweller in a homeland

¹ 1b and the high

² 1b Hebrew

the procession of my God and King into the sanctuary.

²⁵In front are the singers, after them the musicians
with them are the maidens playing tambourines.

²⁶Praise God in the great congregation;
praise the LORD in the assembly of Israel

²⁷There is the little tribe of Benjamin, leading them

there the great throng of Judah's princes,
and there the princes of Zebulun and of Naphtali

²⁸Summon your power, O God^a,
show us your strength, O God, as you have done before

²⁹Because of your temple at Jerusalem
kings will bring you gifts

³⁰Rebuke the beast among the reeds,
the herd of bulls among the calves of the nations

Humbled, may it bring bars of silver.
Scatter the nations who delight in war

³¹Envoys will come from Egypt;
Cush^b will submit herself to God

³²Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth,
sing praise to the Lord, *Selah*

³³to him who rides the ancient skies above,
who thunders with mighty voice

³⁴Proclaim the power of God,
whose majesty is over Israel,
whose power is in the skies

³⁵You are awesome, O God, in your sanctuary;
the God of Israel gives power and strength
to his people

Praise be to God!

Psalm 69

For the director of music. To the tune of "Lilies."
Of David

¹Save me, O God,
for the waters have come up to my neck.

²I sink in the miry depths,
where there is no foothold.

I have come into the deep waters;
the floods engulf me.

68:24 The Way They Worshiped

Many of the psalms were sung in the temple, to worship God. Exactly how people worshiped, however, is difficult to know. This psalm offers unmistakable clues to how it was used—in a procession leading to the temple. It may have first been sung when David brought the ark—the sign of God's actual presence—into Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6; 1 Chronicles 15-16). Or it may have been used in one of the annual festivals that drew Israelites from all over to the capital.

³I am worn out calling for help;
my throat is parched.

My eyes fail,
looking for my God.

⁴Those who hate me without reason
outnumber the hairs of my head;
many are my enemies without cause,
those who seek to destroy me.

I am forced to restore
what I did not steal.

⁵You know my folly, O God;
my guilt is not hidden from you.

⁶May those who hope in you
not be disgraced because of me,
O Lord, the LORD Almighty;
may those who seek you
not be put to shame because of me,
O God of Israel.

⁷For I endure scorn for your sake,
and shame covers my face.

⁸I am a stranger to my brothers,
an alien to my own mother's sons;

⁹for zeal for your house consumes me,
and the insults of those who insult you fall
on me.

¹⁰When I weep and fast,
I must endure scorn;

¹¹when I put on sackcloth,
people make sport of me.

¹²Those who sit at the gate mock me,
and I am the song of the drunkards.

¹³But I pray to you, O LORD,
in the time of your favor;
in your great love, O God,
answer me with your sure salvation.

¹⁴Rescue me from the mire,
do not let me sink;
deliver me from those who hate me,
from the deep waters.

69:9 Foreshadowing Jesus

Psalm 69 was quoted repeatedly in the New Testament as a prediction of Jesus. "Zeal for your house consumes me" was quoted in John 2:17, for instance, when Jesus drove out the moneychangers, and Romans 15:3 quoted the second half of that verse, referring to Jesus' self-sacrificial attitude.

Why did the New Testament writers see Jesus in this psalm? The psalm was attributed to David, the great king. Yet none of David's greatness and majesty are described. Instead, the psalm is a cry of suffering from a righteous man, alienated even from his family because of his zeal for God. It is strange: Israel's greatest hero is portrayed as a helpless victim because of his faith in God. Yet Jesus filled this pattern completely. He did not, however, follow every part of the psalm: instead of the curses this psalm directs toward enemies, Jesus prayed that God would forgive the men murdering him.

^a28 Many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint and Syriac; most Hebrew manuscripts *Your God has summoned power for you*
the upper Nile region

^b31 That is,

18 Do not let the floodwaters engulf me
 or the depths swallow me up
 or let show its mouth over me
 Answer me, O Lord, out of the goodness of
 your love
 in your great mercy turn to me
 Do not hide your face from your servant
 answer me quickly for I am in trouble
 Answer me and rescue me
 redeem me because of my foes
 You know how I am scorned, disgraced and
 shamed
 All my enemies are before you
 My sin has vexed my heart
 and has made me helpless
 because of my iniquity, but there was none,
 because of my guilt, but I found none
 They have eaten my food
 and gave me vinegar for my thirst
 May the table set before them become a snare,
 and it become retribution and a trap
 May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see,
 and their backs be bent forever
 Pour out your wrath on them.
 Let your fierce anger overtake them
 May their place be deserted.
 Let there be no one to dwell in their tents.
 For they persecute those you wound
 and talk about the pain of those you hurt
 Charge them with crime upon crime
 do not let them share in your salvation
 May they be blotted out of the book of life
 and not be listed with the righteous.
 I am in pain and distress,
 may your salvation, O God, protect me.
 I will praise God's name in song
 and glorify him with thanksgiving.
 This will please the Lord more than an ox,
 more than a bull with its horns and hoofs.
 The poor will see and be glad—
 you who seek God, may your hearts live!
 The Lord hears the needy
 and does not despise his captive people.
 Let heaven and earth praise him,
 the seas and all that move in them,
 for God will save Zion
 and rebuild the cities of Judah.
 Then people will settle there and possess it;
 the children of his servants will inherit it,
 and those who love his name will dwell
 there.

Psalm 70

For the director of music Of David. A petition.

1 Hasten, O God, to save me;
 O Lord, come quickly to help me.
 2 May those who seek my life
 be put to shame and confusion;
 may all who desire my ruin
 be turned back in disgrace.

*22 Or snare / and their fellowship become

1 May those who say to me, "Aha! Aha!"
 turn back because of their shame
 that may all who seek you
 rejoice and be glad in you!
 may those who love your salvation always say,
 "Let God be exalted!"

Yet I am poor and needy,
 come quickly to me, O God
 You are my help and my deliverer;
 O Lord, do not delay

Psalm 71

1 In you, O Lord, I have taken refuge,
 let me never be put to shame.
 2 Rescue me and deliver me in your
 righteousness;
 turn your ear to me and save me.
 3 Be my rock of refuge,
 to which I can always go,
 give the command to save me,
 for you are my rock and my fortress.
 4 Deliver me, O my God, from the hand of the
 wicked,
 from the grasp of evil and cruel men.
 5 For you have been my hope, O Sovereign
 Lord,
 my confidence since my youth.
 6 From birth I have relied on you;
 you brought me forth from my mother's
 womb.
 I will ever praise you.
 7 I have become like a portent to many,
 but you are my strong refuge.
 8 My mouth is filled with your praise,
 declaring your splendor all day long.
 9 Do not cast me away when I am old;
 do not forsake me when my strength is
 gone.
 10 For my enemies speak against me;
 those who wait to kill me conspire together.
 11 They say, "God has forsaken him;
 pursue him and seize him,
 for no one will rescue him."
 12 Be not far from me, O God;
 come quickly, O my God, to help me.
 13 May my accusers perish in shame;
 may those who want to harm me
 be covered with scorn and disgrace.
 14 But as for me, I will always have hope;
 I will praise you more and more.
 15 My mouth will tell of your righteousness,
 of your salvation all day long,
 though I know not its measure.
 16 I will come and proclaim your mighty acts,
 O Sovereign Lord;
 I will proclaim your righteousness, yours
 alone.
 17 Since my youth, O God, you have taught me,
 and to this day I declare your marvelous
 deeds.
 18 Even when I am old and gray,

Do not forsake me, O God
 till I declare your power to the next generation,
 your might to all who are to come.
 *Your righteousness reaches to the skies,
 O God,
 you who have done great things.
 Who is like you?
 **Such you have made me see troubles, many
 and bitter;
 you will restore my life again
 from the depths of the earth;
 you will again bring me up.
 †You will increase my honor
 and comfort me once again.
 ‡I will praise you with the harp
 for your faithfulness, O my God;
 I will sing praise to you with the lyre,
 O Holy One of Israel.
 §My lips will shout for joy
 when I sing praise to you—
 I, whom you have redeemed.
 ¶My tongue will tell of your righteous acts
 all day long
 for those who wanted to harm me
 have been put to shame and confusion.

Psalm 72

Of Solomon

1Endow the king with your justice, O God,
 the royal son with your righteousness.
 2He will judge your people in righteousness,
 your afflicted ones with justice.
 3The mountains will bring prosperity to the
 people,
 the hills the fruit of righteousness.
 4He will defend the afflicted among the people
 and save the children of the needy;
 he will crush the oppressor.
 5He will endure^a as long as the sun,
 as long as the moon, through all
 generations.
 6He will be like rain falling on a mown field,
 like showers watering the earth.
 7In his days the righteous will flourish;
 prosperity will abound till the moon is no
 more.
 8He will rule from sea to sea
 and from the River^b to the ends of the
 earth.^d

71:18 A View from Old Age

Older people have a peculiar privilege: the chance to see God's faithfulness over a lifetime. Their troubles do not grow smaller as the years go by (see verses 9-11), but their experiences can strengthen confidence that God will deliver as he always has (verses 20-21).

9The desert tribes will bow before him
 and his enemies will lick the dust.
 10The kings of Tarshish and of distant
 shores
 will bring tribute to him,
 the kings of Sheba and Seba
 will present him gifts.
 11All kings will bow down to him
 and all nations will serve him.
 12For he will deliver the needy who cry out,
 the afflicted who have no one to help.
 13He will take pity on the weak and the
 needy
 and save the needy from death.
 14He will rescue them from oppression and
 violence,
 for precious is their blood in his sight.
 15Long may he live!
 May gold from Sheba be given him.
 May people ever pray for him
 and bless him all day long.
 16Let grain abound throughout the land;
 on the tops of the hills may it sway.
 Let its fruit flourish like Lebanon;
 let it thrive like the grass of the field.
 17May his name endure forever;
 may it continue as long as the sun.
 All nations will be blessed through him,
 and they will call him blessed.

18Praise be to the Lord God, the God of
 Israel,
 who alone does marvelous deeds.
 19Praise be to his glorious name forever;
 may the whole earth be filled with his
 glory,
 Amen and Amen.

20This concludes the prayers of David son of
 Jesse.

72:20 The Five Books

Psalms was probably made into one big book from five separate collections. These are set off in our Bible as Book I, Book II, and so on, each book ending with a concluding line of praise. The contents sometimes overlap: Psalm 14 in Book I turns up again as Psalm 53 in Book II. Part of Psalm 40 (Book I) becomes Psalm 70 (Book II), and parts of Psalms 57 and 60 make up Psalm 108 (Book IV). Other less noticeable differences stand out between the different books. But perhaps the most eloquent proof that all these psalms were not originally collected together is found at the end of Psalm 72, "This concludes the prayers of David son of Jesse." Since 18 more "psalms of David" appear in Psalms, it seems very likely that Psalm 72:20 originally concluded a songbook. Later, this collection was incorporated into the book of Psalms.

^a2 Or May he; similarly in verses 3-11 and 17
 the end of the land

^b5 Septuagint; Hebrew You will be feared

^c8 That is, the Euphrates

^d8 Or

BOOK III

Psalms 73-89

Psalm 73

A psalm of Asaph

Surely God is good to Israel,
to those who are pure in heart

²But as for me, my feet had almost slipped;
I had nearly lost my foothold
for I envied the arrogant
when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

³They have no struggles,
their bodies are healthy and strong.^a
⁴They are free from the burdens common to
man

they are not plagued by human ills.
Their pride is their necklace;
they boast of themselves with violence
from their callous hearts comes iniquity^b;
the evil conceits of their minds know no
limits

⁵They scoff, and speak with malice;
in their arrogance they threaten oppression.
Their mouths lay claim to heaven,
and their tongues take possession of the
earth

Therefore their people turn to them
and drink up waters in abundance.^c
They say, "How can God know?
Does the Most High have knowledge?"

⁶This is what the wicked are like—
always carefree, they increase in wealth.

⁷Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure;
in vain have I washed my hands in
innocence

⁸All day long I have been plagued;
I have been punished every morning.

⁹If I had said, "I will speak thus,"
I would have betrayed your children.

¹⁰When I tried to understand all this,
it was oppressive to me

¹¹Until I entered the sanctuary of God;
then I understood their final destiny.

¹²Surely you place them on slippery ground;
you cast them down to ruin.

¹³How suddenly are they destroyed,

completely swept away by terrors!
²⁰As a dream when one awakes,
so when you arise, O Lord,
you will despise them as fantasies.

²¹When my heart was grieved
and my spirit embittered,
²²I was senseless and ignorant;
I was a brute beast before you.

²³Yet I am always with you;
you hold me by my right hand.

²⁴You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will take me into glory.

²⁵Whom have I in heaven but you?
And earth has nothing I desire besides you.

²⁶My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever

²⁷Those who are far from you will perish;
you destroy all who are unfaithful to you.

²⁸But as for me, it is good to be near God.
I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge;
I will tell of all your deeds.

Psalm 74

A maskil^d of Asaph.

¹Why have you rejected us forever, O God?
Why does your anger smolder against the
sheep of your pasture?

²Remember the people you purchased of old,
the tribe of your inheritance, whom you
redeemed—

Mount Zion, where you dwelt.

³Turn your steps toward these everlasting
ruins,
all this destruction the enemy has brought
on the sanctuary.

⁴Your foes roared in the place where you met
with us;

they set up their standards as signs.

⁵They behaved like men wielding axes
to cut through a thicket of trees.

⁶They smashed all the carved paneling
with their axes and hatchets.

⁷They burned your sanctuary to the ground;
they defiled the dwelling place of your
Name.

⁸They said in their hearts, "We will crush them
completely!"

They burned every place where God was
worshiped in the land.

⁹We are given no miraculous signs;
no prophets are left,
and none of us knows how long this will be.

¹⁰How long will the enemy mock you, O God?
Will the foe revile your name forever?

¹¹Why do you hold back your hand, your right
hand?

Take it from the folds of your garment and
destroy them!

73:4 The Rewards of Bad Character

Some people are deeply disturbed when they see evil people living without a care. Does a bad life always make you unhappy? Not in the short run, according to this description. In fact, the life of the wicked sometimes looks enviable. Only in the light of eternity is godly living always more rewarding.

^a With a different word division of the Hebrew, Masoretic Text struggles at their death; / their bodies are healthy (Septuagint); Hebrew / their eyes bulge with fat

^b The meaning of the Hebrew for this verse is uncertain.

^c Syriac (see also Title). Probably a

12But you, O God, are my king from of old;
you bring salvation upon the earth.
13It was you who split open the sea by your
power
you broke the heads of the monster in the
waters
14It was you who crushed the heads of Leviathan
and gave him as food to the creatures of the
desert
15It was you who opened up springs and
streams;
you dried up the ever flowing rivers
16The day is yours, and yours also the night,
you established the sun and moon
It was you who set all the boundaries of the
earth
you made both summer and winter.

18Remember how the enemy has mocked you,
O Lord,
how foolish people have reviled your name
19Do not hand over the life of your dove to wild
beasts,
do not forget the lives of your afflicted
people forever
20Have regard for your covenant
because haunts of violence fill the dark
places of the land
21Do not let the oppressed retreat in disgrace,
may the poor and needy praise your name.
22Rise up, O God, and defend your cause,
remember how fools mock you all day long
23Do not ignore the clamor of your adversaries,
the uproar of your enemies, which rises
continually.

Psalm 75

For the director of music To the tune of, "Do Not
Destroy" A psalm of Asaph A song

1We give thanks to you, O God,
we give thanks, for your Name is near;
men tell of your wonderful deeds.

2You say, "I choose the appointed time;
it is I who judge uprightly.
3When the earth and all its people quake,
it is I who hold its pillars firm.

Selah

4To the arrogant I say, 'Boast no more,'
and to the wicked, 'Do not lift up your
horns

5Do not lift your horns against heaven;
do not speak with outstretched neck "

6No one from the east or the west
or from the desert can exalt a man.

7But it is God who judges:

He brings one down, he exalts another

8In the hand of the LORD is a cup
full of foaming wine mixed with spices;
he pours it out, and all the wicked of the earth
drink it down to its very dregs.

9As for me, I will declare this forever,
I will sing praise to the God of Jacob.

10I will cut off the horns of all the wicked,
but the horns of the righteous will be lifted
up

Psalm 76

For the director of music With stringed
instruments A psalm of Asaph A song

1In Judah God is known;
his name is great in Israel

2His tent is in Salem,
his dwelling place in Zion.

3There he broke the flashing arrows,
the shields and the swords, the weapons of
war *Selah*

4You are resplendent with light,
more majestic than mountains rich with
game

5Valiant men lie plundered,
they sleep their last sleep,
not one of the warriors
can lift his hands

6At your rebuke, O God of Jacob,
both horse and chariot lie still.

7You alone are to be feared
Who can stand before you when you are
angry?

8From heaven you pronounced judgment,
and the land feared and was quiet—

9when you, O God, rose up to judge,
to save all the afflicted of the land. *Selah*

10Surely your wrath against men brings you
praise,
and the survivors of your wrath are
restrained.*

11Make vows to the LORD your God and fulfill
them;

let all the neighboring lands
bring gifts to the One to be feared.

12He breaks the spirit of rulers;
he is feared by the kings of the earth.

Psalm 77

For the director of music. For Jeduthun. Of Asaph.
A psalm.

1I cried out to God for help;

I cried out to God to hear me

2When I was in distress, I sought the Lord;
at night I stretched out untiring hands
and my soul refused to be comforted.

77:3 How to Spend a Sleepless Night

Sleeplessness afflicts millions, and this psalm shows it is nothing new. Anxiety tormented the psalmist while he lay awake at night. What to do! He deliberately turned his thoughts to the past, remembering what God had done for him and for his people.

*10 Or: Surely the wrath of men brings you praise and with the remainder of wrath you arm yourself

3 I remembered you, O God, and I
groaned;
I mused, and my spirit grew faint
4 You kept my eyes from closing;
I was too troubled to speak
5 I thought about the former days,
the years of long ago;
6 I remembered my songs in the night
My heart mused and my spirit
inquired:

7 "Will the Lord reject forever?
Will he never show his favor again?
8 Has his unfailing love vanished forever?
Has his promise failed for all time?
9 Has God forgotten to be merciful?
Has he in anger withheld his compassion?"

Selah

10 Then I thought, "To this I will appeal:

the years of the right hand of the Most
High "

11 I will remember the deeds of the Lord,
yes, I will remember your miracles of long
ago
12 I will not ^{ago} forget on all your works
and consider all your mighty deeds.

13 Your ways, O God, are holy
What god is so great as our God?
14 You are the God who performs miracles;
you display your power among the peoples.
15 With your mighty arm you redeemed your
people,

the descendants of Jacob and Joseph Selah

16 The waters saw you, O God,
the waters saw you and writhed;
the very depths were convulsed.

17 The clouds poured down water,

INSIGHT

Remembering Back

The past can give you hope for the future

I will remember the deeds of the Lord. 77:11

Many of the psalms are poems of remembrance. When things get bad, these poems often refer to the past—particularly to the great events when, under Moses, the Israelite nation began. God freed the Israelites from Egyptian slavery, carried them through the Red Sea, gave them directions for living, and ushered them into the promised land. This miraculous beginning was as significant to Jews as the cross is to Christians.

The Israelites even had an "anniversary day"—known as Passover—to remember it. Every spring Passover reminded them of their escape from Egypt. It's no accident that Easter often falls on the same week. Both days celebrate liberation from slavery.

The memories weren't all positive. The Israelites could, in fact, be brutally frank about their early failings. Even as they remembered how persistently wonderful God had been, they also remembered how rebellious, complaining, and forgetful they had been. Yet they had one great, happy reason to celebrate: God had kept his promise to love them.

Hope in a Time of Despair

Psalm 77 is a "remembering" poem. It starts with deep despair. "Will the Lord reject forever? Will he never show his favor again? Has God forgotten to be merciful? Has he in anger withheld his compassion?" (77:7,9). Imagine a wife asking such questions about her husband.

Then thoughts turn, deliberately, to the past. Remember the turmoil at the banks of the Red Sea? Could anything be worse? But in that turbulent water they had seen the Lord's power: he had led them through to safety. He would do the same again.

The historical psalms (77, 78, 105, 106) invite us, along with the Israelites, to relive history. We can recall God's work—his powerful victories recorded all through Scripture, his promises and proofs of love toward his people. And we can refer to God's history with us as individuals, too. Who cannot count some blessings, some undeserved favors? Through such remembering we are strengthened to face the future, and to recommit ourselves to trusting God's care.

Life Questions: If you were to refer to a single past event for encouragement, what would it be?

the skies resounded with thunder,
 your arrows flashed back and forth
 18Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind,
 your lightning lit up the world,
 the earth trembled and quaked
 19Your path led through the sea,
 your way through the mighty waters,
 though your footprints were not seen
 20You led your people like a flock
 by the hand of Moses and Aaron

Psalm 78

A *maskil*^a of Asaph

1O my people, hear my teaching,
 listen to the words of my mouth
 2I will open my mouth in parables,
 I will utter hidden things, things from of
 old
 3What we have heard and known,
 what our fathers have told us
 4We will not hide them from their children,
 we will tell the next generation
 the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord,
 his power, and the wonders he has done
 5He decreed statutes for Jacob
 and established the law in Israel,
 which he commanded our forefathers
 to teach their children,
 6so the next generation would know them,
 even the children yet to be born,
 and they in turn would tell their children.
 7Then they would put their trust in God
 and would not forget his deeds
 but would keep his commands
 8They would not be like their forefathers—
 a stubborn and rebellious generation,
 whose hearts were not loyal to God,
 whose spirits were not faithful to him.

9The men of Ephraim, though armed with
 bows,
 turned back on the day of battle,
 10they did not keep God's covenant
 and refused to live by his law.
 11They forgot what he had done,
 the wonders he had shown them.
 12He did miracles in the sight of their fathers
 in the land of Egypt, in the region of Zoan.
 13He divided the sea and led them through;
 he made the water stand firm like a wall.
 14He guided them with the cloud by day
 and with light from the fire all night.
 15He split the rocks in the desert
 and gave them water as abundant as the
 seas,
 16he brought streams out of a rocky crag
 and made water flow down like rivers.
 17But they continued to sin against him,
 rebelling in the desert against the Most
 High
 18They willfully put God to the test

by demanding the food they craved
 19They spoke against God, saying,
 "Can God spread a table in the desert?
 20When he struck the rock, water gushed out,
 and streams flowed abundantly
 But can he also give us food?
 Can he supply meat for his people?"

21When the Lord heard them, he was very
 angry,
 his fire broke out against Jacob,
 and his wrath rose against Israel,
 22for they did not believe in God
 or trust in his deliverance
 23Yet he gave a command to the skies above
 and opened the doors of the heavens;
 24he rained down manna for the people to eat,
 he gave them the grain of heaven.
 25Men ate the bread of angels,
 he sent them all the food they could eat.
 26He let loose the east wind from the heavens
 and led forth the south wind by his power.
 27He rained meat down on them like dust,
 flying birds like sand on the seashore.
 28He made them come down inside their camp,
 all around their tents
 29They ate till they had more than enough,
 for he had given them what they craved.
 30But before they turned from the food they
 craved,
 even while it was still in their mouths,
 31God's anger rose against them;
 he put to death the sturdiest among them,
 cutting down the young men of Israel.

32In spite of all this, they kept on sinning;
 in spite of his wonders, they did not
 believe.
 33So he ended their days in futility
 and their years in terror.
 34Whenever God slew them, they would seek
 him;
 they eagerly turned to him again.
 35They remembered that God was their Rock,
 that God Most High was their Redeemer.
 36But then they would flatter him with their
 mouths,
 lying to him with their tongues;
 37their hearts were not loyal to him,
 they were not faithful to his covenant.
 38Yet he was merciful;
 he forgave their iniquities
 and did not destroy them.
 Time after time he restrained his anger
 and did not stir up his full wrath.
 39He remembered that they were but flesh,
 a passing breeze that does not return.

40How often they rebelled against him in the
 desert
 and grieved him in the wasteland!
 41Again and again they put God to the test;
 they vexed the Holy One of Israel.
 42They did not remember his power—
 the day he redeemed them from the
 oppressor,

^aTitle: Probably a literary or musical term

When he brought the sheep he brought him
 to be the shepherd of his people Jacob
 of Israel his inheritance
 And David shepherded them with integrity of
 heart
 With sound hands he led them

When the nations have invaded your
 sanctuary
 They have defiled your holy temple
 They have reduced Jerusalem to rubble.
 They have given the dead bodies of your
 servants
 as food to the birds of the air
 They have poured out your blood like water
 all around Jerusalem
 And there is no one to bury the dead
 We are objects of reproach to our neighbors,
 of scorn and derision to those around us

How long, O Lord? Will you be angry
 forever?
 How long will your jealousy burn like fire?
 Pour out your wrath on the nations
 that do not acknowledge you,
 on the kingdoms
 that do not call on your name,
 for they have devoured Jacob
 and destroyed his homeland
 Do not hold against us the sins of the
 fathers
 May your mercy come quickly to meet us,
 for we are in desperate need

Help us, O God our Savior,
 for the glory of your name,
 deliver us and forgive our sins
 for your name's sake
 Why should the nations say,
 "Where is their God?"
 Before our eyes make known among the
 nations
 that you avenge the outpoured blood of your
 servants
 May the groans of the prisoners come before
 you
 by the strength of your arm
 preserve those condemned to die.

Pay back into the laps of our neighbors seven
 times
 the reproach they have hurled at you,
 O Lord
 Then we your people, the sheep of your
 pasture
 will praise you forever,
 from generation to generation
 we will recount your praise.

When he brought the sheep he brought him
 to be the shepherd of his people Jacob
 of Israel his inheritance
 And David shepherded them with integrity of
 heart
 With sound hands he led them

Psalm 79

A psalm of Asaph

When the nations have invaded your
 sanctuary
 They have defiled your holy temple
 They have reduced Jerusalem to rubble.
 They have given the dead bodies of your
 servants
 as food to the birds of the air
 They have poured out your blood like water
 all around Jerusalem
 And there is no one to bury the dead
 We are objects of reproach to our neighbors,
 of scorn and derision to those around us

How long, O Lord? Will you be angry
 forever?
 How long will your jealousy burn like fire?
 Pour out your wrath on the nations
 that do not acknowledge you,
 on the kingdoms
 that do not call on your name,
 for they have devoured Jacob
 and destroyed his homeland
 Do not hold against us the sins of the
 fathers
 May your mercy come quickly to meet us,
 for we are in desperate need

Help us, O God our Savior,
 for the glory of your name,
 deliver us and forgive our sins
 for your name's sake
 Why should the nations say,
 "Where is their God?"
 Before our eyes make known among the
 nations
 that you avenge the outpoured blood of your
 servants
 May the groans of the prisoners come before
 you
 by the strength of your arm
 preserve those condemned to die.

Pay back into the laps of our neighbors seven
 times
 the reproach they have hurled at you,
 O Lord
 Then we your people, the sheep of your
 pasture
 will praise you forever,
 from generation to generation
 we will recount your praise.

Psalm 84

For the director of music. To the tune of "The
Lilies of the Covenant." Of Asaph. A psalm.

1 How long, O LORD God of Israel,

you who lead Joseph like a flock,

2 how long enthroned between the cherubim,
shine forth

3 from Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasse

4 and give your might

5 now and save us.

6 Answer us, O God,

7 make your face shine upon us

8 so we may be saved.

9 O LORD God Almighty,

10 how long will your anger smolder

11 against the prayers of your people?

12 You have fed them with the bread of tears;

13 you have made them drink tears by the
bowl.

14 You have made us a source of contention to

our enemies

15 and our enemies mock us.

16 Restore us, O God Almighty;

17 make your face shine upon us,

18 that we may be saved.

19 You brought a vine out of Egypt;

20 you drove out the nations and planted it.

21 You cleared the ground for it,

22 and it took root and filled the land.

23 The mountains were covered with its
shade

24 the mighty cedars with its branches;

25 it sent out its boughs to the Sea,^a

26 its shoots as far as the River.^b

27 Why have you broken down its walls

28 so that all who pass by pick its grapes?

29 Boars from the forest ravage it

30 and the creatures of the field feed on it.

31 Return to us, O God Almighty!

32 Look down from heaven and see!

33 Watch over this vine,

34 the root your right hand has planted,

35 the son you have raised up for yourself.

36 Your vine is cut down, it is burned with
fire;

37 at your rebuke your people perish.

38 Let your hand rest on the man at your right
hand,

39 the son of man you have raised up for
yourself.

40 Then we will not turn away from you;

41 revive us, and we will call on your name.

42 Restore us, O LORD God Almighty;

43 make your face shine upon us,

44 that we may be saved.

Psalm 81

For the director of music. According to guitar.^a
Of Asaph.

1 Sing for joy to God our strength

2 shout aloud to the God of Israel

3 begin the music; strike the tambourine;
4 play the melodious harp and lyre.

5 Sound the ram's horn at the New Moon

6 and when the moon is full, on the day of our
feast.

7 This is a decree for Israel

8 an ordinance of the God of Israel

9 He established it as a statute for Joseph

10 when he went out against Egypt

11 where we heard a language we did not
understand.

12 He says, "I removed the burden from their
shoulders

13 their hands were set free from the basket

14 in your distress you called and I rescued you,

15 I answered you out of a thundercloud,

16 I tested you at the waters of Meribah." *Selah*

17 Hear, O my people, and I will warn you

18 if you would but listen to me, O Israel!

19 You shall have no foreign god among you;

20 you shall not bow down to an alien god.

21 I am the LORD your God,

22 who brought you up out of Egypt

23 Open wide your mouth and I will fill it.

24 "But my people would not listen to me,

25 Israel would not submit to me.

26 So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts
to follow their own devices.

27 "If my people would but listen to me,

28 if Israel would follow my ways,

29 how quickly would I subdue their enemies
and turn my hand against their foes!

30 Those who hate the LORD would cringe before
him,

31 and their punishment would last forever.

32 But you would be fed with the finest of wheat,
33 with honey from the rock I would satisfy
you."

Psalm 82

A psalm of Asaph.

1 God presides in the great assembly;
2 he gives judgment among the "gods":^a

3 "How long will you defend the unjust
and show partiality to the wicked?" *Selah*

4 Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless;
5 maintain the rights of the poor and
oppressed.

6 Rescue the weak and needy;
7 deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

^{a1} Probably the Mediterranean.

^{b1} That is, the Euphrates.

^c and we heard a voice we had not known.

^{d2} The Hebrew is plural.

^{e15} Or branch.

^f Title: Probably a musical term.

^{g15} Or

“They know nothing, they understand nothing
 They walk about in darkness,
 all the foundations of the earth are shaken
 “I said, ‘You are “gods”
 you are all sons of the Most High.’
 “But you will die like mere men,
 you will fall like every other ruler.”
 “Rise up, O God, judge the earth,
 for all the nations are your inheritance

Psalm 83

A song. A psalm of Asaph

1 O God, do not keep silent;
 be not quiet, O God, be not still
 2 See how your enemies are astir,
 how your foes rear their heads.
 3 With cunning they conspire against your
 people,
 they plot against those you cherish.
 4 “Come,” they say, “let us destroy them as a
 nation,
 that the name of Israel be remembered no
 more.”
 5 With one mind they plot together,
 they form an alliance against you—
 6 the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites,
 of Moab and the Hagrites,
 7 Gebal,^a Ammon and Amalek,
 Philistia, with the people of Tyre.
 8 Even Assyria has joined them
 to lend strength to the descendants of Lot.
 Selah
 9 Do to them as you did to Midian,
 as you did to Sisera and Jabin at the river
 Kishon,
 10 who perished at Endor
 and became like refuse on the ground.
 11 Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb,
 all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna,
 12 who said, “Let us take possession
 of the pasturelands of God.”

82:1 Among “the Gods”

Human beings like to think of themselves as godlike—able to do whatever they like. Many commentators believe this psalm’s snort of disdain is aimed at human judges and “powers that be” who set themselves up as little gods. What will become of their arrogance if they defy God? They will “die like men!” The grave is a perfect answer to their pretensions.

When Jesus was accused of blasphemy for claiming to be God’s Son, he referred his critics to this psalm (John 10:35). If Scripture could apply such lofty terminology to sinful human beings, was it not possible that a perfect man could be God’s own Son?

13 Make them like tumbleweed, O my God,
 like chaff before the wind
 14 As fire consumes the forest
 or a flame sets the mountains ablaze,
 15 so pursue them with your tempest
 and terrify them with your storm
 16 Cover their faces with shame
 so that men will seek your name, O LORD
 17 May they ever be ashamed and dismayed,
 may they perish in disgrace.
 18 Let them know that you, whose name is the
 LORD—
 that you alone are the Most High over all the
 earth

Psalm 84

For the director of music. According to *gittith*^b
 Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm

1 How lovely is your dwelling place,
 O LORD Almighty!
 2 My soul yearns, even faints,
 for the courts of the LORD;
 my heart and my flesh cry out
 for the living God.
 3 Even the sparrow has found a home,
 and the swallow a nest for herself,
 where she may have her young—
 a place near your altar,
 O LORD Almighty, my King and my God.
 4 Blessed are those who dwell in your house;
 they are ever praising you. Selah
 5 Blessed are those whose strength is in you,
 who have set their hearts on pilgrimage.
 6 As they pass through the Valley of Baca,
 they make it a place of springs;
 the autumn rains also cover it with pools.^c
 7 They go from strength to strength,
 till each appears before God in Zion.
 8 Hear my prayer, O LORD God Almighty;
 listen to me, O God of Jacob. Selah
 9 Look upon our shield,^d O God;
 look with favor on your anointed one.
 10 Better is one day in your courts
 than a thousand elsewhere;
 I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of
 my God
 than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

84:4 Homecoming

“Home Sweet Home” probably adorns more plaques than any other motto. Home is a place where you can lay down your tired body and bruised ego in safety. Psalm 84 contains the same idea, but with a dramatic difference. Home is in God’s house, a place that brings comfort right down into your bones. You’d rather spend one day near God, praising him, than a thousand days anywhere else.

^a That is, Byblos.^b Title. Probably a musical term.^c Or blessings.^d Or sovereign.

- 11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield;
the LORD bestows favor and honor;
no good thing does he withhold
from those whose walk is blameless.
- 12 O LORD Almighty,
blessed is the man who trusts in you.

Psalm 85

For the director of music Of the Sons of Korah
A psalm

- You showed favor to your land, O LORD;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.
- 2 You forgave the iniquity of your people
and covered all their sins *Selah*
- You set aside all your wrath
and turned from your fierce anger.
- 4 Restore us again, O God our Savior,
and put away your displeasure toward us.
- 5 Will you be angry with us forever?
Will you prolong your anger through all
generations?
- 6 Will you not revive us again,
that your people may rejoice in you?
- 7 Show us your unfailing love, O LORD,
and grant us your salvation
- 8 I will listen to what God the LORD will say;
he promises peace to his people, his saints—
but let them not return to folly
- 9 Surely his salvation is near those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.
- 10 Love and faithfulness meet together;
righteousness and peace kiss each other.
- 11 Faithfulness springs forth from the earth,
and righteousness looks down from heaven.
- 12 The LORD will indeed give what is good,
and our land will yield its harvest.
- 13 Righteousness goes before him
and prepares the way for his steps.

Psalm 86

A prayer of David

- 1 Hear, O LORD, and answer me,
for I am poor and needy.
- 2 Guard my life, for I am devoted to you.
You are my God; save your servant
who trusts in you.
- 3 Have mercy on me, O Lord,
for I call to you all day long.
- 4 Bring joy to your servant,
for to you, O Lord,
I lift up my soul
- 5 You are forgiving and good, O Lord,
abounding in love to all who call to you.
- 6 Hear my prayer, O LORD;
listen to my cry for mercy
- 7 In the day of my trouble I will call to you,
for you will answer me.

- 8 Among the gods there is none like you,
O Lord;
no deeds can compare with yours.
- 9 All the nations you have made
will come and worship before you, O Lord;
they will bring glory to your name.
- 10 For you are great and do marvelous deeds;
you alone are God.

- 11 Teach me your way, O LORD,
and I will walk in your truth;
give me an undivided heart,
that I may fear your name.
- 12 I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my
heart;
I will glorify your name forever.
- 13 For great is your love toward me;
you have delivered me from the depths of
the grave.^a

- 14 The arrogant are attacking me, O God;
a band of ruthless men seeks my life—
men without regard for you.
- 15 But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and
gracious God,
slow to anger, abounding in love and
faithfulness.
- 16 Turn to me and have mercy on me;
grant your strength to your servant
and save the son of your maidservant.^b
- 17 Give me a sign of your goodness,
that my enemies may see it and be put to
shame,
for you, O LORD, have helped me and
comforted me.

Psalm 87

Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm. A song.

- 1 He has set his foundation on the holy
mountain;
- 2 the LORD loves the gates of Zion
more than all the dwellings of Jacob.
- 3 Glorious things are said of you,
O city of God: *Selah*
- 4 "I will record Rahab^c and Babylon
among those who acknowledge me—
Philistia too, and Tyre, along with Cush^d—
and will say, 'This^e one was born in Zion.'"
- 5 Indeed, of Zion it will be said,
"This one and that one were born in her,
and the Most High himself will establish
her."

86:11 Heart Surgery

David prays for an undivided heart, in order to give all of it to God in his praise. "Heart" in the Bible doesn't refer merely to emotions, but to the whole person. David's prayer means, "Help me aim myself in a single direction!"

^a Hebrew Sheol
Rahab and Babylon

^b Or save your faithful son
Philistia Tyre and Cush, / I will record concerning those who acknowledge me / This

^c A poetic name for Egypt

^d That is, the upper Nile region

^e Or

The LORD will write in the register of the
rebellion
that he has done to me
as he has said they will sing
all the day long in your

Psalm 88

A song of lament of the Sons of Korah. For the
musicians. A maskil.¹ A psalm of the Sons of Korah.
A maskil.² of Ethan the Ezrahite.

O LORD, the God who saves me,
at night I cry out before you.
My prayer comes before you,
and my cry reaches you.
O LORD, do not draw near to trouble
me, and do not draw near the grave;
I am troubled among those who go down to the
pit,
as like a man without strength
I am separated from the dead.
My heart is in the grave,
and my strength is cut off from me.
You have put me in the lowest pit,
in the darkest depths.
Your wrath is heavily upon me,
and you have overwhelmed me with all your
waves.
You have taken from me my closest friends
and have made me repulsive to them.
I am troubled and cannot escape,
my eyes are full of grief.
I call to you, O LORD, every day,
I spread out my hands to you.
O LORD, show your wonders to the dead?
O LORD, who are dead rise up and praise
you.
I am declared in the grave,
as a witness in Destruction?
Are your wonders known in the place of
deaths?
Are your merciful deeds in the land of
forgetfulness?
You call to you for help, O LORD;
in the morning my prayer comes before you.
O LORD, do you reject me
and hide your face from me?

Selah

Selah

88:1 Successful Children of a Rebellious Father

Psalm 88 is the last of 12 psalms ascribed to "the Sons of Korah." Korah, a rebel against Moses' leadership, died in his rebellion (Numbers 16). His children were spared, and many years later David chose their clan to found a temple choir (1 Chronicles 6:31-37). Apparently these psalms were part of a musical collection they used.

15 From my youth I have been afflicted and close to death;

I have suffered your terrors and am in despair.

16 Your wrath has swept over me;
your terrors have destroyed me.

17 All day long they surround me like a flood;
they have completely engulfed me.

18 You have taken my companions and loved ones from me;
the darkness is my closest friend.

Psalm 89

A maskil³ of Ethan the Ezrahite.

1 I will sing of the LORD's great love forever;
with my mouth I will make your faithfulness
known through all generations.

2 I will declare that your love stands firm
forever,
that you established your faithfulness in
heaven itself.

3 You said, "I have made a covenant with my
chosen one,

I have sworn to David my servant,

4 "I will establish your line forever
and make your throne firm through all
generations." "

Selah

5 The heavens praise your wonders, O LORD,
your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the
holy ones.

6 For who in the skies above can compare with
the LORD?

Who is like the LORD among the heavenly
beings?

7 In the council of the holy ones God is greatly
feared;

he is more awesome than all who surround
him.

8 O LORD God Almighty, who is like you?

You are mighty, O LORD, and your
faithfulness surrounds you.

9 You rule over the surging sea;
when its waves mount up, you still them.

10 You crushed Rahab like one of the slain;
with your strong arm you scattered your
enemies.

11 The heavens are yours, and yours also the
earth;

you founded the world and all that is in it.

12 You created the north and the south;
Tabor and Hermon sing for joy at your
name.

13 Your arm is endued with power;
your hand is strong, your right hand exalted.

14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation
of your throne;

love and faithfulness go before you.

15 Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim
you,

¹Title: Probably a title: "The Suffering of Affliction"
²11 Hebrew: *Maskil*

³Title: Probably a literary or musical term

⁴3 Hebrew: *Shal*

...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath
...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath

...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath
...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath

...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath
...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath

...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath
...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath

...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath
...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath

...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath
...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath

...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath
...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath

...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath
...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath

...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath
...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath

...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath
...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath

...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath
...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath

...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath
...the days of our life are as a breath
...the years of our life are as a breath

BOOK IV

Psalm 90-100

Psalm 90

A prayer of Moses the man of God.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place
throughout all generations
Before the mountains were born

89-95 How Long Lasts the Shame?

God as this psalm notes, had made tremendous promises to David and to his ancestors (see 2 Samuel 7:4-17). But what do you do when God's promises don't match your experience? This psalm was probably written after the Babylonians had deported the young king Jehoiachin (see here and 2 Kings 24:8-15, and torn down Jerusalem (see verse 40 and 2 Kings 25:10). It gives no explanation of how God's promises fit with this humiliation and suffering. But it offers a model of how to respond, taking the problem straight to God in the frankest terms. Only when Jesus came centuries later did Israel see God fulfill these promises to honor and love a "son of David" as his own Son (verses 26-29).

or you brought forth the earth and the world
from everlasting to everlasting you are God

⁷You turn men back to dust,

⁸Return to dust. O sons of men
for a thousand years in your sight
are like a day that has just gone by,
or like a watch in the night.

⁹You sweep us away in the sleep of death
they are like the new grass of the morning
though in the morning it springs up new
by evening it is dry and withered.

¹⁰We are consumed by your anger
and terrified by your indignation.
¹¹You have set our iniquities before you
our secret sins in the light of your presence.

¹²Our days pass away under your wrath
we finish our years with a moan.
¹³The length of our days is seventy years—
or eighty, if we have the strength,
yet their span is but trouble and sorrow,
for they quickly pass, and we fly away.

¹⁴Who knows the power of your anger?
For your wrath is as great as the fear that is
due you.

¹⁵Teach us to number our days aright,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

¹⁶Rejoice, O LORD! How long will it be?
Have compassion on your servants.

¹⁷Season us in the morning with your unfailing
love,
that we may sing for joy and be glad all our
days.

¹⁸Make us glad for as many days as you have
afflicted us,
for as many years as we have seen trouble.
¹⁹May your deeds be shown to your servants,
your splendor to their children.

²⁰May the favor of the LORD our God rest upon
us,
establish the work of our hands for us—
yes, establish the work of our hands.

Psalm 91

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.¹

²I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and
my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust."

³Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare
and from the deadly pestilence.

⁴He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness will be your shield and
rampart.

⁵You will not fear the terror of night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,

⁶nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,
nor the plague that destroys at midday.

⁷A thousand may fall at your side,

ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.

⁸You will only observe with your eyes
and see the punishment of the wicked.

⁹If you make the Most High your dwelling—
even the LORD, who is my refuge—

¹⁰then no harm will befall you,

no disaster will come near your tent.

¹¹For he will command his angels concerning
you

to guard you in all your ways;

¹²they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a
stone.

¹³You will tread upon the lion and the cobra;
you will trample the great lion and the
serpent.

¹⁴"Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will
rescue him;

I will protect him, for he acknowledges my
name.

¹⁵He will call upon me, and I will answer him;

I will be with him in trouble,

I will deliver him and honor him.

¹⁶With long life will I satisfy him
and show him my salvation."

Psalm 92

A psalm. A song. For the Sabbath day.

¹It is good to praise the LORD
and make music to your name, O Most
High,

²to proclaim your love in the morning
and your faithfulness at night,

³to the music of the ten-stringed lyre
and the melody of the harp.

⁴For you make me glad by your deeds, O LORD;
I sing for joy at the works of your hands.

⁵How great are your works, O LORD,
how profound your thoughts!

⁶The senseless man does not know,
fools do not understand,

⁷that though the wicked spring up like grass
and all evildoers flourish,
they will be forever destroyed.

⁸But you, O LORD, are exalted forever.

⁹For surely your enemies, O LORD,
surely your enemies will perish;
all evildoers will be scattered.

¹⁰You have exalted my horn like that of a wild
ox,

fine oils have been poured upon me.

¹¹My eyes have seen the defeat of my
adversaries;

my ears have heard the rout of my wicked
foes.

¹²The righteous will flourish like a palm tree,
they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon;

¹³planted in the house of the LORD,

¹ Or get the best of them

² Or beauty

³ Hebrew Shaddai

⁴ Or He says

¹⁰ Horn here symbolizes strength

For I will shake the earth, and I will build it;
 I will set the sea in motion, and I will build it;
 I will set the sea in motion, and I will build it;
 I will set the sea in motion, and I will build it;
 I will set the sea in motion, and I will build it;

Psalm 93

The Lord reigns. He is seated in majesty;
 He is seated in majesty;
 He is seated in majesty;
 He is seated in majesty;
 He is seated in majesty;

The seas have lifted up, O Lord;
 The seas have lifted up their voice;
 The seas have lifted up their pounding
 waves.

Mightier than the thunder of the great waters,
 mightier than the breakers of the sea,
 the Lord on high is mighty.

Your statutes stand firm;
 holiness adorns your house
 for endless days. O Lord.

Psalm 94

O Lord, the God who avenges,
 O God who avenges, shine forth;
 Rise up, O Judge of the earth;
 pay back to the proud what they deserve.
 How long will the wicked, O Lord,
 how long will the wicked be jubilant?

They pour out arrogant words,
 all the evildoers are full of boasting.

They crush your people, O Lord;
 they oppress your inheritance.

They slay the widow and the alien;
 they murder the fatherless.

They say, "The Lord does not see,
 the God of Jacob pays no heed."

Take heed, you senseless ones among the
 people,

you fools, when will you become wise?

Does he who implanted the ear not hear?
 Does he who formed the eye not see?

Does he who disciplines nations not punish?
 Does he who teaches man lack knowledge?

The Lord knows the thoughts of man;
 he knows that they are futile.

Blessed is the man you discipline, O Lord,
 the man you teach from your law;

you grant him relief from days of trouble,
 till a pit is dug for the wicked.

For the Lord will not reject his people;
 he will never forsake his inheritance.

Judgment will again be founded on
 righteousness,
 and all the upright in heart will follow it.

Who will take up for me against the wicked?
 Who will take a stand for me against
 evildoers?

When the Lord has given me help,
 I would never have dwelt in the silence of
 death.

When I said, "My foot is slipping,
 my feet have failed,"
 when anxiety was great within me,
 your consolation brought me to joy and

joy; as a trumpet theme he allied with you,
 and that brings on victory by its descent.

They band together against the righteous
 and condemn the innocent to death.

When the Lord has become my fortress,
 and my God the rock in whom I take refuge,

he will repay them for their sin
 and destroy them for their wickedness;
 the Lord our God will destroy them.

Psalm 95

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord;
 let us shout aloud to the Rock of our
 salvation.

Let us come before him with thanksgiving
 and extol him with music and song.

For the Lord is the great God,
 the great King above all gods;
 In his hand are the depths of the earth,
 and the mountain peaks belong to him.

The sea is his, for he made it,
 and his hands formed the dry land.

Come, let us bow down in worship,
 let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;

For he is our God,
 and we are the people of his pasture,
 the flock under his care.

Today, if you hear his voice,
 do not harden your hearts as you did at
 Meribah,^a
 as you did that day at Massah^b in the
 desert,

where your fathers tested and tried me,
 though they had seen what I did.

95:8 Rebellion

One of Israel's worst memories involved a place known as Massah and Meribah. There, on their way to the promised land, the Israelites ran out of water (Exodus 17:1-7) and rebelled against Moses and God. Because of their lack of faith, God made them wander the wilderness for 40 years.

Now, hundreds of years later, Psalm 95 warns another generation of Israelites not to repeat the mistake that had made their forebears miss "God's rest." In the New Testament Hebrews 4:1-13 argues that "God's rest" means not merely the promised land of Israel, but a state of peaceful unity with God. The warning still applies.

^a Meribah means quarreling.

^b Massah means testing.

¹⁰For forty years I was angry with that generation.
 I said, "They are a people whose hearts go astray
 and they have not known my ways."
¹¹So I declared on oath in my anger,
 They shall never enter my rest."

Psalm 96

¹Sing to the LORD a new song,
 sing to the LORD, all the earth.
²Sing to the LORD, praise his name;
 proclaim his salvation day after day.
³Declare his glory among the nations,
 his marvelous deeds among all peoples.
⁴For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise:
 he is to be feared above all gods.
⁵For all the gods of the nations are idols,
 but the LORD made the heavens.
⁶Splendor and majesty are before him;
 strength and glory are in his sanctuary.
⁷Ascribe to the LORD, O families of nations,
 ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
⁸Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
 bring an offering and come into his courts.
⁹Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness,
 tremble before him, all the earth.
¹⁰Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns."
 The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved;
 he will judge the peoples with equity.
¹¹Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;
 let the sea resound, and all that is in it;
¹²let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them.
 Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy;
¹³they will sing before the LORD, for he comes,
 he comes to judge the earth.
 He will judge the world in righteousness
 and the peoples in his truth.

Psalm 97

¹The LORD reigns, let the earth be glad;
 let the distant shores rejoice.
²Clouds and thick darkness surround him;
 righteousness and justice are the foundation
 of his throne.
³Fire goes before him
 and consumes his foes on every side.
⁴His lightning lights up the world;
 the earth sees and trembles.
⁵The mountains melt like wax before the LORD,
 before the Lord of all the earth.
⁶The heavens proclaim his righteousness,
 and all the peoples see his glory.
⁷All who worship images are put to shame,
 those who boast in idols—

worship him, all you gods!

⁸Zion hears and rejoices
 and the villages of Judah are glad
 because of your judgments, O LORD.
⁹For you, O LORD, are the Most High over all
 the earth,
 you are exalted far above all gods.
¹⁰Let those who love the LORD hate evil,
 for he guards the lives of his faithful ones
 and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.
¹¹Light is shed upon the righteous
 and joy on the upright in heart.
¹²Rejoice in the LORD, you who are righteous,
 and praise his holy name.

Psalm 98

A psalm.

¹Sing to the LORD a new song,
 for he has done marvelous things;
 his right hand and his holy arm
 have worked salvation for him.
²The LORD has made his salvation known
 and revealed his righteousness to the nations.
³He has remembered his love
 and his faithfulness to the house of Israel;
 all the ends of the earth have seen
 the salvation of our God.
⁴Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth,
 burst into jubilant song with music;
⁵make music to the LORD with the harp,
 with the harp and the sound of singing,
⁶with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn—
 shout for joy before the LORD, the King.
⁷Let the sea resound, and everything in it,
 the world, and all who live in it.
⁸Let the rivers clap their hands,
 let the mountains sing together for joy;
⁹let them sing before the LORD,
 for he comes to judge the earth.
 He will judge the world in righteousness
 and the peoples with equity.

Psalm 99

¹The LORD reigns,
 let the nations tremble;
 he sits enthroned between the cherubim,
 let the earth shake.
²Great is the LORD in Zion;
 he is exalted over all the nations.
³Let them praise your great and awesome name—
 he is holy.
⁴The King is mighty, he loves justice—
 you have established equity;
 in Jacob you have done

⁹⁹ Or LORD with the splendor of

what is just and right
 1 Exalt the LORD our God
 and worship at his footstool,
 he is holy

2 Moses and Aaron were among his priests,
 Samuel was among those who called on his
 name

they called on the LORD
 and he answered them

3 He spoke to them from the pillar of cloud;
 they kept his statutes and the decrees he
 gave them

4 O LORD our God,
 you answered them;
 you were to Israel a forgiving God,
 though you punished their misdeeds.^b
 5 Exalt the LORD our God
 and worship at his holy mountain,
 for the LORD our God is holy.

Psalm 100

A psalm. For giving thanks

1 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.
 2 Worship the LORD with gladness;
 come before him with joyful songs.
 3 Know that the LORD is God.
 It is he who made us, and we are his;
 we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving
 and his courts with praise;
 give thanks to him and praise his name.
 5 For the LORD is good and his love endures
 forever;
 his faithfulness continues through all
 generations.

Psalm 101

Of David. A psalm.

1 I will sing of your love and justice;
 to you, O LORD, I will sing praise.
 2 I will be careful to lead a blameless life—
 when will you come to me?

I will walk in my house
 with blameless heart.

3 I will set before my eyes
 no vile thing.

The deeds of faithless men I hate;
 they will not cling to me.

4 Men of perverse heart shall be far from me;
 I will have nothing to do with evil.

5 Whoever slanders his neighbor in secret,
 him will I put to silence;
 whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart,
 him will I not endure.

6 My eyes will be on the faithful in the land,
 that they may dwell with me;

he whose walk is blameless
 will minister to me

7 No one who practices deceit
 will dwell in my house,
 no one who speaks falsely
 will stand in my presence

8 Every morning I will put to silence
 all the wicked in the land,
 I will cut off every evildoer
 from the city of the LORD.

Psalm 102

A prayer of an afflicted man. When he is faint and
 pours out his lament before the LORD.

1 Hear my prayer, O LORD;
 let my cry for help come to you.

2 Do not hide your face from me
 when I am in distress.

Turn your ear to me;
 when I call, answer me quickly.

3 For my days vanish like smoke;
 my bones burn like glowing embers.

4 My heart is blighted and withered like grass.
 I forget to eat my food.

5 Because of my loud groaning
 I am reduced to skin and bones.

6 I am like a desert owl,
 like an owl among the ruins.

7 I lie awake; I have become
 like a bird alone on a roof.

8 All day long my enemies taunt me;
 those who rail against me use my name as a
 curse.

9 For I eat ashes as my food
 and mingle my drink with tears

10 because of your great wrath,
 for you have taken me up and thrown me
 aside.

11 My days are like the evening shadow;
 I wither away like grass.

12 But you, O LORD, sit enthroned forever;
 your renown endures through all
 generations.

13 You will arise and have compassion on Zion,
 for it is time to show favor to her;
 the appointed time has come.

14 For her stones are dear to your servants;
 her very dust moves them to pity.

15 The nations will fear the name of the LORD.

101:7 The Company You Keep

Some friends build you up, others tear you down.
 That's true for people in influential positions, also.
 "Politics makes strange bedfellows," they say,
 because a politician must work with people from
 various political factions, whether he admires them
 or not. But here David, the head of state, pledges
 to steer clear of all shady alliances. He wants a
 clean administration, from the top down.

^a8 Hebrew them

^b8 Or an avenger of the wrongs done to them

^c3 Or and not use ourselves

The first of these is the fact that the
 Government has not yet decided whether
 it will accept the offer of the
 United States to purchase the
 Alaska Pipeline. This is a
 very important decision, and
 it will have a great effect
 on the future of the
 country. The second of these
 is the fact that the
 Government has not yet decided
 whether it will accept the offer
 of the United States to purchase
 the Alaska Pipeline. This is a
 very important decision, and
 it will have a great effect
 on the future of the
 country. The third of these
 is the fact that the
 Government has not yet decided
 whether it will accept the offer
 of the United States to purchase
 the Alaska Pipeline. This is a
 very important decision, and
 it will have a great effect
 on the future of the
 country.

Page 163

13.6

and reach all your diseases,
 have, reforms your life from the pit
 and renews you with love and compassion,
 who watches your desires with good things

192 26 Outlasting the Universe

Is a diamond forever? Not according to the scientist, who predicts that the universe, which God made, will wear out like old clothes. But God remains the same forever—and he will preserve his people whom he is committed to, far more than his universe.

[illegible]

Psalm 104

1 Praise the Lord, O my soul.
O Lord my God, you are very great;
you are clothed with splendor and majesty.
2 He wraps himself in light as with a garment;
he stretches out the heavens like a tent
3 and lays the beams of his upper chambers on
their waters.
He makes the clouds his chariot
and rides on the wings of the wind.
4 He makes winds his messengers,^b
flames of fire his servants.
5 He set the earth on its foundations;
it can never be moved.
6 You covered it with the deep as with a
garment,
the waters stood above the mountains.

7But at your rebuke the waters fled,
at the sound of your thunder they took to flight.

8They flowed over the mountains,
they went down into the valleys
to the place you assigned for them.
9You set a boundary they cannot cross,
never again will they cover the earth.

10He makes springs pour water into the ravines,
it flows between the mountains.

11They give water to all the beasts of the field,
the wild donkeys quench their thirst.
The birds of the air nest by the waters,
they sing among the branches.

12He waters the mountains from his upper
chambers.

the earth is satisfied by the fruit of his work.

14He makes grass grow for the cattle,

*15 That is, the hyrax or rock badger.

and plants for man to cultivate,
bringing forth food from the earth.

16The trees that produce the fruit of oil
oil to make the face shine.

17The trees of the forest are well watered,
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.

18There the birds make their nests,
the stork her nest of reeds.

19The high mountains belong to the wild goats,
the crags are a refuge for the animals.

20The moon marks off the seasons,
and the sun knows when to rise.

21You bring darkness, it becomes night,
and all the beasts of the forest find rest.

22The lions roar for their prey
and seek their food from God.

23The sun rises, and they start away,

INSIGHT

The Beauty of Nature

Creation sings God's praise

How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all. 104.24

Psalm 104 shows appreciation for every aspect of nature, even creatures like wild goats, lions, and the "leviathan," the whale or sea monster. The Israelites, as herders and farmers, had no romantic idealization of the outdoors. Nobody who herds sheep thinks of them as soft and fluffy pets. But to the poet who wrote Psalm 104, creatures that are no "use" to anyone still have intrinsic worth—especially to God.

The author saw how the world fits together, everything in its proper sphere. At night wild animals hunt, at daybreak humans go out to work. The rain falls, nourishing crops for people and grass for cattle, but also watering the forest to provide a place for birds to nest.

God's Perfect Work

The intertwining of nature is not, for the psalmist, like a complex machine, dangerously sensitive. Things fit together because an intimate, personal God watches over them. Animals eat on schedule not just because their habitat contains adequate food, but because God gives them their food "at the proper time." Every breath of life depends on his will. So do the weather, the winds and clouds, the water supply, the very stability of the earth. The psalmist doesn't just marvel over the complexity and beauty of nature; in it he sees the work of God.

Modern people are often preoccupied with the fear of overcrowding and poisoning nature. The psalms show no such fear, for overcrowding and pollution were not major problems in that preindustrial civilization. Yet interestingly enough, this psalm ends with a wish that God would clean up the earth—cleanse it of sinners, who mar its perfection by their rejection of God's will. The beauty of the earth, made by God, calls out for purity—purity of the heart.

Life Questions: How does nature affect you? How do you affect it?

they return and lie down in their dens
 23Then man goes out to his work,
 to his labor until evening
 24How many are your works, O LORD!
 In wisdom you made them all,
 the earth is full of your creatures
 25There is the sea, vast and spacious,
 teeming with creatures beyond number—
 living things both large and small
 26There the ships go to and fro,
 and the leviathan, which you formed to
 frolic there.
 27These all look to you
 to give them their food at the proper time.
 28When you give it to them,
 they gather it up;
 when you open your hand,
 they are satisfied with good things.
 29When you hide your face,
 they are terrified;
 when you take away their breath,
 they die and return to the dust.
 30When you send your Spirit,
 they are created,
 and you renew the face of the earth.
 31May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
 may the LORD rejoice in his works—
 32he who looks at the earth, and it trembles,
 who touches the mountains, and they
 smoke.
 33I will sing to the LORD all my life;
 I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.
 34May my meditation be pleasing to him,
 as I rejoice in the LORD.
 35But may sinners vanish from the earth
 and the wicked be no more.
 Praise the LORD, O my soul.
 Praise the LORD.^a

Psalm 105

1Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name;
 make known among the nations what he has
 done.
 2Sing to him, sing praise to him;
 tell of all his wonderful acts.
 3Glory in his holy name;
 let the hearts of those who seek the LORD
 rejoice.
 4Look to the LORD and his strength;
 seek his face always.
 5Remember the wonders he has done,
 his miracles, and the judgments he
 pronounced,
 6O descendants of Abraham his servant,
 O sons of Jacob, his chosen ones
 7He is the LORD our God,
 his judgments are in all the earth
 8He remembers his covenant forever,

the word he commanded, for a thousand
 generations,
 9the covenant he made with Abraham,
 the oath he swore to Isaac.
 10He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree,
 to Israel as an everlasting covenant
 11"To you I will give the land of Canaan
 as the portion you will inherit."
 12When they were but few in number,
 few indeed, and strangers in it,
 13they wandered from nation to nation,
 from one kingdom to another.
 14He allowed no one to oppress them;
 for their sake he rebuked kings:
 15"Do not touch my anointed ones;
 do my prophets no harm."
 16He called down famine on the land
 and destroyed all their supplies of food;
 17and he sent a man before them—
 Joseph, sold as a slave.
 18They bruised his feet with shackles,
 his neck was put in irons,
 19till what he foretold came to pass,
 till the word of the LORD proved him true.
 20The king sent and released him,
 the ruler of peoples set him free.
 21He made him master of his household,
 ruler over all he possessed,
 22to instruct his princes as he pleased
 and teach his elders wisdom.
 23Then Israel entered Egypt;
 Jacob lived as an alien in the land of Ham.
 24The LORD made his people very fruitful;
 he made them too numerous for their foes,
 25whose hearts he turned to hate his people,
 to conspire against his servants.
 26He sent Moses his servant,
 and Aaron, whom he had chosen.
 27They performed his miraculous signs among
 them,
 his wonders in the land of Ham.
 28He sent darkness and made the land dark—
 for had they not rebelled against his
 words?
 29He turned their waters into blood,
 causing their fish to die.
 30Their land teemed with frogs,
 which went up into the bedrooms of their
 rulers.
 31He spoke, and there came swarms of flies,
 and gnats throughout their country
 32He turned their rain into hail,
 with lightning throughout their land,
 33he struck down their vines and fig trees
 and shattered the trees of their country.
 34He spoke, and the locusts came,
 grasshoppers without number;
 35they ate up every green thing in their land,
 ate up the produce of their soil
 36Then he struck down all the firstborn in their
 land,
 the firstfruits of all their manhood.

^a35 Hebrew *Hallelu Yah*, in the Septuagint this line stands at the beginning of Psalm 105

17He brought out Israel, laden with silver and gold,
 and from among their tribes no one faltered.
 18Egypt was glad when they left,
 because dread of Israel had fallen on them.
 19He spread out a cloud as a covering,
 and a fire to give light at night.
 20They asked, and he brought them quail
 and satisfied them with the bread of heaven.
 21He opened the rock, and water gushed out;
 like a river it flowed in the desert.
 22For he remembered his holy promise
 given to his servant Abraham.
 23He brought out his people with rejoicing,
 his chosen ones with shouts of joy;
 24he gave them the lands of the nations,
 and they fell heir to what others had toiled
 for—
 25that they might keep his precepts
 and observe his laws.
 Praise the LORD.^a

Psalm 106

1Praise the LORD.^b
 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
 his love endures forever.
 2Who can proclaim the mighty acts of the LORD
 or fully declare his praise?
 3Blessed are they who maintain justice,
 who constantly do what is right.
 4Remember me, O LORD, when you show favor
 to your people,
 come to my aid when you save them,
 5that I may enjoy the prosperity of your chosen
 ones,
 that I may share in the joy of your nation
 and join your inheritance in giving praise.
 6We have sinned, even as our fathers did;
 we have done wrong and acted wickedly.
 7When our fathers were in Egypt,
 they gave no thought to your miracles;
 they did not remember your many kindnesses,
 and they rebelled by the sea, the Red Sea.^c
 8Yet he saved them for his name's sake,
 to make his mighty power known.
 9He rebuked the Red Sea, and it dried up;
 he led them through the depths as through a
 desert.
 10He saved them from the hand of the foe;
 from the hand of the enemy he redeemed
 them.
 11The waters covered their adversaries;
 not one of them survived.
 12Then they believed his promises
 and sang his praise.
 13But they soon forgot what he had done
 and did not wait for his counsel.
 14In the desert they gave in to their craving;
 in the wasteland they put God to the test.
 15So he gave them what they asked for,

but sent a wasting disease upon them.
 16In the camp they grew envious of Moses
 and of Aaron, who was consecrated to the
 LORD.
 17The earth opened up and swallowed Dathan;
 it buried the company of Abiram.
 18Fire blazed among their followers;
 a flame consumed the wicked.
 19At Horeb they made a calf
 and worshiped an idol cast from metal.
 20They exchanged their Glory
 for an image of a bull, which eats grass.
 21They forgot the God who saved them,
 who had done great things in Egypt,
 22miracles in the land of Ham
 and awesome deeds by the Red Sea.
 23So he said he would destroy them—
 had not Moses, his chosen one,
 stood in the breach before him
 to keep his wrath from destroying them.
 24Then they despised the pleasant land;
 they did not believe his promise.
 25They grumbled in their tents
 and did not obey the LORD.
 26So he swore to them with uplifted hand
 that he would make them fall in the desert.
 27make their descendants fall among the nations
 and scatter them throughout the lands.
 28They yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor
 and ate sacrifices offered to lifeless gods;
 29they provoked the LORD to anger by their
 wicked deeds,
 and a plague broke out among them.
 30But Phinehas stood up and intervened,
 and the plague was checked.
 31This was credited to him as righteousness
 for endless generations to come.
 32By the waters of Meribah they angered the
 LORD,
 and trouble came to Moses because of them;
 33for they rebelled against the Spirit of God,
 and rash words came from Moses' lips.^d
 34They did not destroy the peoples
 as the LORD had commanded them,
 35but they mingled with the nations
 and adopted their customs.
 36They worshiped their idols,
 which became a snare to them.
 37They sacrificed their sons

106:12 The Turning Point

When the Israelites praised God, their thoughts
 turned naturally back to the time when God
 (through Moses) freed them from slavery and gave
 them a country all their own. In it they saw God's
 pure graciousness. They had done nothing to win
 their freedom; God had done it all. Similarly,
 Christians look back to Jesus' death and
 resurrection, which freed them from sin's slavery.

^a45 Hebrew *Hallelu Yah* ^b1 Hebrew *Hallelu Yah*, also in verse 48
 and 22 ^c33 Or against his spirit, 1 and rash words came from his lips

^d7 Hebrew *Yam Suph*, that is, Sea of Reeds, also in verses 9

the first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the plane was the cold air. It felt like a blanket. The sun was shining brightly, but the air was so cold. I had heard that the weather was good, but I didn't realize how cold it would be. The plane was full of people, and everyone seemed to be looking out the windows. I was a bit nervous, but I knew I had to go. The pilot announced that we were about to land. I took a deep breath and looked out the window. The ground was so close. I felt a little bit of excitement. The plane touched down, and we were off. The ride was smooth, and I was in good luck. The first part of the trip was easy. I had a good seat, and the food was good. I was a bit tired, but I knew I had to go. The second part of the trip was a bit more difficult. The weather was a bit worse, but I knew I had to go. The third part of the trip was the best. I was in good luck, and the weather was perfect. I was a bit nervous, but I knew I had to go. The fourth part of the trip was the worst. The weather was terrible, and I was a bit nervous. The fifth part of the trip was the best. I was in good luck, and the weather was perfect. I was a bit nervous, but I knew I had to go. The sixth part of the trip was the worst. The weather was terrible, and I was a bit nervous. The seventh part of the trip was the best. I was in good luck, and the weather was perfect. I was a bit nervous, but I knew I had to go. The eighth part of the trip was the worst. The weather was terrible, and I was a bit nervous. The ninth part of the trip was the best. I was in good luck, and the weather was perfect. I was a bit nervous, but I knew I had to go. The tenth part of the trip was the worst. The weather was terrible, and I was a bit nervous.

25 AUG 1968

the first thing I noticed

25 AUG 1968

the first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the plane was the cold air. It felt like a blanket. The sun was shining brightly, but the air was so cold. I had heard that the weather was good, but I didn't realize how cold it would be. The plane was full of people, and everyone seemed to be looking out the windows. I was a bit nervous, but I knew I had to go. The pilot announced that we were about to land. I took a deep breath and looked out the window. The ground was so close. I felt a little bit of excitement. The plane touched down, and we were off. The ride was smooth, and I was in good luck. The first part of the trip was easy. I had a good seat, and the food was good. I was a bit tired, but I knew I had to go. The second part of the trip was a bit more difficult. The weather was a bit worse, but I knew I had to go. The third part of the trip was the best. I was in good luck, and the weather was perfect. I was a bit nervous, but I knew I had to go. The fourth part of the trip was the worst. The weather was terrible, and I was a bit nervous. The fifth part of the trip was the best. I was in good luck, and the weather was perfect. I was a bit nervous, but I knew I had to go. The sixth part of the trip was the worst. The weather was terrible, and I was a bit nervous. The seventh part of the trip was the best. I was in good luck, and the weather was perfect. I was a bit nervous, but I knew I had to go. The eighth part of the trip was the worst. The weather was terrible, and I was a bit nervous. The ninth part of the trip was the best. I was in good luck, and the weather was perfect. I was a bit nervous, but I knew I had to go. The tenth part of the trip was the worst. The weather was terrible, and I was a bit nervous.

the first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the plane was the cold air. It felt like a blanket. The sun was shining brightly, but the air was so cold. I had heard that the weather was good, but I didn't realize how cold it would be. The plane was full of people, and everyone seemed to be looking out the windows. I was a bit nervous, but I knew I had to go. The pilot announced that we were about to land. I took a deep breath and looked out the window. The ground was so close. I felt a little bit of excitement. The plane touched down, and we were off. The ride was smooth, and I was in good luck. The first part of the trip was easy. I had a good seat, and the food was good. I was a bit tired, but I knew I had to go. The second part of the trip was a bit more difficult. The weather was a bit worse, but I knew I had to go. The third part of the trip was the best. I was in good luck, and the weather was perfect. I was a bit nervous, but I knew I had to go. The fourth part of the trip was the worst. The weather was terrible, and I was a bit nervous. The fifth part of the trip was the best. I was in good luck, and the weather was perfect. I was a bit nervous, but I knew I had to go. The sixth part of the trip was the worst. The weather was terrible, and I was a bit nervous. The seventh part of the trip was the best. I was in good luck, and the weather was perfect. I was a bit nervous, but I knew I had to go. The eighth part of the trip was the worst. The weather was terrible, and I was a bit nervous. The ninth part of the trip was the best. I was in good luck, and the weather was perfect. I was a bit nervous, but I knew I had to go. The tenth part of the trip was the worst. The weather was terrible, and I was a bit nervous.

- 22For I am poor and needy,
and my heart is wounded within me.
23I fade away like an evening shadow;
I am shaken off like a locust.
24My knees give way from fasting;
my body is thin and gaunt.
25I am an object of scorn to my accusers;
when they see me, they shake their heads.
26Help me, O LORD my God;
save me in accordance with your love.
27Let them know that it is your hand,
that you, O LORD, have done it.
28They may curse, but you will bless;
when they attack they will be put to shame,
but your servant will rejoice.
29My accusers will be clothed with disgrace
and wrapped in shame as in a cloak.
30With my mouth I will greatly extol the LORD;
in the great throng I will praise him.
31For he stands at the right hand of the needy
one,
to save his life from those who condemn
him.

Psalm 110

Of David. A psalm.

- 1The LORD says to my Lord:
"Sit at my right hand
until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet."
2The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from
Zion;
you will rule in the midst of your enemies.
3Your troops will be willing
on your day of battle.
Arrayed in holy majesty,
from the womb of the dawn
you will receive the dew of your youth.^a
4The LORD has sworn
and will not change his mind:
"You are a priest forever,
in the order of Melchizedek."
5The Lord is at your right hand;
he will crush kings on the day of his wrath.
6He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead
and crushing the rulers of the whole earth.
7He will drink from a brook beside the way^b;

110:1 The Son of God

Jesus quoted this verse in Mark 12:35-37 to show that the Messiah would not be merely a human military leader, as many Jews expected. Here David refers to the coming King (David's descendant) as "my Lord." If the Messiah were strictly his human descendant, David would not address him so respectfully.

therefore he will lift up his head.

Psalm 111^c

- 1Praise the LORD.^d
I will extol the LORD with all my heart
in the council of the upright and in the
assembly.
2Great are the works of the LORD;
they are pondered by all who delight in
them.
3Glorious and majestic are his deeds,
and his righteousness endures forever.
4He has caused his wonders to be remembered;
the LORD is gracious and compassionate.
5He provides food for those who fear him;
he remembers his covenant forever.
6He has shown his people the power of his
works,
giving them the lands of other nations.
7The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy.
8They are steadfast for ever and ever,
done in faithfulness and uprightness.
9He provided redemption for his people;
he ordained his covenant forever—
holy and awesome is his name.
10The fear of the LORD is the beginning of
wisdom;
all who follow his precepts have good
understanding.
To him belongs eternal praise.

Psalm 112^c

- 1Praise the LORD.^d
Blessed is the man who fears the LORD,
who finds great delight in his commands.
2His children will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.
3Wealth and riches are in his house,
and his righteousness endures forever.
4Even in darkness light dawns for the upright,
for the gracious and compassionate and
righteous man.^e
5Good will come to him who is generous and
lends freely,
who conducts his affairs with justice.
6Surely he will never be shaken;
a righteous man will be remembered forever.
7He will have no fear of bad news;
his heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.
8His heart is secure, he will have no fear;
in the end he will look in triumph on his
foes.
9He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor,
his righteousness endures forever;
his horn^f will be lifted high in honor.
10The wicked man will see and be vexed,

^a3 Or / your young men will come to you like the dew
an acrostic poem. ^bhe lines of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet
for the LORD is gracious and compassionate and righteous

^c7 Or / The One who grants succession will set him in authority
19 Horn here symbolizes dignity.

^dThis psalm is
11 Hebrew Hallelu Yah

^e4 Or

he will gnash his teeth and waste away,
the longings of the wicked will come to
nothing

Psalm 113

1 Praise the LORD.*

Praise, O servants of the LORD,
praise the name of the LORD

*1 Hebrew *Hallelu Yah*, also in verse 9

2 Let the name of the LORD be praised,
both now and forevermore
3 From the rising of the sun to the place where it
sets,
the name of the LORD is to be praised.

4 The LORD is exalted over all the nations,
his glory above the heavens
5 Who is like the LORD our God,
the One who sits enthroned on high,
6 who stoops down to look

INSIGHT

A Mysterious Figure

He came "out of nowhere" to win great respect

"You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." 110:4

The Bible has a shadowy figure who is mentioned only three times, yet has great importance. Melchizedek came "out of nowhere" in Genesis 14:18-20 as a priest whom Abraham honored. Melchizedek never reappeared. But Psalm 110 mentions him in referring to the Messiah, the conquering king whom Israelites expected. And in the New Testament, the book of Hebrews devotes more than a chapter to Melchizedek's significance. Why so? The answer has to do with Israel's longing for great leadership.

Israel had three important kinds of leaders: prophets, priests, and kings. Prophets told the truth, revealing God's righteousness. Kings were to put righteousness into effect, as head of the government. Priests were to see that God met his people in worship: they represented God to the people, and the people to God. According to the God-given Israelite constitution, kings and priests always came from different tribes: a priest from the Levite family and a king from the Judah family. Ordinarily, a king could not be a priest.

Total Leadership

The Messiah, however, must be a total leader: a perfect king governing justly, a perfect prophet revealing God's truth, a perfect priest bringing God and people together. But how could he be all three, when priests and kings were supposed to come from different families? Wouldn't that violate God's law?

Psalm 110 suggests (and Hebrews 7 amplifies) the answer. Melchizedek's example proves that a priest need not necessarily come from the proper family. Melchizedek was not even a Jew, let alone from the Levite family. He knew nothing about the temple or the Old Testament law, for these came after his time. Yet his spiritual power impressed Abraham. Melchizedek showed the kind of leadership Christ was to bring. He was both a priest and a king.

Psalm 110's brief praise provides a thread between the Old and New Testaments. It hints that the Messiah would be greater than David, while David's descendant. And by tracing the Messiah's roots to Melchizedek, it established his credibility as both priest and king.

Life Questions: What are the "proper channels" you expect to see spiritual leadership come from? Has God ever led you through someone outside those channels?

on the heavens and the earth?

- 7He raises the poor from the dust
and lifts the needy from the ash heap.
8He seats them with princes,
with the princes of their people
9He settles the barren woman in her home
as a happy mother of children
Praise the LORD

Psalm 114

- 1When Israel came out of Egypt,
the house of Jacob from a people of foreign
tongue.
2Judah became God's sanctuary,
Israel his dominion
3The sea looked and fled,
the Jordan turned back,
4the mountains skipped like rams,
the hills like lambs
5Why was it, O sea, that you fled,
O Jordan, that you turned back,
6you mountains, that you skipped like rams,
you hills, like lambs?
7Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord,
at the presence of the God of Jacob,
8who turned the rock into a pool,
the hard rock into springs of water.

Psalm 115

- 1Not to us, O LORD, not to us
but to your name be the glory,
because of your love and faithfulness.
2Why do the nations say,
"Where is their God?"
3Our God is in heaven;
he does whatever pleases him.
4But their idols are silver and gold,
made by the hands of men.
5They have mouths, but cannot speak,
eyes, but they cannot see,
6they have ears, but cannot hear,
noses, but they cannot smell;
7they have hands, but cannot feel,
feet, but they cannot walk;
nor can they utter a sound with their throats.
8Those who make them will be like them,
and so will all who trust in them.
9O house of Israel, trust in the LORD—
he is their help and shield.

113:1 Psalms of the Last Supper

Psalms 113 to 118 were traditionally sung at the Passover meal—the first two before the meal, the last four after. These were probably the last songs Jesus sang with his disciples before his death (Mark 14:26).

- 10O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD—
he is their help and shield
11You who fear him, trust in the LORD—
he is their help and shield.
12The LORD remembers us and will bless us:
He will bless the house of Israel,
he will bless the house of Aaron,
13he will bless those who fear the LORD—
small and great alike.
14May the LORD make you increase,
both you and your children.
15May you be blessed by the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth.
16The highest heavens belong to the LORD,
but the earth he has given to man.
17It is not the dead who praise the LORD,
those who go down to silence;
18it is we who extol the LORD,
both now and forevermore.
Praise the LORD.*

Psalm 116

- 1I love the LORD, for he heard my voice;
he heard my cry for mercy.
2Because he turned his ear to me,
I will call on him as long as I live.
3The cords of death entangled me,
the anguish of the grave^b came upon me;
I was overcome by trouble and sorrow.
4Then I called on the name of the LORD:
"O LORD, save me!"
5The LORD is gracious and righteous;
our God is full of compassion.
6The LORD protects the simplehearted;
when I was in great need, he saved me.
7Be at rest once more, O my soul,
for the LORD has been good to you.
8For you, O LORD, have delivered my soul from
death,
my eyes from tears,
my feet from stumbling,
9that I may walk before the LORD
in the land of the living.
10I believed; therefore^c I said,
"I am greatly afflicted."
11And in my dismay I said,
"All men are liars."
12How can I repay the LORD
for all his goodness to me?
13I will lift up the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the LORD.
14I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all his people.
15Precious in the sight of the LORD
is the death of his saints.
16O LORD, truly I am your servant;
I am your servant, the son of your
maidservant^d;

*18 Hebrew Hallelu Yah

^b3 Hebrew Sheol^c10 Or believed even when^d16 Or servant, your faithful son

you have freed me from my chains

17 I will sacrifice a thank offering to you
and call on the name of the LORD

18 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all his people,

19 in the courts of the house of the LORD
in your midst, O Jerusalem

Praise the LORD *

Psalm 117

1 Praise the LORD, all you nations,
exalt him, all you peoples

2 For great is his love toward us,
and the faithfulness of the LORD endures
forever

Praise the LORD *

Psalm 118

1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
his love endures forever

2 Let Israel say
"His love endures forever."

3 Let the house of Aaron say
"His love endures forever."

4 Let those who fear the LORD say:
"His love endures forever."

5 In my anguish I cried to the LORD,
and he answered by setting me free.

6 The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid
What can man do to me?

7 The LORD is with me, he is my helper
I will look in triumph on my enemies

8 It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in man.

9 It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in princes.

10 All the nations surrounded me,
but in the name of the LORD I cut them off.

11 They surrounded me on every side,
but in the name of the LORD I cut them off.

12 They swarmed around me like bees,
but they died out as quickly as burning
thorns;
in the name of the LORD I cut them off.

13 I was pushed back and about to fall,
but the LORD helped me.

14 The LORD is my strength and my song;
he has become my salvation.

15 Shouts of joy and victory
resound in the tents of the righteous:
"The LORD's right hand has done mighty
things!"

16 The LORD's right hand is lifted high;
the LORD's right hand has done mighty
things!"

17 I will not die but live,

and will proclaim what the LORD has done.

18 The LORD has chastened me severely,
but he has not given me over to death.

19 Open for me the gates of righteousness;
I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.

20 This is the gate of the LORD
through which the righteous may enter.

21 I will give you thanks, for you answered me;
you have become my salvation.

22 The stone the builders rejected
has become the capstone;

23 the LORD has done this,
and it is marvelous in our eyes.

24 This is the day the LORD has made,
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

25 O LORD, save us,
O LORD, grant us success.

26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the
LORD.

From the house of the LORD we bless you.*

27 The LORD is God,
and he has made his light shine upon us.

With boughs in hand, join in the festal
procession
up to the horns of the altar.

28 You are my God, and I will give you thanks;
you are my God, and I will exalt you.

29 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

Psalm 119^d

* Aleph

1 Blessed are they whose ways are blameless,
who walk according to the law of the LORD.

2 Blessed are they who keep his statutes
and seek him with all their heart.

3 They do nothing wrong;
they walk in his ways.

4 You have laid down precepts
that are to be fully obeyed.

✓ 5 Oh, that my ways were steadfast
in obeying your decrees!

✓ 6 Then I would not be put to shame
when I consider all your commands.

7 I will praise you with an upright heart
as I learn your righteous laws.

8 I will obey your decrees;
do not utterly forsake me.

2 Beth

9 How can a young man keep his way pure?
By living according to your word.

10 I seek you with all my heart;
do not let me stray from your commands.

11 I have hidden your word in my heart
that I might not sin against you.

12 Praise be to you, O LORD;
teach me your decrees.

*19,2 Hebrew Hallelu Yah *26 The Hebrew is plural.

*27 Or Bind the festal sacrifice with ropes; and take it

an acrostic poem, the verses of each stanza begin with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

*This psalm is

13 With my lips I recount
all the laws that come from your
mouth.
14 I rejoice in following your statutes
as one rejoices in great riches.
15 I meditate on your precepts
and consider your ways.
16 I delight in your decrees;
I will not neglect your word.

2 Daniel

17 Obedient to your servant, and I will live;
I will obey your word.
18 Open my eyes that I may see
wonderful things in your law.
19 I am a stranger on earth;
do not hide your commands from me.
20 My soul is consumed with longing
for your laws at all times.

INSIGHT

A Love Poem to God's Law

How could Scripture inspire such poetry?

17 So my hands to your commands, which I love 119:48

Psalm 119 is a special poem. This poem takes a very systematic form: the acrostic, where each line of each stanza begins with a letter from the Hebrew alphabet, 4 in the first stanza, 8 in the second, and so on, through all 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

But the subject is the biggest surprise. Psalm 119 is a long, passionate love poem about God's law.

How do you fall in love with law? Most people admit that rules are necessary, and appreciate them grudgingly. But no one writes love poems about laws.

The word translated "law" doesn't merely mean rules. It expresses the totality of God's written instructions. The poet sees life full of uncertainties, of enemies, of pain. But God has given a reliable guide for living—like pavement underneath after you have been stuck in mud. Obeying God's law, to the psalmist, is no slavery—rather it is freedom. "I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free" (verse 32).

On the Edge of Death

Psalm 119 is not written from an ivory tower. The poet has apparently been near death (verse 87) and even as he writes, "the wicked are waiting to destroy" him (verse 95). But in this dangerous situation he has learned to hang on to God's wisdom. The lesson is so valuable he has become grateful for his sufferings: "It was good for me to be afflicted, so that I might learn your decrees" (verse 71).

The psalmist simply does not see God's law as a dusty, rigid rulebook. He hears God's loving voice in it. "The earth is filled with your love, O Lord, teach me your decrees" (verse 64). "Your statutes . . . are the joy of my heart" (verse 111).

God's laws channel God's love into the poet's life. They protect him from doing wrong, give him wisdom to understand his situation. They make new life flow into him. No wonder he writes with such thankfulness. In God's word he finds more than direction. He finds God himself.

Life Questions Do you ever feel with the psalmist that life has become frighteningly out of control? How can God's law help you regain confidence?

11 You rebuke the arrogant, who are cursed
and who stray from your commands;
12 Remove from me scorn and contempt,
for I keep your statutes.
13 Though rulers sit together and slander me,
your servant will meditate on your decrees.
14 Your statutes are my delight;
they are my counselors.

T Teth

15 I am laid low in the dust;
preserve my life according to your word.
16 Reminded my ways and you answered me;
teach me your decrees.
17 Let me understand the teaching of your
precepts,
then I will meditate on your wonders.
18 My soul is weary with sorrow;
strengthen me according to your word.
19 Keep me from deceitful ways;
be gracious to me through your law.
20 I have chosen the way of truth;
I have set my heart on your laws.
21 Hold fast to your statutes, O Lord;
do not let me be put to shame.
22 Run in the path of your commands,
for you have set my heart free.

H He

23 Teach me, O Lord, to follow your decrees,
then I will keep them to the end.
24 Give me understanding, and I will keep your
law
and obey it with all my heart.
25 Direct me in the path of your commands,
for there I find delight.
26 Turn my heart toward your statutes
and not toward selfish gain.
27 Turn my eyes away from worthless things;
preserve my life according to your word.
28 Fulfill your promise to your servant,
so that you may be feared.
29 Take away the disgrace I dread,
for your laws are good.
30 How I long for your precepts!
Preserve my life in your righteousness.

W Waw

31 May your unfailing love come to me, O Lord,
your salvation according to your promise.
32 Then I will answer the one who taunts me,
for I trust in your word.
33 Do not snatch the word of truth from my
mouth,
for I have put my hope in your laws.
34 I will always obey your law,
for ever and ever.
35 I will walk about in freedom,
for I have sought out your precepts.
36 I will speak of your statutes before kings
and will not be put to shame,
37 for I delight in your commands
because I love them.

38 I lift up my hands up your commands, which
I love,
and I meditate on your decrees.

Z Zayin

39 Remember your word to your servant,
for you have given me hope.
40 My comfort in my suffering is this:
Your promise preserves my life.
41 The arrogant mock me without restraint,
but I do not turn from your law.
42 Remember your ancient laws, O Lord,
and I find comfort in them.
43 Indignation grips me because of the wicked,
who have forsaken your law.
44 Your decrees are the theme of my song
wherever I lodge.
45 In the night I remember your name, O Lord,
and I will keep your law.
46 This has been my practice:
I obey your precepts.

N Heth

47 You are my portion, O Lord;
I have promised to obey your words.
48 I have sought your face with all my heart;
be gracious to me according to your promise.
49 I have considered my ways
and have turned my steps to your statutes.
50 I will hasten and not delay
to obey your commands.
51 Though the wicked bind me with ropes,
I will not forget your law.
52 At midnight I rise to give you thanks
for your righteous laws.
53 I am a friend to all who fear you;
to all who follow your precepts.
54 The earth is filled with your love, O Lord;
teach me your decrees.

T Teth

55 Do good to your servant
according to your word, O Lord.
56 Teach me knowledge and good judgment,
for I believe in your commands.
57 Before I was afflicted I went astray,
but now I obey your word.
58 You are good, and what you do is good;
teach me your decrees.

119:55 Lying in Bed

The psalms consider every aspect of life—even the thoughts that come while lying in bed at night. You can easily become obsessed with other people's wrongs against you. But you can also turn your thoughts to God and quiet your anxieties while strengthening your commitment. Other psalms that refer to such nighttime thoughts, good and bad, are these: 4:4; 6:6; 16:7; 17:3; 63:6; 77:2; 102:7; and 119:62, 148.

69 Though the arrogant have smeared me with lies,
I keep your precepts with all my heart.
70 Their hearts are callous and unfeeling,
but I delight in your law.
71 It was good for me to be afflicted
so that I might learn your decrees.
72 The law from your mouth is more precious to me
than thousands of pieces of silver and gold.

Yodh

73 Your hands made me and formed me;
give me understanding to learn your commands.
74 May those who fear you rejoice when they see me,
for I have put my hope in your word.
75 I know, O LORD, that your laws are righteous,
and in faithfulness you have afflicted me.
76 May your unfailing love be my comfort,
according to your promise to your servant.
77 Let your compassion come to me that I may live,
for your law is my delight.
78 May the arrogant be put to shame for wronging me without cause;
but I will meditate on your precepts.
79 May those who fear you turn to me,
those who understand your statutes.
80 May my heart be blameless toward your decrees,
that I may not be put to shame.

Kaph

81 My soul faints with longing for your salvation,
but I have put my hope in your word.
82 My eyes fail, looking for your promise;
I say, "When will you comfort me?"
83 Though I am like a wineskin in the smoke,
I do not forget your decrees.
84 How long must your servant wait?
When will you punish my persecutors?
85 The arrogant dig pitfalls for me,
contrary to your law.
86 All your commands are trustworthy;
help me, for men persecute me without cause.
87 They almost wiped me from the earth,
but I have not forsaken your precepts.
88 Preserve my life according to your love,
and I will obey the statutes of your mouth.

Lamedh

89 Your word, O LORD, is eternal;
it stands firm in the heavens.
90 Your faithfulness continues through all generations;
you established the earth, and it endures.
91 Your laws endure to this day,
for all things serve you.
92 If your law had not been my delight,
I would have perished in my affliction.
93 I will never forget your precepts,

for by them you have preserved my life.
94 Save me, for I am yours;
I have sought out your precepts.
95 The wicked are waiting to destroy me,
but I will ponder your statutes.
96 To all perfection I see a limit;
but your commands are boundless.

Mem

97 Oh, how I love your law!
I meditate on it all day long.
98 Your commands make me wiser than my enemies,
for they are ever with me.
99 I have more insight than all my teachers,
for I meditate on your statutes.
100 I have more understanding than the elders,
for I obey your precepts.
101 I have kept my feet from every evil path
so that I might obey your word.
102 I have not departed from your laws,
for you yourself have taught me.
103 How sweet are your words to my taste,
sweeter than honey to my mouth!
104 I gain understanding from your precepts;
therefore I hate every wrong path.

Nun

105 Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light for my path.
106 I have taken an oath and confirmed it,
that I will follow your righteous laws.
107 I have suffered much;
preserve my life, O LORD, according to your word.
108 Accept, O LORD, the willing praise of my mouth,
and teach me your laws.
109 Though I constantly take my life in my hands,
I will not forget your law.
110 The wicked have set a snare for me,
but I have not strayed from your precepts.
111 Your statutes are my heritage forever;
they are the joy of my heart.
112 My heart is set on keeping your decrees
to the very end.

Samekh

113 I hate double-minded men,
but I love your law.
114 You are my refuge and my shield;
I have put my hope in your word.
115 Away from me, you evildoers,
that I may keep the commands of my God!
116 Sustain me according to your promise, and I will live;
do not let my hopes be dashed.
117 Uphold me, and I will be delivered;
I will always have regard for your decrees.
118 You reject all who stray from your decrees,
for their deceitfulness is in vain.
119 All the wicked of the earth you discard like dross;
therefore I love your statutes.

39 My flesh trembles in fear of you
I stand in awe of your laws.

6 Avin

111 I have done what is righteous and just
do not leave me to my oppressors.
112 Ensure your servant's well being,
let not the arrogant oppress me.
113 My eyes fail, looking for your salvation,
looking for your righteous promise.
114 Deal with your servant according to your love
and teach me your decrees.
115 I am your servant, give me discernment
that I may understand your statutes.
116 It is time for you to act, O Lord;
your law is being broken.
117 Because I love your commands
more than gold, more than pure gold,
118 and because I consider all your precepts right,
I hate every wrong path.

7 Pe

119 Your statutes are wonderful,
therefore I obey them.
120 The unfolding of your words gives light,
it gives understanding to the simple.
121 Open my mouth and pant,
longing for your commands.
122 Turn to me and have mercy on me,
as you always do to those who love your
name.
123 Direct my footsteps according to your word,
let no sin rule over me.
124 Redeem me from the oppression of men,
that I may obey your precepts.
125 Make your face shine upon your servant
and teach me your decrees.
126 Streams of tears flow from my eyes,
for your law is not obeyed.

8 Tsadhe

127 Righteous are you, O Lord,
and your laws are right.
128 The statutes you have laid down are righteous,
they are fully trustworthy.
129 My zeal wears me out,
for my enemies ignore your words.
130 Your promises have been thoroughly tested,
and your servant loves them.
131 Though I am lowly and despised,
I do not forget your precepts.
132 Your righteousness is everlasting,
and your law is true.
133 Trouble and distress have come upon me,
but your commands are my delight.
134 Your statutes are forever right,
give me understanding that I may live.

9 Qoph

135 I call with all my heart, answer me, O Lord,
and I will obey your decrees.
136 I call out to you, save me,
and I will keep your statutes.
137 Rise before dawn and cry for help,

I have put my hope in your word.
138 My eyes stay open through the watches of the
night,
that I may meditate on your promises.
139 Hear my voice in accordance with your love,
preserve my life, O Lord, according to your
laws.
140 Those who devise wicked schemes are near,
but they are far from your law.
141 Yet you are near, O Lord,
and all your commands are true.
142 Long ago I learned from your statutes
that you established them to last forever.

10 Resh

143 Look upon my suffering and deliver me,
for I have not forgotten your law.
144 Defend my cause and redeem me,
preserve my life according to your promise.
145 Salvation is far from the wicked,
for they do not seek out your decrees.
146 Your compassion is great, O Lord;
preserve my life according to your laws.
147 Many are the foes who persecute me,
but I have not turned from your statutes.
148 I look on the faithless with loathing,
for they do not obey your word.
149 See how I love your precepts,
preserve my life, O Lord, according to your
love.
150 All your words are true;
all your righteous laws are eternal.

11 Sin and Shun

151 Rulers persecute me without cause,
but my heart trembles at your word.
152 Rejoice in your promise,
like one who finds great spoil.
153 I hate and abhor falsehood,
but I love your law.
154 Seven times a day I praise you
for your righteous laws.
155 Great peace have they who love your law,
and nothing can make them stumble.
156 I wait for your salvation, O Lord,
and I follow your commands.
157 Obey your statutes,
for I love them greatly.
158 Obey your precepts and your statutes,
for all my ways are known to you.

12 N Taw

159 May my cry come before you, O Lord,
give me understanding according to your
word.
160 May my supplication come before you,
deliver me according to your promise.
161 May my lips overflow with praise,
for you teach me your decrees.
162 May my tongue sing of your word,
for all your commands are righteous.
163 May your hand be ready to help me,
for I have chosen your precepts.
164 I long for your salvation, O Lord,

and your law is my delight
 For we are that I may praise you
 and may your law be within me
 of days marked like a hand stamp
 and your statutes
 as your statutes are within me

Psalm 120

A song of ascents

My soul is weary of crying
 and my distresses are
 before me. (1) I turn from wrath
 and anger

What will be the result
 and what more trouble? (2) distressed tongue?
 He will punish you with a warrior's charge
 with burning coals of the desert fire
 When to me that I dwell in Asshur
 that I live among the tents of Kedar
 How long have I lived
 among those who hate peace
 I am a man of peace
 but when I speak they are the war

Psalm 121

A song of ascents

Lift up my eyes to the hills
 where does my help come from?
 My help comes from the Lord
 the Maker of heaven and earth
 He will not let your foot slip—
 he who watches over you will not slumber
 indeed, he who watches over Israel
 will not slumber or sleep
 The Lord is your shade at your right hand
 the sun will not harm you by day
 nor the moon by night
 The Lord will keep you from all harm—
 he will watch over your life
 the Lord will watch over your coming and
 going
 both now and hereafter

Psalm 122

A song of ascents. Of David

If renewed with those who said to me
 "Let us go to the house of the Lord."
 Our feet are standing
 in your gates, O Jerusalem
 Jerusalem is built like a city
 that is closely compacted together.
 That is where the tribes go up,
 the tribes of the Lord,
 to praise the name of the Lord

according to the statute given to Israel
 There the thrones by judgment stand
 the thrones of the house of David

When by the power of heaven
 they those who have you to serve
 May there be peace within your walls
 and security within your citadels
 For the sake of my brothers and friends
 I will say, "Peace be within you"
 For the sake of the house of the Lord our God
 I will seek your prosperity

Psalm 123

A song of ascents

If lift up my eyes to you
 to you whose throne is in heaven
 As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their
 master
 as the eyes of a maid look to the hand of her
 mistress
 so our eyes look to the Lord our God,
 till he shows us his mercy
 Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us,
 for we have endured much contempt
 We have endured much rebuke from the
 proud
 much contempt from the arrogant

Psalm 124

A song of ascents. Of David

If the Lord had not been on our side—
 let Israel say—
 If the Lord had not been on our side
 when men attacked us
 when their anger flared against us
 they would have swallowed us alive,
 the flood would have engulfed us,
 the current would have swept over us,
 the raging waters
 would have swept us away

124:7 Deeper and Deeper

Some trouble is quick—bang and it's over. But with other trouble trying to escape only gets you more deeply entangled. Spreading gossip, for instance, may lead you into all kinds of unexpected consequences as the gossip spreads. If you try to undo the damage, you only make it worse.

That's exactly the picture of "the Fowler's snare." The bird that caught its neck in the noose only tightened the snare's choke-hold by struggling. The bird could not get out by its own effort. But this time, says David, the snare has miraculously broken, and the bird has flown to safety. When you escape that way, there's only one person to thank, the Lord.

⁶Praise be to the LORD,
who has not let us be torn by their teeth
⁷We have escaped like a bird
out of the fowler's snare,
the snare has been broken,
and we have escaped
⁸Our help is in the name of the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth

Psalm 125

A song of ascents

¹Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount
Zion,
which cannot be shaken but endures forever
²As the mountains surround Jerusalem,
so the LORD surrounds his people
both now and forevermore
³The scepter of the wicked will not remain
over the land allotted to the righteous,
for then the righteous might use
their hands to do evil
⁴Do good, O LORD, to those who are good,
to those who are upright in heart
⁵But those who turn to crooked ways
the LORD will banish with the evildoers.
Peace be upon Israel

Psalm 126

A song of ascents

¹When the LORD brought back the captives to
Zion,
we were like men who dreamed.^b
²Our mouths were filled with laughter,
our tongues with songs of joy
Then it was said among the nations,
"The LORD has done great things for them."
The LORD has done great things for us,
and we are filled with joy
³Restore our fortunes,^c O LORD,
like streams in the Negev
⁴Those who sow in tears
will reap with songs of joy.
⁵He who goes out weeping,
carrying seed to sow,
will return with songs of joy,
carrying sheaves with him

Psalm 127

A song of ascents. Of Solomon

¹Unless the LORD builds the house,
its builders labor in vain.
Unless the LORD watches over the city,
the watchmen stand guard in vain.
²In vain you rise early
and stay up late,

toiling for food to eat—
for he grants sleep to those he loves.

³Sons are a heritage from the LORD,
children a reward from him
⁴Like arrows in the hands of a warrior
are sons born in one's youth.
⁵Blessed is the man
whose quiver is full of them.
They will not be put to shame
when they contend with their enemies in the
gate.

Psalm 128

A song of ascents

¹Blessed are all who fear the LORD,
who walk in his ways
²You will eat the fruit of your labor;
blessings and prosperity will be yours.
³Your wife will be like a fruitful vine
within your house;
your sons will be like olive shoots
around your table.
⁴Thus is the man blessed
who fears the LORD.
⁵May the LORD bless you from Zion
all the days of your life;
may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem,
⁶ and may you live to see your children's
children.

Peace be upon Israel.

Psalm 129

A song of ascents.

¹They have greatly oppressed me from my
youth—
let Israel say—
²they have greatly oppressed me from my
youth,
but they have not gained the victory over
me.
³Plowmen have plowed my back
and made their furrows long.
⁴But the LORD is righteous;

129:3 The Right Words

You can't improve on the vivid images used in great poetry. If someone asks you, "What's it about?" you can only quote the poem. The psalms are full of such unforgettable language. "Plowmen have plowed my back and made their furrows long" makes you grit your teeth with the sense of oppression. "May they be like grass on the roof, which withers before it can grow" (verse 6) says it better than any alternate phrase like, "Let their successes amount to nothing."

^a Or LORD restored the fortunes of
the prisoners for^b Or men restored to health^c Or bring back our captives^d Or eat— I for while they sleep

he has cut me free from the cords of the wicked

May all who hate Zion
be turned back in shame
May they be like grass on the roof,
which withers before it can grow,
with it the reaper cannot fill his hands,
nor the one who gathers fill his arms.
May those who pass by not say,
"The blessing of the Lord be upon you,
we bless you in the name of the Lord."

Psalm 130

A song of ascents

1 Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord;
2 O Lord, hear my voice
Let your ears be attentive
to my cry for mercy
3 If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins,
O Lord, who could stand?
4 But with you there is forgiveness,
therefore you are feared
5 I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
and in his word I put my hope
6 My soul waits for the Lord
more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning
7 O Israel, put your hope in the Lord,
for with the Lord is unfailing love
and with him is full redemption.
8 He himself will redeem Israel
from all their sins.

Psalm 131

A song of ascents. Of David.

My heart is not proud, O Lord,
my eyes are not haughty;
I do not concern myself with great matters
or things too wonderful for me.
But I have stilled and quieted my soul,
like a weaned child with its mother,
like a weaned child is my soul within me.

131-2 A Child with Its Mother

How trusting is a baby? Not very: some would say, the babies cry violently as soon as they feel the slightest hunger. It is the weaned child, a little older, who has learned to trust its mother to feed it and simply ask for food instead of wailing. The profound simplicity of this patience is David's model for how he—and all Israel—should wait on the Lord. The apostle Paul comments similarly, "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation . . . I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:12-13).

10 Israel, put your hope in the Lord
both now and forevermore

Psalm 132

A song of ascents

1 O LORD, remember David
and all the hardships he endured.
2 He swore an oath to the LORD
and made a vow to the Mighty One of Jacob
3 "I will not enter my house
or go to my bed
4 I will allow no sleep to my eyes,
no slumber to my eyelids,
5 till I find a place for the LORD,
a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob."
6 We heard it in Ephrathah,
we came upon it in the fields of Jaar^a
7 "Let us go to his dwelling place;
let us worship at his footstool—
8 arise, O LORD, and come to your resting place,
you and the ark of your might.
9 May your priests be clothed with
righteousness,
may your saints sing for joy."
10 For the sake of David your servant,
do not reject your anointed one.
11 The LORD swore an oath to David,
a sure oath that he will not revoke:
"One of your own descendants
I will place on your throne—
12 if your sons keep my covenant
and the statutes I teach them,
then their sons will sit
on your throne for ever and ever."
13 For the LORD has chosen Zion,
he has desired it for his dwelling:
14 "Thus is my resting place for ever and ever;
here I will sit enthroned, for I have desired
it—
15 I will bless her with abundant provisions;
her poor will I satisfy with food.
16 I will clothe her priests with salvation,
and her saints will ever sing for joy.
17 "Here I will make a horn^c grow for David
and set up a lamp for my anointed one.
18 I will clothe his enemies with shame,
but the crown on his head will be
resplendent."

Psalm 133

A song of ascents. Of David

1 How good and pleasant it is
when brothers live together in unity!
2 It is like precious oil poured on the head,
running down on the beard,
running down on Aaron's beard,

^a That is, Kirath-seurun.^b Or name of it in Ephrathah. We heard it in the fields of Jaar. (And no quotes around verses 7-9)^c Horn here symbolizes strength and glory.

down upon the collar of his robes
 'It is as if the dew of Hermon
 were falling on Mount Zion
 For there the LORD bestows his blessing,
 even life forevermore

Psalm 134

A song of ascents

¹Praise the LORD, all you servants of the LORD
 who minister by night in the house of the
 LORD

²Lift up your hands in the sanctuary
 and praise the LORD

³May the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth,
 bless you from Zion

Psalm 135

Praise the LORD ^a

Praise the name of the LORD;
 praise him, you servants of the LORD,
²you who minister in the house of the LORD,
 in the courts of the house of our God.

³Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good;
 sing praise to his name, for that is pleasant.
⁴For the LORD has chosen Jacob to be his own,
 Israel to be his treasured possession.

⁵I know that the LORD is great,
 that our Lord is greater than all gods.

⁶The LORD does whatever pleases him,
 in the heavens and on the earth,
 in the seas and all their depths
⁷He makes clouds rise from the ends of the
 earth,

he sends lightning with the rain
 and brings out the wind from his
 storehouses

⁸He struck down the firstborn of Egypt,
 the firstborn of men and animals.

⁹He sent his signs and wonders into your
 midst, O Egypt,
 against Pharaoh and all his servants.

¹⁰He struck down many nations
 and killed mighty kings—

¹¹Sihon king of the Amorites,
 Og king of Bashan
 and all the kings of Canaan—

¹²and he gave their land as an inheritance,
 an inheritance to his people Israel.

¹³Your name, O LORD, endures forever,
 your renown, O LORD, through all
 generations.

¹⁴For the LORD will vindicate his people
 and have compassion on his servants.

¹⁵The idols of the nations are silver and gold,
 made by the hands of men.

¹⁶They have mouths, but cannot speak,
 eyes, but they cannot see;

¹⁷they have ears, but cannot hear,
 nor is there breath in their mouths.
¹⁸Those who make them will be like them,
 and so will all who trust in them.

¹⁹O house of Israel, praise the LORD;
 O house of Aaron, praise the LORD;

²⁰O house of Levi, praise the LORD;
 you who fear him, praise the LORD.

²¹Praise be to the LORD from Zion,
 to him who dwells in Jerusalem.

Praise the LORD.

Psalm 136

¹Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good.
His love endures forever.

²Give thanks to the God of gods.
His love endures forever.

³Give thanks to the Lord of lords:
His love endures forever.

⁴to him who alone does great wonders,
His love endures forever.

⁵who by his understanding made the heavens,
His love endures forever.

⁶who spread out the earth upon the waters,
His love endures forever.

⁷who made the great lights—
His love endures forever.

⁸the sun to govern the day,
His love endures forever.

⁹the moon and stars to govern the night;
His love endures forever.

¹⁰to him who struck down the firstborn of
 Egypt
His love endures forever.

¹¹and brought Israel out from among them
His love endures forever.

¹²with a mighty hand and outstretched arm;
His love endures forever.

¹³to him who divided the Red Sea^b asunder
His love endures forever.

¹⁴and brought Israel through the midst of it,
His love endures forever.

¹⁵but swept Pharaoh and his army into the Red
 Sea;
His love endures forever.

¹⁶to him who led his people through the desert,
His love endures forever.

¹⁷who struck down great kings,
His love endures forever.

¹⁸and killed mighty kings—
His love endures forever.

¹⁹Sihon king of the Amorites
His love endures forever.

²⁰and Og king of Bashan—
His love endures forever.

²¹and gave their land as an inheritance,
His love endures forever.

²²an inheritance to his servant Israel;
His love endures forever.

^a1 Hebrew *Hallelu Yah*, also in verses 3 and 21

^b13 Hebrew *Yam Suph*, that is, Sea of Reeds, also in verse 15

He the One who remembered us in our low
estate

His love endures forever

And freed us from our enemies

His love endures forever

And who gives food to every creature.

His love endures forever.

Give thanks to the God of heaven.

His love endures forever

Psalm 137

By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept
when we remembered Zion.

There on the poplars

we hung our harps

For there our captors asked us for songs,
our tormentors demanded songs of joy;
they said, "Sing us one of the songs of
Zion."

"How can we sing the songs of the LORD
while in a foreign land?"

"Singer, sing! O Jerusalem

may my right hand forget its skill!

"May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth

if I do not remember you

if I do not consider Jerusalem

my inquest!"

Remember, O LORD, what the Edomites did
on the day Jerusalem fell
"Tear it down," they cried,
"tear it down to its foundations!"

O Daughter of Babylon, doomed to
destruction,

happy is he who repays you
for what you have done to us—

He who seizes your infants
and dashes them against the rocks

Psalm 138

Of David.

I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart;
before the "gods" I will sing your praise.

I will bow down toward your holy temple
and will praise your name
for your love and your faithfulness,
for you have exalted above all things
your name and your word.

When I called, you answered me,
you made me bold and stouthearted.

May all the kings of the earth praise you,
O LORD,
when they hear the words of your mouth.
May they sing of the ways of the LORD,

INSIGHT

What about Curses?

Bitter emotions expressed in sorrow

happy is he who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks. 137:8-9

The so-called "cursing psalms" come as a shock. Psalm 137 is the most famous example. In a gorgeous lament from exile, the poet crescendoes to wish that God would bless anyone who kills a Babylonian baby.

To many people, this wish seems too bitter to belong in the Bible. Aren't Christians supposed to love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them (Matthew 5:44)? Even in the Old Testament, enemies were not to be treated unkindly (Exodus 23:4). How does this outburst fit into God's Word?

A Cry for Justice

To answer we must go to the courtroom, where more and more judges are allowing the victims of a crime to testify during sentencing. A mother who has lost her child to a murderer may spout wild and even vindictive emotions as she stands to demand the death sentence. Still the court needs to hear her. She alone knows fully what was lost. She alone feels the full outrage of the crime.

The cursing psalms voice such "victim testimony" to God, the judge. They always assume that the punishment they ask for is deserved. For example, Psalm 109 calls down curses on a man who hounded to death the poor and the needy and the brokenhearted. He loved to pronounce a curse—may it come on him" (109:16-17).

Psalm 137 was written out of similar anguish. As a nation, Babylon had callously murdered, earning punishment. The Bible says that God hears the cries of the innocent. He promises to punish those who have hurt them.

With all his teaching on forgiving enemies, Jesus did not change this idea of justice. He taught that justice will be done by God after death. (See, for instance, Matthew 25:31-46.) But Old Testament Israelites had only vague ideas about life after death. For them, justice had to be done in this life, before their eyes. They asked for it in the cursing psalms.

for the glory of the LORD is great.

⁶Though the LORD is on high, he looks upon the lowly.

but the proud he knows from afar.

⁷Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life;

you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes,

with your right hand you save me.

⁸The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your love, O LORD, endures forever—do not abandon the works of your hands.

Psalm 139

For the director of music Of David A psalm.

¹O LORD, you have searched me and you know me.

²You know when I sit and when I rise;—you perceive my thoughts from afar.

³You discern my going out and my lying down, you are familiar with all my ways

⁴Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD.

⁵You hem me in—behind and before;

you have laid your hand upon me
⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain

⁷Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

⁸If I go up to the heavens, you are there, if I make my bed in the depths,^a you are there.

⁹If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,

¹⁰even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

¹¹If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,"

¹²even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

¹³For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;

your works are wonderful, I know that full well

¹⁵My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place.

^a Hebrew Sheol

Mercy for Your Enemies

What about mercy? Isn't our duty to forgive our enemies, and love them? How do the cursing psalms fit with that?

Three things must be said. First, while no mercy shows through in the "cursing" psalms, that doesn't mean the people who wrote them were wholly unmerciful. David, credited with some of the strongest cursing psalms, showed extraordinary mercy toward Saul, his vengeful enemy. The cursing psalms are unbridled cries of agony. They honestly reflect the way people felt. Their authors' lives sometimes balanced this cry with compassion.

Second, the psalmists wrote before Jesus offered forgiveness to all by dying, as God's Son, in people's place. Even today many people find it difficult to accept Jesus' teaching on forgiving enemies, for it means forgiving rapists, child molesters, mass murderers. We can only forgive them because Jesus paid the price for their crimes. The psalmists lived before that payment.

Third, the cursing psalms prepared the way for forgiveness. You can only be genuinely merciful if you start with a full appreciation of guilt. The judge who carelessly lets a criminal off on a technicality is not showing mercy. Maybe he or she just lacks sympathy for the crime's victim. True mercy comes when victims themselves turn and forgive the people who hurt them, releasing them to liberty.

Jesus the Victim

The cursing psalms express the hideousness of violence and injustice. Unless you feel the depth of this, you cannot understand the depth of God's forgiveness, offered freely to anyone who pleads for mercy. God is not merely letting people off on a legal technicality. He hears the cry of their victims, and more: he shares it. In Jesus, God was the victim, beaten, cursed, killed.

The New Testament actually quoted two of the cursing psalms, referring to Judas's betrayal of Jesus. These psalms speak of bitter injustice, and Jesus suffered the ultimate injustice. But the final word comes from Jesus himself: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

If we follow Jesus' example, we dare not mouth the cursing psalms when we think of our enemies. These psalms are not for us to borrow from, as are other psalms. Yet these cursing psalms remind us of the bitter suffering many experience, and reading them can impel us to fight for justice. More, they remind us to forgive. For God, hearing such cries from the victim, having suffered as they suffer, forgives. So can we.

Life Questions What is the worst injustice you have ever experienced? Did you feel some of the anger expressed in the cursing psalms? Were you able to forgive?

How long shall we forsake Zion?
How long shall we say,
We will not build our tower,
For we are in a foreign land.

For we have remembered Zion
all the day.

When we lie down we say,
We will not sleep;
When we rise we say,
We will not rest.

For we have remembered Zion
all the day;
For we have said,
We will not build our tower,
For we are in a foreign land.

For we have remembered Zion
all the day;
For we have said,
We will not build our tower,
For we are in a foreign land.

Remember, O Lord, the day of our exile,
How we have remembered Zion
all the day;
For we have said,
We will not build our tower,
For we are in a foreign land.

Psalm 137

For the stream of Babylon I weep, O Lord.

Remember, O Lord, the day of our exile,
How we have remembered Zion
all the day;
For we have said,
We will not build our tower,
For we are in a foreign land.

The stream of Babylon I weep, O Lord.

Remember, O Lord, the day of our exile,
How we have remembered Zion
all the day;

For we have said,
We will not build our tower,
For we are in a foreign land.

Remember, O Lord, the day of our exile,
How we have remembered Zion
all the day;
For we have said,
We will not build our tower,
For we are in a foreign land.

Solo

O Lord, I weep as when I say,
How we have remembered Zion
all the day;

For we have said,
We will not build our tower,
For we are in a foreign land.
Remember, O Lord, the day of our exile,
How we have remembered Zion
all the day;
For we have said,
We will not build our tower,
For we are in a foreign land.

Solo

Let the heads of those who surround me
be covered with the trouble their lips have
spoken.

Let burning coals fall upon them,
may they be thrown into the fire
and not put their hands
to their mouths.

Let slanderers not be established in the land;
may disaster hunt down men of violence.

O Lord, I weep as when I say,
How we have remembered Zion
all the day;

How long shall we forsake Zion?
How long shall we say,
We will not build our tower,
For we are in a foreign land.

Psalm 137

A Psalm of David.

How long shall we forsake Zion?
How long shall we say,
We will not build our tower,
For we are in a foreign land.

For we have remembered Zion
all the day;
For we have said,
We will not build our tower,
For we are in a foreign land.

Remember, O Lord, the day of our exile,
How we have remembered Zion
all the day;
For we have said,
We will not build our tower,
For we are in a foreign land.

For we have remembered Zion
all the day;

For we have said,
We will not build our tower,
For we are in a foreign land.

Remember, O Lord, the day of our exile,
How we have remembered Zion
all the day;
For we have said,
We will not build our tower,
For we are in a foreign land.

For we have remembered Zion
all the day;

For we have said,
We will not build our tower,
For we are in a foreign land.

Remember, O Lord, the day of our exile,
How we have remembered Zion
all the day;

For we have said,
We will not build our tower,
For we are in a foreign land.

Remember, O Lord, the day of our exile,
How we have remembered Zion
all the day;

Psalm 137

A Psalm of David. When he was in the land of the Chaldeans.

How long shall we forsake Zion?
How long shall we say,
We will not build our tower,
For we are in a foreign land.

For we have remembered Zion
all the day;

For we have said,
We will not build our tower,
For we are in a foreign land.

Remember, O Lord, the day of our exile,
How we have remembered Zion
all the day;

For we have said,
We will not build our tower,
For we are in a foreign land.

no one cares for my life.

- 3I cry to you, O LORD;
I say, "You are my refuge,
my portion in the land of the living."
4Listen to my cry,
for I am in desperate need;
rescue me from those who pursue me,
for they are too strong for me.
5Set me free from my prison,
that I may praise your name.

Then the righteous will gather about me
because of your goodness to me.

Psalm 143

A psalm of David

- 1O LORD, hear my prayer,
listen to my cry for mercy;
in your faithfulness and righteousness
come to my relief.
2Do not bring your servant into judgment,
for no one living is righteous before you.
3The enemy pursues me,
he crushes me to the ground,
he makes me dwell in darkness
like those long dead.
4So my spirit grows faint within me;
my heart within me is dismayed.
5I remember the days of long ago;
I meditate on all your works
and consider what your hands have done.
6I spread out my hands to you;
my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.
Selah
7Answer me quickly, O LORD;
my spirit fails.
Do not hide your face from me
or I will be like those who go down to the
pit.
8Let the morning bring me word of your
unfailing love,
for I have put my trust in you.
Show me the way I should go,
for to you I lift up my soul.
9Rescue me from my enemies, O LORD,
for I hide myself in you.
10Teach me to do your will,
for you are my God;
may your good Spirit
lead me on level ground.

- 11For your name's sake, O LORD, preserve my
life;
in your righteousness, bring me out of
trouble.
12In your unfailing love, silence my enemies;
destroy all my foes,
for I am your servant.

Psalm 144

Of David.

- 1Praise be to the LORD my Rock,
who trains my hands for war,
my fingers for battle.
2He is my loving God and my fortress,
my stronghold and my deliverer,
my shield, in whom I take refuge,
who subdues peoples^a under me.
3O LORD, what is man that you care for him,
the son of man that you think of him?
4Man is like a breath;
his days are like a fleeting shadow.
5Part your heavens, O LORD, and come down;
touch the mountains, so that they smoke.
6Send forth lightning and scatter the enemies;
shoot your arrows and rout them.
7Reach down your hand from on high;
deliver me and rescue me
from the mighty waters,
from the hands of foreigners
whose mouths are full of lies,
whose right hands are deceitful.
8I will sing a new song to you, O God;
on the ten-stringed lyre I will make music to
you.
9to the One who gives victory to kings,
who delivers his servant David from the
deadly sword.
10Deliver me and rescue me
from the hands of foreigners
whose mouths are full of lies,
whose right hands are deceitful.
11Then our sons in their youth
will be like well-nurtured plants,
and our daughters will be like pillars
carved to adorn a palace.
12Our barns will be filled
with every kind of provision.
Our sheep will increase by thousands,
by tens of thousands in our fields;
13our oxen will draw heavy loads.^b
There will be no breaching of walls,
no going into captivity,
no cry of distress in our streets.
14Blessed are the people of whom this is true;
blessed are the people whose God is the
LORD.

Psalm 145

A psalm of praise. Of David.

- 1I will exalt you, my God the King;
I will praise your name for ever and ever.
2Every day I will praise you
and extol your name for ever and ever.

^a Many manuscripts of the Masoretic Text. Dead Sea Scrolls, Aquila, Jerome and Syriac. Most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text subdues people. ^b 14 Or our chariots will be firmly established. This psalm is an acrostic poem: the verses of which (including verse 16) begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise.
His greatness no one can fathom.
A new generation will commend your works to
another.

They will tell of your mighty acts.
They will speak of the glorious splendor of
your majesty

and I will meditate on your wonderful
works.

They will tell of the power of your awesome
works

and I will proclaim your great deeds.

They will celebrate your abundant goodness
and exultantly sing of your righteousness.

The Lord is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and rich in love.

The Lord is good to all

he has compassion on all he has made.

All you have made will praise you. O Lord,
your saints will extol you.

They will tell of the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your might.

So that all men may know of your mighty acts
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures through all
generations.

The Lord is faithful to all his promises
and loving toward all he has made.

The Lord upholds all those who fall
and lifts up all who are bowed down.

The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food at the proper
time.

You open your hand
and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

The Lord is righteous in all his ways
and loving toward all he has made.

The Lord is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.

He fulfills the desires of those who fear him;
he hears their cry and saves them.

The Lord watches over all who love him,
but all the wicked he will destroy.

My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord.
Let every creature praise his holy name
for ever and ever.

Psalm 146

Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord, O my soul.

I will praise the Lord all my life,
and sing praise to my God as long as I live.

Do not put your trust in princes

or mortal men who cannot save.

When their spirit departs, they return to the
ground.

on that very day their plans come to
nothing.

Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the Lord his God.

The Maker of heaven and earth,
the sea and everything in them,
the Lord who remains faithful forever.

He upholds the cause of the oppressed
and gives food to the hungry.

The Lord sets prisoners free.

The Lord gives sight to the blind.

The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down,
the Lord loves the righteous.

The Lord watches over the alien
and sustains the fatherless and the widow,
but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

The Lord reigns forever.

Your God, O Zion, for all generations.

Praise the Lord.

Psalm 147

Upraise the Lord.

How good it is to sing praises to our God,
how pleasant and fitting to praise him!

The Lord builds up Jerusalem;
he gathers the exiles of Israel.

He heals the brokenhearted
and binds up their wounds.

He determines the number of the stars
and calls them each by name.

Great is our Lord and mighty in power;
his understanding has no limit.

The Lord sustains the humble
but casts the wicked to the ground.

Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving;
make music to our God on the harp.

He covers the sky with clouds;
he supplies the earth with rain
and makes grass grow on the hills.

He provides food for the cattle
and for the young ravens when they call.

His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse,
nor his delight in the legs of a man.

The Lord delights in those who fear him,
who put their hope in his unfailing love.

Exalt the Lord, O Jerusalem.

praise your God, O Zion,

for he strengthens the bars of your gates
and blesses your people within you.

147:11 God's Great Concern

The Lord is a God of strength, as this song amply demonstrates. But power doesn't delight him (verse 10). More than anything he loves to be in a close relationship to people who respond to his love.

11. Good and terrible and strong (see also Septuagint, Minoritic Text). On the glorious splendor of your majesty and on your wonderful works I will meditate.

12. One manuscript of the Minoritic Text, Good and strong and strong (see also Septuagint), and manuscripts of the Minoritic Text do not have the last two lines of verse 13.

13. Hebrew: *halal* (also in verse 10).

14. Hebrew: *halal* (also in verse 10).

1¹He grants peace to your borders
 and satisfies you with the finest of wheat.
 2²He sends his command to the earth;
 his word runs swiftly.
 3³He spreads the snow like wool
 and casts the frost like ashes.
 4⁴He hurls down his hail like pebbles.
 Who can withstand his icy blast?
 5⁵He sends his word and melts them;
 he stirs up his breezes, and the waters flow.
 6⁶He has revealed his word to Jacob,
 his laws and decrees to Israel.
 7⁷He has done this for no other nation;
 they do not know his laws.
 Praise the LORD.

Psalm 148

1¹Praise the LORD.
 Praise the LORD from the heavens,
 praise him in the heights above.
 2²Praise him, all his angels,
 praise him, all his heavenly hosts.
 3³Praise him, sun and moon,
 praise him, all you shining stars.
 4⁴Praise him, you highest heavens
 and you waters above the skies.
 5⁵Let them praise the name of the LORD,
 for he commanded and they were created.
 6⁶He set them in place for ever and ever;
 he gave a decree that will never pass away.
 7⁷Praise the LORD from the earth,
 you great sea creatures and all ocean depths,
 8⁸lightning and hail, snow and clouds,

stormy winds that do his bidding,
 9⁹you mountains and all hills,
 fruit trees and all cedars,
 10¹⁰wild animals and all cattle,
 small creatures and flying birds,
 11¹¹kings of the earth and all nations,
 you princes and all rulers on earth,
 12¹²young men and maidens,
 old men and children.
 13¹³Let them praise the name of the LORD,
 for his name alone is exalted;
 his splendor is above the earth and the
 heavens.
 14¹⁴He has raised up for his people a horn,^a
 the praise of all his saints,
 of Israel, the people close to his heart.
 Praise the LORD.

Psalm 149

1¹Praise the LORD.
 Sing to the LORD a new song,
 his praise in the assembly of the saints.
 2²Let Israel rejoice in their Maker;
 let the people of Zion be glad in their King.
 3³Let them praise his name with dancing
 and make music to him with tambourine and
 harp.
 4⁴For the LORD takes delight in his people,
 he crowns the humble with salvation.
 5⁵Let the saints rejoice in this honor
 and sing for joy on their beds.
 6⁶May the praise of God be in their mouths
 and a double-edged sword in their hands,

^a Hebrew *Hallelu Yah*, also in verse 14.

^a 14 Horn here symbolizes strong one, that is, king.

^a 1 Hebrew *Hallelu Yah*, also in

INSIGHT

Some Notable Psalms

A listing of some of the best-loved or best-known psalms

A plea for help in time of trouble: 5, 17, 25, 31, 61
 A prayer when near despair: 39, 42, 43, 55, 73, 77, 86, 88, 102, 130
 A prayer for forgiveness and help: 6, 32, 38, 51, 143
 Rest in God's goodness: 4, 11, 23, 27, 63, 67, 91, 115, 121, 125, 139
 Israel's cry of anguish at God's anger: 44, 74, 80, 85
 Praise with shouts and singing: 33, 47, 66, 81, 95, 96, 98, 149, 150
 Praise for God's personal blessings: 18, 30, 34, 40, 92, 103, 107, 113, 116, 118, 146
 Praise for God's blessings to Israel: 77, 68, 100, 108, 124, 126, 129
 Praise for God's awesome majesty: 8, 24, 29, 46, 50, 90, 93, 114, 145
 Praise for God's law: 19, 119
 Songs of war and vindication: 35, 58, 76, 79, 83, 109, 137
 The history of God and the people of Israel: 78, 105, 106
 Nature: 19, 65, 104, 147, 148
 The Messiah: 2, 16, 22, 45, 69, 89, 110, 132
 Jerusalem and the temple: 48, 84, 87, 122
 The fates of the wicked and the righteous: 1, 15, 37, 49

PSALM 149:7

7to inflict vengeance on the nations
and punishment on the peoples,
8to bind their kings with fetters,
their nobles with shackles of iron,
9to carry out the sentence written against them
This is the glory of all his saints.

Praise the LORD.

Psalm 150

1Praise the LORD.*

540

Praise God in his sanctuary,
praise him in his mighty heavens.
2Praise him for his acts of power,
praise him for his surpassing greatness
3Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,
praise him with the harp and lyre,
4praise him with tambourine and dancing,
praise him with the strings and flute,
5praise him with the clash of cymbals,
praise him with resounding cymbals
6Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.
Praise the LORD.

*1 Hebrew *Hallelu Yah*, also in verse 6

PROVERBS

INTRODUCTION

Uncommon Sense

A most down-to-earth book

If you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. 2:3-5

Proverbs is probably the most down-to-earth book in the Bible. Its education prepares you for the street and the marketplace, not the schoolroom (Proverbs 1:20-21 expresses this poetically). The book offers the warm advice you get by growing up in a good family: practical guidance for successfully making your way in the world. It covers small questions as well as large: talking too much, visiting neighbors too often, being unbearably cheerful too early in the morning.

The first nine chapters, which explain the purpose of Proverbs's wisdom, are spoken from father to son. Fifteen times the fatherly voice says, "My son." Some of the advice seems particularly well suited to young people: warnings against joining gangs, for instance, or urgent cautions against sex outside marriage. But the central message of Proverbs applies to anyone, old or young: "Get wisdom at all costs." It is a plea to strain your mind and your ears searching for the wise way to live.

Virtue Is Not Its Only Reward

Anybody can find exceptions to the generalities of Proverbs. For instance, Proverbs 28:19 proclaims that "he who works his land will have abundant food," but the one who chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty." Yet farmers who work hard go hungry in a drought, and dreamers sometimes become rich.

Proverbs simply tells how life works most of the time. You can worry about the exceptions after you have learned the rule. Try to live by the exceptions, and you court disaster.

The rule is that the godly, moral, hardworking, and wise will reap many rewards. Those who learn the practical and godly wisdom of Proverbs not only sleep better, they succeed and become able to help their family and friends. Fools and scoffers, though they appear successful, will eventually pay the cost of their lifestyle.

Much of Proverbs's practical advice makes no mention of God, and its concern for success may therefore seem quite secular. But if you take the book as a whole, it becomes obvious that the lifestyle Proverbs teaches depends on a healthy respect for God (1:7) affecting every aspect of life (3:5-7). Proverbs frankly concedes that the wise path will not be chosen by many: it is easier to live carelessly and godlessly. But those who choose to live by Proverbs will get success and safety, and more: they will get to know God himself. "Then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God" (2:5).

How to Read Proverbs

People love to quote proverbs, which often express truth about life in an elegant, witty kernel. You'll find more humor in Proverbs than anywhere else in the Bible.

Yet Proverbs may well be the most abused book in the Bible. People often quote the proverbs as though they were absolute promises from God or rigid rules for living. In fact, few of the proverbs should be read that way. And some proverbs, read by themselves, would give you a distorted point of view.

To understand Proverbs, you should not hunt through it for proverbs you like. You should study the whole book to get its overall point of view. This takes time, for Proverbs covers dozens of subjects in subtle detail.

Each of the more than 500 proverbs is a tough nut you have to crack before you get the inner meat. Read Proverbs slowly, but not for too long at one sitting.

Some people like to read a small number of proverbs each day in addition to their regular Bible readings. Others concentrate on memorizing proverbs so they can run them through their heads as they go on about the day. Whatever technique you use, keep two things in mind: think carefully about each proverb, and try to put each into the bigger context of the teachings of all of Proverbs. To help you see the total picture of Proverbs's teaching on some key subjects, ten insights scattered throughout Proverbs briefly introduce ten subjects and list relevant proverbs.

The book of Proverbs is divided into two main parts: an introduction in the first nine chapters and the proverbs themselves in the remaining 22 chapters. If you skip the introduction, you won't understand the point of Proverbs as a book. It introduces Lady Wisdom and explains what she can do for you.

PLANS FOR READING PROVERBS

PLAN 1: An Overview of Proverbs in 3 Days

- ☐ Day 1 Read the Introduction to Proverbs, and chapter 4, which gives an introduction to the importance of wisdom and the style of life you need to pursue it.
- ☐ Day 2 Read chapter 10, which covers a fairly typical range of subject matter
- ☐ Day 3 Read all the proverbs listed in "Verbal Dynamite," on page 553

PLAN 2: All of Proverbs in 31 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16
☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28 ☐ 29 ☐ 30
☐ 31

Prologue: Purpose and Theme

1 The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:

- ²for attaining wisdom and discipline;
for understanding words of insight;
- ³for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life,
doing what is right and just and fair;
- ⁴for giving prudence to the simple,
knowledge and discretion to the young—
- ⁵let the wise listen and add to their learning,
and let the discerning get guidance—
- ⁶for understanding proverbs and parables,
the sayings and riddles of the wise.

⁷The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,
but fools^a despise wisdom and discipline.

Exhortations to Embrace Wisdom

Warning Against Enticement

- ⁸Listen, my son, to your father's instruction
and do not forsake your mother's teaching
- ⁹They will be a garland to grace your head
and a chain to adorn your neck.
- ¹⁰My son, if sinners entice you,
do not give in to them

^a7 The Hebrew words rendered *fool* in Proverbs, and often elsewhere in the Old Testament, denote one who is morally deficient.

¹¹If they say, "Come along with us;
let's lie in wait for someone's blood,
let's waylay some harmless soul,
¹²let's swallow them alive, like the grave,^a
and whole like those who go down to the
pit;

¹³we will get all sorts of valuable things
and fill our houses with plunder,
¹⁴throw in your lot with us,
and we will share a common purse"—

¹⁵my son, do not go along with them,
do not set foot on their paths,
for their feet rush into sin,
they are swift to shed blood.

¹⁶How useless to spread a net
in full view of all the birds!

¹⁷These men lie in wait for their own blood,
they waylay only themselves!

¹⁸Such is the end of all who go after ill-gotten
gain,
it takes away the lives of those who get it.

Warning Against Rejecting Wisdom

²⁰Wisdom calls aloud in the street,
she raises her voice in the public squares,
²¹at the head of the noisy streets^b she cries out,
in the gateways of the city she makes her
speech

²²How long will you simple ones^c love your
simple ways?
How long will mockers delight in mockery
and fools hate knowledge?

²³If you had responded to my rebuke,
I would have poured out my heart to you
and made my thoughts known to you
²⁴But since you rejected me when I called
and no one gave heed when I stretched out
my hand,

²⁵since you ignored all my advice
and would not accept my rebuke,
²⁶in turn will laugh at your disaster,
I will mock when calamity overtakes you—

²⁷when calamity overtakes you like a storm,
when disaster sweeps over you like a
whirlwind,
when distress and trouble overwhelm you

1:22 Three Problem People

Mockers, fools, the simple: Proverbs keeps using these words to define the "bad characters" we should stay away from. What kind of people are they? The "simple" are the least harmful group: they live without thinking and are too lazy to change. But they, like the others, will end up sorry. "Fools" are smarter but have made a conscious decision to live by their own lights, independent of God and independent of advice. "Mockers," worst of all, are rebels against God who make their prideful position known to everyone. They mock God, but God will mock them in the end (1:26).

²⁸Then they will call to me but I will not
answer;

they will look for me but will not find me

²⁹Since they hated knowledge
and did not choose to fear the Lord,

³⁰since they would not accept my advice
and spurned my rebuke,

³¹they will eat the fruit of their ways
and be filled with the fruit of their schemes

³²For the waywardness of the simple will kill
them,

and the complacency of fools will destroy
them,

³³but whoever listens to me will live in safety
and be at ease, without fear of harm."

Moral Benefits of Wisdom

2 My son, if you accept my words
and store up my commands within you,
²turning your ear to wisdom
and applying your heart to understanding,

³and if you call out for insight
and cry aloud for understanding,

⁴and if you look for it as for silver
and search for it as for hidden treasure,

⁵then you will understand the fear of the Lord
and find the knowledge of God

⁶For the Lord gives wisdom,
and from his mouth come knowledge and
understanding

⁷He holds victory in store for the upright,
he is a shield to those whose walk is
blameless,

⁸for he guards the course of the just
and protects the way of his faithful ones.

⁹Then you will understand what is right and
just
and fair—every good path

¹⁰For wisdom will enter your heart,
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul

¹¹Discretion will protect you,
and understanding will guard you

¹²Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked
men,

from men whose words are perverse,

¹³who leave the straight paths
to walk in dark ways,

¹⁴who delight in doing wrong
and rejoice in the perverseness of evil,

¹⁵whose paths are crooked
and who are devious in their ways

¹⁶It will save you also from the adulteress,
from the wayward wife with her seductive
words,

¹⁷who has left the partner of her youth
and ignored the covenant she made before
God^d

¹⁸For her house leads down to death
and her paths to the spirits of the dead.

¹⁹None who go to her return
or attain the paths of life.

²⁰Thus you will walk in the ways of good men

^a Hebrew: wheel. ^b Hebrew: Septuagint: on the tops of the walls.
^c Literally: despises one without moral direction and inclined to evil.

^d The Hebrew word translated simple in Proverbs
4:12 (Or: covenant of her God).

- and keep to the paths of the righteous.
 21For the upright will live in the land,
 and the blameless will remain in it,
 22but the wicked will be cut off from the land,
 and the unfaithful will be torn from it

Further Benefits of Wisdom

- 3 My son, do not forget my teaching,
 but keep my commands in your heart,
 2for they will prolong your life many years
 and bring you prosperity
 3Let love and faithfulness never leave you;
 bind them around your neck,
 write them on the tablet of your heart
 4Then you will win favor and a good name
 in the sight of God and man.
 5Trust in the LORD with all your heart
 and lean not on your own understanding;
 6in all your ways acknowledge him,
 and he will make your paths straight.^a
 7Do not be wise in your own eyes;
 fear the LORD and shun evil.
 8This will bring health to your body
 and nourishment to your bones.
 9Honor the LORD with your wealth,
 with the firstfruits of all your crops;
 10then your barns will be filled to overflowing,
 and your vats will brim over with new wine
 11My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline
 and do not resent his rebuke,
 12because the LORD disciplines those he loves,
 as a father^b the son he delights in.
 13Blessed is the man who finds wisdom,
 the man who gains understanding,
 14for she is more profitable than silver
 and yields better returns than gold.
 15She is more precious than rubies;
 nothing you desire can compare with her.
 16Long life is in her right hand;
 in her left hand are riches and honor.
 17Her ways are pleasant ways,
 and all her paths are peace
 18She is a tree of life to those who embrace her;
 those who lay hold of her will be blessed.
 19By wisdom the LORD laid the earth's
 foundations,
 by understanding he set the heavens in
 place;
 20by his knowledge the deeps were divided,
 and the clouds let drop the dew

3:6 Walking with God

In the original Hebrew, "in all your ways acknowledge him" is more literally "in all your ways know him." This fundamental statement of how to relate to God implies more than mere reverence. Nodding in God's direction is not enough: you must know him by living closely with him, relating to him personally in every aspect of your life.

- 21My son, preserve sound judgment and
 discernment,
 do not let them out of your sight;
 22they will be life for you,
 an ornament to grace your neck
 23Then you will go on your way in safety,
 and your foot will not stumble.
 24When you lie down, you will not be afraid;
 when you lie down, your sleep will be
 sweet.
 25Have no fear of sudden disaster
 or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked,
 26for the LORD will be your confidence
 and will keep your foot from being snared.
 27Do not withhold good from those who deserve
 it,
 when it is in your power to act
 28Do not say to your neighbor,
 "Come back later, I'll give it tomorrow" —
 when you now have it with you
 29Do not plot harm against your neighbor,
 who lives trustfully near you.
 30Do not accuse a man for no reason —
 when he has done you no harm.
 31Do not envy a violent man
 or choose any of his ways,
 32for the LORD detests a perverse man
 but takes the upright into his confidence.
 33The LORD's curse is on the house of the
 wicked,
 but he blesses the home of the righteous.
 34He mocks proud mockers
 but gives grace to the humble.
 35The wise inherit honor,
 but fools he holds up to shame.

Wisdom Is Supreme

- 4 Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction;
 pay attention and gain understanding.
 2I give you sound learning,
 so do not forsake my teaching.
 3When I was a boy in my father's house,
 still tender, and an only child of my mother,
 4he taught me and said,
 "Lay hold of my words with all your heart;
 keep my commands and you will live."
 5Get wisdom, get understanding;
 do not forget my words or swerve from
 them.
 6Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect
 you;
 love her, and she will watch over you.
 7Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom.
 Though it cost all you have,^c get
 understanding.
 8Esteem her, and she will exalt you;
 embrace her, and she will honor you.
 9She will set a garland of grace on your head
 and present you with a crown of splendor."
 10Listen, my son, accept what I say,
 and the years of your life will be many.
 11I guide you in the way of wisdom

^a6. Or will direct your paths

^b12. Hebrew, Septuagint / and he punishes

^c7. Or Whatever else you get

and lead you along straight paths.
 12When you walk, your steps will not be hampered.
 when you run, you will not stumble.
 13Hold on to instruction, do not let it go, guard it well, for it is your life.
 14Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evil men.
 15Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn from it and go on your way.
 16For they cannot sleep till they do evil; they are robbed of slumber till they make someone fall.
 They eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence.

8The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn,
 shining ever brighter till the full light of day.
 19But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness;
 they do not know what makes them stumble.

4:8 A Lifelong Quest

A father's advice can easily degenerate into, "Don't do this, don't do that." But the fatherly advice of Proverbs isn't preoccupied with rules. Instead, this father tries to help his son develop a love for the best things in life—just as his father did for him. This love for the best—and most of all for wisdom—begins with listening to your father's advice, but it goes beyond taking instructions. The love of wisdom becomes a lifelong quest that may make you wiser than your father.

^a6 Or Consider the

^b5 Hebrew Shool

20My son, pay attention to what I say,
 listen closely to my words.
 21Do not let them out of your sight,
 keep them within your heart,
 22for they are life to those who find them
 and health to a man's whole body.
 23Above all else, guard your heart,
 for it is the wellspring of life.
 24Put away perversity from your mouth,
 keep corrupt talk far from your lips.
 25Let your eyes look straight ahead,
 fix your gaze directly before you.
 26Make level^a paths for your feet
 and take only ways that are firm.
 27Do not swerve to the right or the left;
 keep your foot from evil.

Warning Against Adultery

5 My son, pay attention to my wisdom,
 listen well to my words of insight,
 2that you may maintain discretion
 and your lips may preserve knowledge.
 3For the lips of an adulteress drip honey,
 and her speech is smoother than oil;
 4but in the end she is bitter as gall,
 sharp as a double-edged sword.
 5Her feet go down to death;
 her steps lead straight to the grave.^b
 6She gives no thought to the way of life;
 her paths are crooked, but she knows it not.
 7Now then, my sons, listen to me;
 do not turn aside from what I say.
 8Keep to a path far from her,
 do not go near the door of her house,
 9lest you give your best strength to others
 and your years to one who is cruel,

INSIGHT

Whom Should You Marry?

A good partner can make or break your life

Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife. 21:9

In ancient times women were often viewed as men's property, good for bearing children and not much more. Proverbs, addressed to young men approaching the age of marriage, takes a different view. It holds up marriage as a crucial choice, to be made with great care.

A good wife (or husband, we can assume) will make or break her partner's life. Her duties lay the foundation for her family's welfare (14:1; 31:10-31). She shares with her husband the most significant task of teaching their children the way of wisdom (1:8-9; 6:20). Therefore, her character matters far more than her physical beauty.

Not that Proverbs ignores the physical side of love. It urges marriage partners to rejoice in their love, to be captivated by it (5:18-19). It warns young people against sexual sin precisely because this wastes sexuality on unsatisfying, unloving relationships. Sex ought to be saved for the long-lasting, productive joy of marriage.

Proverbs on sexual sin: 2:16-19; 5:1-23; 6:20-35; 7:6-27; 23:26-28.

Proverbs on marriage: 5:15-19; 12:4; 14:1; 18:22; 19:13-14; 21:9,19; 27:15,16; 31:10-31.

Life Questions: What qualities make a good marriage partner?

¹⁰lest strangers feast on your wealth
and your toil enrich another man's house.
¹¹At the end of your life you will groan,
when your flesh and body are spent.
¹²You will say, "How I hated discipline!
How my heart spurned correction!
¹³I would not obey my teachers
or listen to my instructors
¹⁴I have come to the brink of utter ruin
in the midst of the whole assembly."

¹⁵Drink water from your own cistern,
running water from your own well.
¹⁶Should your springs overflow in the streets,
your streams of water in the public squares?
¹⁷Let them be yours alone,
never to be shared with strangers
¹⁸May your fountain be blessed,
and may you rejoice in the wife of your
youth
¹⁹A loving doe, a graceful deer—
may her breasts satisfy you always,
may you ever be captivated by her love.
²⁰Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress?
Why embrace the bosom of another man's
wife?
²¹For a man's ways are in full view of the LORD,
and he examines all his paths.
²²The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him;
the cords of his sin hold him fast.
²³He will die for lack of discipline,
led astray by his own great folly.

Warnings Against Folly

6 My son, if you have put up security for your
neighbor,
if you have struck hands in pledge for
another,
²if you have been trapped by what you said,
ensnared by the words of your mouth,
³then do this, my son, to free yourself,
since you have fallen into your neighbor's
hands
Go and humble yourself,
press your plea with your neighbor!
⁴Allow no sleep to your eyes,
no slumber to your eyelids
⁵Free yourself, like a gazelle from the hand of
the hunter,
like a bird from the snare of the fowler.
⁶Go to the ant, you sluggard;
consider its ways and be wise!
⁷It has no commander,
no overseer or ruler,
⁸yet it stores its provisions in summer
and gathers its food at harvest.
⁹How long will you lie there, you sluggard?
When will you get up from your sleep?
¹⁰A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest—
¹¹and poverty will come on you like a bandit
and scarcity like an armed man.^a
¹²A scoundrel and villain,

who goes about with a corrupt mouth,
¹³who winks with his eye,
signals with his feet
and motions with his fingers,
¹⁴who plots evil with deceit in his heart—
he always stirs up dissension.
¹⁵Therefore disaster will overtake him in an
instant;
he will suddenly be destroyed—without
remedy.
¹⁶There are six things the LORD hates,
seven that are detestable to him:
¹⁷haughty eyes,
a lying tongue,
hands that shed innocent blood,
¹⁸a heart that devises wicked schemes,
feet that are quick to rush into evil,
¹⁹a false witness who pours out lies
and a man who stirs up dissension among
brothers.

Warning Against Adultery

²⁰My son, keep your father's commands
and do not forsake your mother's teaching.
²¹Bind them upon your heart forever;
fasten them around your neck.
²²When you walk, they will guide you;
when you sleep, they will watch over you;
when you awake, they will speak to you.
²³For these commands are a lamp,
this teaching is a light,
and the corrections of discipline
are the way to life,
²⁴keeping you from the immoral woman,
from the smooth tongue of the wayward
wife
²⁵Do not lust in your heart after her beauty
or let her captivate you with her eyes,
²⁶for the prostitute reduces you to a loaf of
bread,
and the adulteress preys upon your very life.
²⁷Can a man scoop fire into his lap
without his clothes being burned?
²⁸Can a man walk on hot coals
without his feet being scorched?
²⁹So is he who sleeps with another man's wife;
no one who touches her will go unpunished.
³⁰Men do not despise a thief if he steals
to satisfy his hunger when he is starving.
³¹Yet if he is caught, he must pay sevenfold,
though it costs him all the wealth of his
house.
³²But a man who commits adultery lacks
judgment;
whoever does so destroys himself.
³³Blows and disgrace are his lot,
and his shame will never be wiped away;
³⁴for jealousy arouses a husband's fury,
and he will show no mercy when he takes
revenge
³⁵He will not accept any compensation,
he will refuse the bribe, however great it is

^a11 Or like a vagrant / and scarcity like a beggar

Warning Against the Adulteress

- 7** My son, keep my words
and store up my commands within you.
2 Keep my commands and you will live;
guard my teachings as the apple of your eye.
3 Bind them on your fingers;
write them on the tablet of your heart.
4 Say to wisdom, "You are my sister,"
and call understanding your kinsman;
5 they will keep you from the adulteress,
from the wayward wife with her seductive words
6 At the window of my house
I looked out through the lattice.
7 I saw among the simple,
I noticed among the young men,
a youth who lacked judgment.
8 He was going down the street near her corner,
walking along in the direction of her house
9 at twilight, as the day was fading,
as the dark of night set in.
10 Then out came a woman to meet him,
dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent
11 (She is loud and defiant,
her feet never stay at home;
12 now in the street, now in the squares,
at every corner she lurks.)
13 She took hold of him and kissed him
and with a brazen face she said:
14 "I have fellowship offerings^a at home;
today I fulfilled my vows.
15 So I came out to meet you;
I looked for you and have found you!
16 I have covered my bed
with colored linens from Egypt.
17 I have perfumed my bed
with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.
18 Come, let's drink deep of love till morning;
let's enjoy ourselves with love!
19 My husband is not at home;
he has gone on a long journey.
20 He took his purse filled with money
and will not be home till full moon."
21 With persuasive words she led him astray;
she seduced him with her smooth talk.
22 All at once he followed her

7:2 The Apple of Your Eye

The "apple of your eye" is an Old English expression for the eye's center, or pupil. The whole body is tuned to protect that pupil from harm: eyelids reflexively snap shut at the slightest hint of danger; tear ducts bathe your eye with a cleansing liquid if any irritant enters; nerve endings scream "danger" at the slightest pain or pressure. Proverbs urges you to take as much care of its teachings as you do of your eye.

like an ox going to the slaughter,
like a deer^b stepping into a noose^c
23 till an arrow pierces his liver,
like a bird darting into a snare,
little knowing it will cost him his life.

- 24** Now then, my sons, listen to me;
pay attention to what I say.
25 Do not let your heart turn to her ways
or stray into her paths.
26 Many are the victims she has brought down;
her slain are a mighty throng.
27 Her house is a highway to the grave,^d
leading down to the chambers of death.

Wisdom's Call

- 8** Does not wisdom call out?
Does not understanding raise her voice?
2 On the heights along the way,
where the paths meet, she takes her stand;
3 beside the gates leading into the city,
at the entrances, she cries aloud:
4 "To you, O men, I call out;
I raise my voice to all mankind.
5 You who are simple, gain prudence;
you who are foolish, gain understanding.
6 Listen, for I have worthy things to say;
I open my lips to speak what is right.
7 My mouth speaks what is true,
for my lips detest wickedness.
8 All the words of my mouth are just;
none of them is crooked or perverse.
9 To the discerning all of them are right;
they are faultless to those who have knowledge.
10 Choose my instruction instead of silver,
knowledge rather than choice gold,
11 for wisdom is more precious than rubies,
and nothing you desire can compare with her.
12 "I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence;
I possess knowledge and discretion.
13 To fear the LORD is to hate evil;
I hate pride and arrogance,
evil behavior and perverse speech.
14 Counsel and sound judgment are mine;
I have understanding and power.
15 By me kings reign
and rulers make laws that are just;
16 by me princes govern,
and all nobles who rule on earth.^e
17 I love those who love me,
and those who seek me find me.
18 With me are riches and honor,

8:13 The Fear of the Lord

The phrase "fear of the Lord" doesn't mean fright or terror. It means "a good relationship with God," based on reverence and respect for him and his commands. Here, for instance, the fear of the Lord means righteous living.

^a14 Traditionally peace offerings uncertain.
^d27 Hebrew Shul righteous rulers

^b22 Syriac (see also Septuagint), Hebrew fool

^c16 Many Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint, most Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac all

^e22 The meaning of the Hebrew for this line is

enduring wealth and prosperity.
¹⁹My trust is better than fine gold,
 what I yield surpasses choice silver.
²⁰I walk in the way of righteousness,
 along the paths of justice.
²¹Bestowing wealth on those who love me
 and making their treasures full.
²²The Lord brought me forth as the first of his
 works ^{a,2}
 before his deeds of old
²³I was appointed from eternity
 from the beginning, before the world began.
²⁴When there were no oceans, I was given birth,
 when there were no springs abounding with
 water
²⁵before the mountains were settled in place,
 before the hills, I was given birth.
²⁶before he made the earth or its fields
 or any of the dust of the world
²⁷I was there when he set the heavens in place,
 when he marked out the horizon on the face
 of the deep,
²⁸when he established the clouds above
 and fixed securely the fountains of the deep,
²⁹when he gave the sea its boundary
 so the waters would not overstep his
 command,
 and when he marked out the foundations of
 the earth.
³⁰ Then I was the craftsman at his side.
 I was filled with delight day after day,
 rejoicing always in his presence,

knowing in his whole world
 and delighting in mankind.
³¹Now then, my sons, listen to me,
 blessed are those who keep my ways.
³²Listen to my instruction and be wise;
 do not ignore it.
³³Blessed is the man who listens to me,
 watching daily at my doors,
 waiting at my doorway.
³⁴For whoever finds me finds life
 and receives favor from the Lord.
³⁵But whoever fails to find me harms himself,
 all who hate me love death."

Invitations of Wisdom and of Folly

9 Wisdom has built her house:
 she has hewn out its seven pillars.
 She has prepared her meat and mixed her
 wine,
 she has also set her table.
²She has sent out her maids, and she calls
 from the highest point of the city:
³"Let all who are simple come in here!"
 she says to those who lack judgment.
⁴"Come, eat my food
 and drink the wine I have mixed.
⁵Leave your simple ways and you will live,
 walk in the way of understanding.
⁷Whoever corrects a mocker invites insult;
 whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs
 abuse.

^{a,2} Or *way*, or *dominion*
 work ²³ Or *fashioned*

^{a,22} Or *The Lord possessed me at the beginning of his work*, or *The Lord brought me forth at the beginning of his*

INSIGHT

God and "How-to-Succeed"

Does Proverbs care more for success than for God?

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. 9:10

Bookstores are full of "how-to" books, each promising to teach you how to make a success of yourself by just following a few simple rules. Is Proverbs an ancient "how-to" book? It seems, at first look, more interested in success and prosperity than in God. Many of the proverbs can be adopted by those who have no love for God.

But if you look at Proverbs as a book, rather than a collection of unrelated fragments, you will find that its "how-tos" of wise living can't be separated from God. While some proverbs observe the hard facts of life—that bribes are effective, for instance, or that money does buy friends of a kind—the book never for a moment endorses success techniques that involve immorality. More important, a deep sense of people's sin and their utter dependence on God pervades Proverbs. Wisdom, that fundamental tool for living, starts with the fear of God and leads to a knowledge of him.

The words *LORD* or *God* are actually mentioned nearly 100 times, so a complete study of God's place in Proverbs takes you through virtually the entire book.

Proverbs on God's relationship to wisdom: 1:7; 2:5-9; 8:22-31; 9:10; 22:17-19.

Proverbs on sin: 15:8; 16:6; 20:9; 24:11,12; 28:9,13.

Proverbs on trust in God: 3:5-12; 14:26,27; 16:20; 18:10; 19:21; 21:31; 29:25,26; 30:5-9.

Proverbs on God's blessing: 10:22,27,29; 15:16.

Other proverbs of particular interest: 11:1; 20:12; 21:3; 17:3; 19:3; 28:5.

Life Questions. What are your plans for success? Is God's will the basis of your life or an afterthought?

Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you;
 rebuke a wise man and he will love you.
 Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still,
 teach a righteous man and he will add to his
 learning.

10:1 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding

For through me your days will be many,
 and years will be added to your life.

If you are wise, your wisdom will reward you,
 if you are a mocker, you alone will suffer."

The woman Folly is loud,
 she is undisciplined and without knowledge.

She sits at the door of her house,
 on a seat at the highest point of the city,

calling out to those who pass by,
 who go straight on their way.

"Let all who are simple come in here!"
 she says to those who lack judgment.

Stolen water is sweet,
 food eaten in secret is delicious!"

But little do they know that the dead are there,
 that her guests are in the depths of the
 grave."

Proverbs of Solomon

10 The proverbs of Solomon.

**A wise son brings joy to his father,
 but a foolish son grief to his mother.**

Ill-gotten treasures are of no value,
 but righteousness delivers from death.

The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry
 but he thwarts the craving of the wicked.

Lazy hands make a man poor,
 but diligent hands bring wealth.

He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son,
 but he who sleeps during harvest is a
 disgraceful son.

10:1 Making Sense of Parallelism

"Parallelism" is a technical term for the form of Hebrew poetry that repeats a thought in slightly different ways. "Synonymous parallelism" is found in Proverbs 15:30, "A cheerful look brings joy to the heart, and good news gives health to the bones." "Antithetical parallelism," in which a thought is followed by its opposite, is found in 14:30, "A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones."

In studying parallelism the trick is to compare each part with its pair in the other half of the proverb. For instance, in 14:30 "a heart at peace" pairs with its opposite, "envy," and "rots the bones" is the opposite of "gives life to the body." Sometimes these comparisons reveal subtle shades of meaning.

Blessings crown the head of the righteous,
 but violence overwhelms the mouth of the
 wicked.^b

The memory of the righteous will be a
 blessing,
 but the name of the wicked will rot.

The wise in heart accept commands,
 but a chattering fool comes to ruin.

The man of integrity walks securely,
 but he who takes crooked paths will be
 found out.

He who winks maliciously causes grief,
 and a chattering fool comes to ruin.

The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life,
 but violence overwhelms the mouth of the
 wicked.

Hatred stirs up dissension,
 but love covers over all wrongs.

Wisdom is found on the lips of the discerning,
 but a rod is for the back of him who lacks
 judgment.

Wise men store up knowledge,
 but the mouth of a fool invites ruin.

The wealth of the rich is their fortified city,
 but poverty is the ruin of the poor.

The wages of the righteous bring them life,
 but the income of the wicked brings them
 punishment.

He who heeds discipline shows the way to life,
 but whoever ignores correction leads others
 astray.

He who conceals his hatred has lying lips,
 and whoever spreads slander is a fool.

When words are many, sin is not absent,
 but he who holds his tongue is wise.

The tongue of the righteous is choice silver,
 but the heart of the wicked is of little value.

The lips of the righteous nourish many,
 but fools die for lack of judgment.

The blessing of the Lord brings wealth,
 and he adds no trouble to it.

A fool finds pleasure in evil conduct,
 but a man of understanding delights in
 wisdom.

10:12 The Greatest of These Is Love

If you think of love as restricted to the New Testament, Proverbs will surprise you. Here love is the all-purpose cure, covering all wrongs. It is worth searching for. It should be expressed openly.

Some of the proverbs on love are found in the following passages: 3:3-4; 9:8; 10:12; 14:22; 15:17; 16:6; 17:9; 19:22; 20:6,28; 21:21; 27:5.

^a18 Hebrew Sheol

^b6 Or but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence, also in verse 11

10:1 But the wicked's strength will overtake him,
and the righteous desire will be granted.
10:2 When the sun has swept by, the wicked are gone,
but the righteous stand firm forever.
10:3 Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes,
so is the tongue of those who sow strife.
10:4 The words of the Lord are right, and the years of the wicked are not short.
10:5 The interest of the righteous is love, but the interest of the wicked is hate.
10:6 The way of the Lord is a refuge for the righteous,
but it is the ruin of those who do evil.
10:7 The righteous will never be disturbed,
but the wicked will not remain in the land.
10:8 The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom,
but a perverse tongue will be cut out.
10:9 The lips of the righteous know what is fitting,
but the mouth of the wicked only what is perverse.

11:1 The righteous man's harvest is justice,
but the wicked's harvest is his wrath.

11:2 When good comes, then sinners disagree,
but when trouble comes, they are at one.

11:3 The righteous man's harvest is justice,
but the wicked's harvest is his wrath.

11:4 The righteous man's harvest is justice,
but the wicked's harvest is his wrath.

11:5 The righteousness of the blameless makes a straight way for them,
but the wicked are brought down by their wickedness.

11:6 The righteousness of the upright delivers them,
but the wicked are trapped by evil desires.

11:7 The righteousness of the upright delivers them,
but the wicked are trapped by evil desires.

11:8 When a wicked man dies, his hope perishes;
and the expected from his power comes to nothing.

11:9 The righteous man is rescued from trouble,
and a sinner in the wicked instead.

11:10 When the righteous prosper, the king's peace is secure,
but when the wicked prosper, the king's peace is in jeopardy.

11:11 When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices,
when the wicked perish, there are shouts of joy.

11:12 Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted,
but by the mouth of the wicked it is destroyed.

11:13 A man who lacks judgment despises his neighbor,
but a man of understanding holds his tongue.

11:14 A gossip betrays a confidence,
but a trustworthy man keeps a secret.

11:15 For lack of guidance a nation falls,
but many advisers make victory sure.

11:16 He who puts up security for another will surely suffer,
but whoever refuses to strike hands in pledge is safe.

11:17 A kindhearted woman gains respect,
but ruthless men gain only wealth.

11:18 A kind man benefits himself,
but a cruel man brings trouble on himself.

11:19 The wicked man earns deceptive wages,
but he who sows righteousness reaps a sure reward.

11:20 The truly righteous man attains life,
but he who pursues evil goes to his death.

11:21 The Lord detests men of perverse heart,
but he delights in those whose ways are blameless.

11:22 Be sure of this: The wicked will not go unpunished,
but those who are righteous will go free.

11:23 Like a gold ring in a pig's snout
is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.

11:24 The desire of the righteous ends only in good,
but the hope of the wicked only in wrath.

11:25 One man gives freely, yet gains even more,
another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.

11:26 A generous man will prosper;
he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.

11:27 People curse the man who hoards grain,
but blessing crowns him who is willing to sell.

11:28 He who seeks good finds goodwill,
but evil comes to him who searches for it.

11:29 Whoever trusts in his riches will fall,
but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.

11:30 He who brings trouble on his family will inherit only wind,
and the fool will be servant to the wise.

11:31 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,
and he who wins souls is wise.

11:32 If the righteous receive their due on earth,
how much more the ungodly and the sinner!

12:1 Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge,
but he who hates correction is stupid.

12:2 A good man obtains favor from the Lord,
but the Lord condemns a crafty man.

- 3A man cannot be established through wickedness,
but the righteous cannot be uprooted.
- 4A wife of noble character is her husband's crown,
but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones.
- 5The plans of the righteous are just,
but the advice of the wicked is deceitful.
- 6The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood,
but the speech of the upright rescues them.
- 7Wicked men are overthrown and are no more,
but the house of the righteous stands firm.
- 8A man is praised according to his wisdom,
but men with warped minds are despised.
- 9Better to be a nobody and yet have a servant
than pretend to be somebody and have no food.
- 10A righteous man cares for the needs of his animal,
but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel.
- 11He who works his land will have abundant food,
but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment.
- 12The wicked desire the plunder of evil men,
but the root of the righteous flourishes.
- 13An evil man is trapped by his sinful talk,
but a righteous man escapes trouble.
- 14From the fruit of his lips a man is filled with good things
as surely as the work of his hands rewards him.
- 15The way of a fool seems right to him,
but a wise man listens to advice.
- 16A fool shows his annoyance at once,
but a prudent man overlooks an insult.
- 17A truthful witness gives honest testimony,
but a false witness tells lies.
- 18Reckless words pierce like a sword,
but the tongue of the wise brings healing.
- 19Truthful lips endure forever,
but a lying tongue lasts only a moment.
- 20There is deceit in the hearts of those who plot evil,
but joy for those who promote peace.
- 21No harm befalls the righteous,
but the wicked have their fill of trouble.
- 22The LORD detests lying lips,
but he delights in men who are truthful.
- 23A prudent man keeps his knowledge to himself,
but the heart of fools blurts out folly.
- 24Diligent hands will rule,
but laziness ends in slave labor.
- 25An anxious heart weighs a man down,
but a kind word cheers him up.
- 26A righteous man is cautious in friendship,^a
but the way of the wicked leads them astray.
- 27The lazy man does not roast^b his game,
but the diligent man prizes his possessions.
- 28In the way of righteousness there is life;
along that path is immortality.
- 13** A wise son heeds his father's instruction,
but a mocker does not listen to rebuke.
- 2From the fruit of his lips a man enjoys good things,
but the unfaithful have a craving for violence.
- 3He who guards his lips guards his life,
but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin.
- 4The sluggard craves and gets nothing,
but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied.
- 5The righteous hate what is false,
but the wicked bring shame and disgrace.
- 6Righteousness guards the man of integrity,
but wickedness overthrows the sinner.
- 7One man pretends to be rich, yet has nothing;
another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth.
- 8A man's riches may ransom his life,
but a poor man hears no threat.
- 9The light of the righteous shines brightly,
but the lamp of the wicked is snuffed out.
- 10Pride only breeds quarrels,
but wisdom is found in those who take advice.
- 11Dishonest money dwindles away,
but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow.
- 12Hope deferred makes the heart sick,
but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.
- 13He who scorns instruction will pay for it,
but he who respects a command is rewarded.
- 14The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life,
turning a man from the snares of death.
- 15Good understanding wins favor,
but the way of the unfaithful is hard.^c

12:17 Deeper Meanings

Some proverbs, disarmingly obvious at first glance, offer deep truth when chewed on. For instance, verse 17 seems to merely repeat the obvious. But its underlying meaning is that a person's character determines his or her actions. You can reflect at length on what this implies about why you do what you do.

^a26 Or man is a guide to his neighbor
endure

^b27 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain

^c25 Or unfaithful does not

- 16 Every prudent man acts out of knowledge,
but a fool exposes his folly.
- 17 A wicked messenger falls into trouble,
but a trustworthy envoy brings healing.
- 18 He who ignores discipline comes to poverty
and shame,
but whoever heeds correction is honored.
- 19 A longing fulfilled is sweet to the soul,
but fools detest turning from evil.
- 20 He who walks with the wise grows wise,
but a companion of fools suffers harm.
- 21 Misfortune pursues the sinner,
but prosperity is the reward of the righteous.
- 22 A good man leaves an inheritance for his
children's children,
but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the
righteous.
- 23 A poor man's field may produce abundant
food,
but injustice sweeps it away.
- 24 He who spares the rod hates his son,
but he who loves him is careful to discipline
him.
- 25 The righteous eat to their hearts' content,
but the stomach of the wicked goes hungry.
- 14** The wise woman builds her house,
but with her own hands the foolish one
tears hers down.
- 2 He whose walk is upright fears the LORD,
but he whose ways are devious despises
him.
- 3 A fool's talk brings a rod to his back,
but the lips of the wise protect them.

- 4 Where there are no oxen, the manger is empty,
but from the strength of an ox comes an
abundant harvest.
- 5 A truthful witness does not deceive,
but a false witness pours out lies.
- 6 The mocker seeks wisdom and finds none,
but knowledge comes easily to the
discerning.
- 7 Stay away from a foolish man,
for you will not find knowledge on his lips.
- 8 The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought
to their ways,
but the folly of fools is deception.
- 9 Fools mock at making amends for sin,
but goodwill is found among the upright.
- 10 Each heart knows its own bitterness,
and no one else can share its joy.
- 11 The house of the wicked will be destroyed,
but the tent of the upright will flourish.
- 12 There is a way that seems right to a man,
but in the end it leads to death.
- 13 Even in laughter the heart may ache,
and joy may end in grief.
- 14 The faithless will be fully repaid for their ways,
and the good man rewarded for his.
- 15 A simple man believes anything,
but a prudent man gives thought to his
steps.
- 16 A wise man fears the LORD and shuns evil,
but a fool is hotheaded and reckless.
- 17 A quick-tempered man does foolish things,
and a crafty man is hated.

INSIGHT

What Makes People Poor?

A clear-eyed view of wealth and poverty

The wealth of the rich is their fortified city, but poverty is the ruin of the poor. 10:15

Poor people are lazy," says one person. Someone else claims the opposite: "They are poor because the rich control the system." People tend to oversimplify when they discuss wealth and poverty. Curiously, both sides may quote Proverbs to prove their point.

You have to read all of Proverbs to get its subtle view. It says people are poor for various reasons: because of laziness and drunkenness, but also because the rich oppress them. People get rich for various reasons too: because of hard work, because of the Lord's blessing, because they cheated.

Proverbs gives an evenhanded view of what money does for people. Wealth brings benefits, including eager friends, Proverbs says; but it also brings worries and troubles. Proverbs strongly urges the rich and powerful to be generous and fair to poor people. It remains remarkably clear-eyed about the tangled causes of poverty and about the dangers and benefits of wealth.

Proverbs on money: 10:4,15,22; 11:4,16,28; 13:8,18,22,23; 14:20,23,31; 15:16; 18:23; 19:1,4,17; 20:13; 21:5,17; 22:1,2,4,7,9,16,22,23; 23:5; 28:3,6,8,11,19,20,22,27; 29:7,14; 30:7-9.

Life Questions: Think of the richest and the poorest people you know. What is your attitude toward them?

- ¹⁶The simple inherit folly,
but the prudent are crowned with
knowledge.
- ¹⁷Fool men will bow down in the presence of the
great,
and the wicked at the gates of the righteous.
- ¹⁸The poor are shunned even by their neighbors,
but the rich have many friends.
- ¹⁹He who despises his neighbor sins,
but blessed is he who is kind to the needy.
- ²⁰Do not those who plot evil go astray?
But those who plant what is good find love
and faithfulness.
- ²¹All hard work brings a profit,
but mere talk leads only to poverty.
- ²²The wealth of the wise is their crown,
but the folly of fools yields folly.
- ²³A truthful witness saves lives,
but a false witness is deceitful.
- ²⁴He who fears the LORD has a secure fortress,
and for his children it will be a refuge.
- ²⁵The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life,
turning a man from the snares of death.
- ²⁶A large population is a king's glory,
but without subjects a prince is ruined.
- ²⁷A patient man has great understanding,
but a quick-tempered man displays folly.
- ²⁸A heart at peace gives life to the body,
but envy rots the bones.
- ²⁹He who oppresses the poor shows contempt
for their Maker,

but whoever is kind to the needy honors
God.

³⁰When calamity comes, the wicked are brought
down,
but even in death the righteous have a
refuge.

³¹Wisdom reposes in the heart of the discerning
and even among fools she lets herself be
known.¹

³²Righteousness exalts a nation,
but sin is a disgrace to any people.

³³A king delights in a wise servant,
but a shameful servant incurs his wrath.

15 A gentle answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger.

²The tongue of the wise commends knowledge,
but the mouth of the fool gushes folly.

³The eyes of the LORD are everywhere,
keeping watch on the wicked and the good.

⁴The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life,
but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.

⁵A fool spurns his father's discipline,
but whoever heeds correction shows
prudence.

⁶The house of the righteous contains great
treasure,
but the income of the wicked brings them
trouble.

⁷The lips of the wise spread knowledge;
not so the hearts of fools.

⁸The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked,
but the prayer of the upright pleases him.

¹22 Or show

¹33 Hebrew, Septuagint and Syriac / but in the heart of fools she is not known

INSIGHT

Verbal Dynamite

Even truthful words can damage other people

A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends. 16:28

What could be wrong with just talking, as long as you don't actually lie? Proverbs sees plenty of danger. Words are dynamite; they can destroy people. They should be carefully weighed before they are spoken. Even truthful words can damage. Yet they can also save a friend from going wrong. Proverbs speaks strongly about both the danger of gossip and the good done when someone justly rebukes his friend.

"The tongue has the power of life and death," Proverbs 18:21 says, "and those who love it will eat its fruit." Proverbs teaches the skill of speaking so as to give life.

Proverbs on the importance of words: 10:11,20; 12:14; 15:4; 17:10; 18:21; 25:11.

Proverbs on the wrong way to speak: 6:16-19; 11:9,12,13; 12:18; 13:3; 16:27,28; 18:8,13; 26:23-28; 29:5.

Proverbs on the right way to speak: 10:14,21,32; 12:25; 15:1,23,28; 16:13,23,24; 17:27,28; 25:12,15; 27:5,6; 28:23.

Proverbs on the dangers of words: 10:19; 14:23.

Life Questions Have you said anything recently that you wish you could unsay? What are the most life-giving words you've spoken lately?

- 18The Lord is far from the wicked,
but he hears the prayer of the righteous.
- 19A cheerful look attracts him who hears the heart,
so who hears words that will die?
- 20Truth and discretion keep the eyes before the Lord,
and he will remove the desires of men.
- 21A man's heart is as a fountain,
so he will overflow with wisdom.
- 22A barren house makes the face cheerful,
but desire crushes the spirit.
- 23The discerning heart seeks knowledge,
but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly.
- 24The oppressed are writhed,
but the heart has a continual feast.
- 25The fear of the Lord
will remove wrath with turmoil.
- 26Where there are vegetables where there is love,
there will be peace and without hatred.
- 27An angry man stirs up dissension,
but a patient man calms a quarrel.
- 28The arrogant shagard is blocked with
fools,
but the mouth of the upright is a highway.
- 29A wise son brings joy to his father,
but a foolish man despises his mother.
- 30A man who lacks judgment,
his lack of understanding keeps a straight
course.
- 31Lack of counsel
will ruin many advisers they succeed.
- 32A man finds joy in giving an apt reply—
and how good is a timely word!
- 33The Lord's path leads upward for the wise,
but he keeps the man going down to the grave.^a
- 34The Lord tears down the proud man's house,
but he keeps the widow's boundaries intact.
- 35The Lord detests the thoughts of the wicked,
but those of the pure are pleasing to him.
- 36A greedy man brings trouble to his family,
but he who hates bribes will live.
- 37The heart of the righteous weighs its answers,

- but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil.
- 38The Lord is far from the wicked
but he hears the prayer of the righteous.
- 39A cheerful look brings joy to the heart,
and good news gives health to the bones.
- 40He who listens to a life giving rebuke
will be at home among the wise.
- 41He who ignores discipline despises himself,
but whoever heeds correction gains
understanding.
- 42The fear of the Lord teaches a man wisdom,^c
and humility comes before honor.
- 16 To man belong the plans of the heart,
but from the Lord comes the reply of the
tongue.
- 1A man's ways seem innocent to him,
but motives are weighed by the Lord.
- 2Commit to the Lord whatever you do,
and your plans will succeed.
- 3The Lord works out everything for his own
ends—
even the wicked for a day of disaster.
- 4The Lord detests all the proud of heart.
Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.
- 5Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for;
through the fear of the Lord a man avoids
evil.
- 6When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord,
he makes even his enemies live at peace with
him.
- 7Better a little with righteousness
than much gain with injustice.
- 8In his heart a man plans his course,
but the Lord determines his steps.
- 9The lips of a king speak as an oracle,
and his mouth should not betray justice.
- 10Honest scales and balances are from the Lord;
all the weights in the bag are of his making.
- 11Kings detest wrongdoing,
for a throne is established through
righteousness.
- 12Kings take pleasure in honest lips;
they value a man who speaks the truth.
- 13A king's wrath is a messenger of death,
but a wise man will appease it.
- 14When a king's face brightens, it means life;
his favor is like a rain cloud in spring.
- 15How much better to get wisdom than gold,
to choose understanding rather than silver!
- 16The highway of the upright avoids evil;
he who guards his way guards his life.
- 17Pride goes before destruction,
a haughty spirit before a fall.

15:25 Who Cares About the Poor?

In Old Testament society the most helpless person was the widow. With no one to protect her, she could only watch as her late husband's land was grabbed by wicked neighbors. But a widow was never completely helpless. The Lord was on her side. In the final analysis her condition was more secure than that of her proud, rich neighbor.

^a22 Hebrew: Son and Amman

^b24 Hebrew: Shool

^c33 Or: Wisdom teaches the fear of the Lord

- ¹⁹Better to be lowly in spirit and among the oppressed
than to share plunder with the proud
- ²⁰Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers,
and blessed is he who trusts in the LORD
- ²¹The wise in heart are called discerning,
and pleasant words promote instruction.^a
- ²²Understanding is a fountain of life to those
who have it,
but folly brings punishment to fools
- ²³A wise man's heart guides his mouth,
and his lips promote instruction.^b
- ²⁴Pleasant words are a honeycomb,
sweet to the soul and healing to the bones
- ²⁵There is a way that seems right to a man,
but in the end it leads to death.
- ²⁶The laborer's appetite works for him;
his hunger drives him on.
- ²⁷A scoundrel plots evil,
and his speech is like a scorching fire.
- ²⁸A perverse man stirs up dissension,
and a gossip separates close friends.
- ²⁹A violent man entices his neighbor
and leads him down a path that is not good.
- ³⁰He who winks with his eye is plotting
perversity;
he who purses his lips is bent on evil.
- ³¹Gray hair is a crown of splendor;
it is attained by a righteous life.
- ³²Better a patient man than a warrior,
a man who controls his temper than one
who takes a city.

- ³³The lot is cast into the lap,
but its every decision is from the LORD
- 17** Better a dry crust with peace and quiet
than a house full of feasting,^c with strife.
- ²A wise servant will rule over a disgraceful son,
and will share the inheritance as one of the
brothers.
- ³The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold,
but the LORD tests the heart.
- ⁴A wicked man listens to evil lips;
a liar pays attention to a malicious tongue.
- ⁵He who mocks the poor shows contempt for
their Maker;
whoever gloats over disaster will not go
unpunished.
- ⁶Children's children are a crown to the aged,
and parents are the pride of their children.
- ⁷Arrogant^d lips are unsuited to a fool—
how much worse lying lips to a ruler!
- ⁸A bribe is a charm to the one who gives it;
wherever he turns, he succeeds.
- ⁹He who covers over an offense promotes love,
but whoever repeats the matter separates
close friends.
- ¹⁰A rebuke impresses a man of discernment

17:8 Bribery Works Wonders!

Proverbs is utterly realistic about the hard facts of life. One is that bribery works. A complete education ought to include that fact! But does that make bribery right? No—just a few verses later (verse 23), Proverbs condemns bribery.

^a21 Or words make a man persuasive

^b23 Or mouth / and makes his lips persuasive

^c3 Hebrew sacrifices

^d7 Or Eloquent

INSIGHT

How to Raise Children

Family members should be allies, not adversaries

Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it. 22:6

“Spare the rod and spoil the child” may be the most famous of the Bible’s proverbs. Proverbs calls punishment a form of love and says that parents who won’t discipline their children are in danger of ruining them (29:15). But that much-quoted maxim is only a small part of what Proverbs has to offer on the subject of bringing up children.

The overwhelming emphasis of Proverbs is on verbal encouragement and teaching. The whole book is framed as a father’s words to his son, teaching him those “facts of life” that have nothing to do with biology. Again and again he pleads, “Listen, my son.” Mother has equally important words (1:8; 6:20). The parent-child conversation is a warm one, and Proverbs 17:6 bears out what the whole book implies: parents and children are not meant to be adversaries, but allies in life who are proud of each other.

Proverbs on parent-child relationships: 3:11,12; 10:1,5; 13:1,24; 14:26; 15:20; 17:6,21; 19:18,26,27; 20:20; 22:6,15; 23:13-16,22-25; 27:11; 29:15,17; 31:28.

Life Questions: What is more effective in raising children: punishment and discipline, or verbal instruction and encouragement?

~~SECRET~~ ~~RESTRICTED~~ ~~RESTRICTED~~ ~~RESTRICTED~~

1-43 and 1-44 are both sets of drawings.
A separate office will be sent separate mail.

RECEIVED AT THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
JAN 2 1961

[illegible]

1. Starting & Stopping of the Machine & Load
 2. How to Load the Machine & Adjust the Machine

~~and hereby certify that the within and foregoing are~~

22 JUL 1964 1200Z

10. "I would not be included in the future in a trial, unless the fact the defense is not available."

THE FIRST STEP IS TO
GET A LIST OF ALL THE

20. **प्राप्त करतारक या संप्रदायवादी आचार्य विचारक 10**

THE DATE IS INDICATED IN THE ENCLOSURE

ALL THE POWER & PLANT CODES ARE
IN THE POWER & PLANT CODE BOOKS

24. HET IS VERVEN NED. DUS DO JORDAN
 10. STAGE INDEE 4. DEELT ALS NED.
 10. 10. 10.

THE NAME IS THE SAME AS THE ONE WHICH WAS
GIVEN TO THE CITY OF THE SAME NAME IN THE
PAST

THE CHINESE WAY TO GOOD MEDICINE
BY A CHINESE EXPERT IN THE SUBJECT

[illegible]

25. Assuming that certain material is new
but a fact: that material is the basis of the

1. The first of these is the fact that the
the government is not a party to the dispute.

התורה והנבואה
התורה והנבואה

1. The first part of the text discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions, including sales, purchases, and expenses. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for determining the correct amount of tax liability.

1. 凡在本行开立存款账户的企事业单位及其他组织，均可申请取得本行的支票。

18

המחברת מודה כי היא לא יודעת
האם זהו תרגום או לא.

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
AND THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

THE MATTER IS A MATTER OF FACT AND NOT A MATTER OF LAW
AND THE COURT IS NOT A JURY
AND

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered. This involves understanding the context and the specific requirements of the task.

[illegible]

WIRE WITH 5 PAIR 12 AWG W/UT
5 PAIR 12 AWG W/UT

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

The weather of the night is then described as:
 "The weather is as follows: it is a
 very fine night."

There is a great deal of pride in the heart of a man.

THE NEW ANSWERS BEFORE LISTENING
THE NEW ANSWERS BEFORE LISTENING

4. "I AM A SILENT WITNESS OF IT ALL, BUT I AM NOT A SILENT WITNESS OF IT ALL."

INSIGHT

Five Dangerous Responses

Inner attitudes can destroy you

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 84

Control your temper! Read Proverbs

See Proverbs 3:34 11:2, 13:10

[illegible]

1925 1926 1927 1928 1929 1930 1931 1932 1933 1934 1935 1936 1937 1938 1939 1940 1941 1942 1943 1944 1945 1946 1947 1948 1949 1950 1951 1952 1953 1954 1955 1956 1957 1958 1959 1960 1961 1962 1963 1964 1965 1966 1967 1968 1969 1970 1971 1972 1973 1974 1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025 2026 2027 2028 2029 2030 2031 2032 2033 2034 2035 2036 2037 2038 2039 2040 2041 2042 2043 2044 2045 2046 2047 2048 2049 2050 2051 2052 2053 2054 2055 2056 2057 2058 2059 2060 2061 2062 2063 2064 2065 2066 2067 2068 2069 2070 2071 2072 2073 2074 2075 2076 2077 2078 2079 2080 2081 2082 2083 2084 2085 2086 2087 2088 2089 2090 2091 2092 2093 2094 2095 2096 2097 2098 2099 2100 2101 2102 2103 2104 2105 2106 2107 2108 2109 2110 2111 2112 2113 2114 2115 2116 2117 2118 2119 2120 2121 2122 2123 2124 2125 2126 2127 2128 2129 2130 2131 2132 2133 2134 2135 2136 2137 2138 2139 2140 2141 2142 2143 2144 2145 2146 2147 2148 2149 2150 2151 2152 2153 2154 2155 2156 2157 2158 2159 2160 2161 2162 2163 2164 2165 2166 2167 2168 2169 2170 2171 2172 2173 2174 2175 2176 2177 2178 2179 2180 2181 2182 2183 2184 2185 2186 2187 2188 2189 2190 2191 2192 2193 2194 2195 2196 2197 2198 2199 2200 2201 2202 2203 2204 2205 2206 2207 2208 2209 2210 2211 2212 2213 2214 2215 2216 2217 2218 2219 2220 2221 2222 2223 2224 2225 2226 2227 2228 2229 2230 2231 2232 2233 2234 2235 2236 2237 2238 2239 2240 2241 2242 2243 2244 2245 2246 2247 2248 2249 2250 2251 2252 2253 2254 2255 2256 2257 2258 2259 2260 2261 2262 2263 2264 2265 2266 2267 2268 2269 2270 2271 2272 2273 2274 2275 2276 2277 2278 2279 2280 2281 2282 2283 2284 2285 2286 2287 2288 2289 2290 2291 2292 2293 2294 2295 2296 2297 2298 2299 2300 2301 2302 2303 2304 2305 2306 2307 2308 2309 2310 2311 2312 2313 2314 2315 2316 2317 2318 2319 2320 2321 2322 2323 2324 2325 2326 2327 2328 2329 2330 2331 2332 2333 2334 2335 2336 2337 2338 2339 2340 2341 2342 2343 2344 2345 2346 2347 2348 2349 2350 2351 2352 2353 2354 2355 2356 2357 2358 2359 2360 2361 2362 2363 2364 2365 2366 2367 2368 2369 2370 2371 2372 2373 2374 2375 2376 2377 2378 2379 2380 2381 2382 2383 2384 2385 2386 2387 2388 2389 2390 2391 2392 2393 2394 2395 2396 2397 2398 2399 2400 2401 2402 2403 2404 2405 2406 2407 2408 2409 2410 2411 2412 2413 2414 2415 2416 2417 2418 2419 2420 2421 2422 2423 2424 2425 2426 2427 2428 2429 2430 2431 2432 2433 2434 2435 2436 2437 2438 2439 2440 2441 2442 2443 2444 2445 2446 2447 2448 2449 2450 2451 2452 2453 2454 2455 2456 2457 2458 2459 2460 2461 2462 2463 2464 2465 2466 2467 2468 2469 2470 2471 2472 2473 2474 2475 2476 2477 2478 2479 2480 2481 2482 2483 2484 2485 2486 2487 2488 2489 2490 2491 2492 2493 2494 2495 2496 2497 2498 2499 2500 2501 2502 2503 2504 2505 2506 2507 2508 2509 2510 2511 2512 2513 2514 2515 2516 2517 2518 2519 2520 2521 2522 2523 2524 2525 2526 2527 2528 2529 2530 2531 2532 2533 2534 2535 2536 2537 2538 2539 2540 2541 2542 2543 2544 2545 2546 2547 2548 2549 2550 2551 2552 2553 2554 2555 2556 2557 2558 2559 2560 2561 2562 2563 2564 2565 2566 2567 2568 2569 2570 2571 2572 2573 2574 2575 2576 2577 2578 2579 2580 2581 2582 2583 2584 2585 2586 2587 2588 2589 2590 2591 2592 2593 2594 2595 2596 2597 2598 2599 2600 2601 2602 2603 2604 2605 2606 2607 2608 2609 2610 2611 2612 2613 2614 2615 2616 2617 2618 2619 2620 2621 2622 2623 2624 2625 2626 2627 2628 2629 2630 2631 2632 2633 2634 2635 2636 2637 2638 2639 2640 2641 2642 2643 2644 2645 2646 2647 2648 2649 2650 2651 2652 2653 2654 2655 2656 2657 2658 2659 2660 2661 2662 2663 2664 2665 2666 2667 2668 2669 2670 2671 2672 2673 2674 2675 2676 2677 2678 2679 2680 2681 2682 2683 2684 2685 2686 2687 2688 2689 2690 2691 2692 2693 2694 2695 2696 2697 2698 2699 2700 2701 2702 2703 2704 2705 2706 2707 2708 2709 2710 2711 2712 2713 2714 2715 2716 2717 2718 2719 2720 2721 2722 2723 2724 2725 2726 2727 2728 2729 2730 2731 2732 2733 2734 2735 2736 2737 2738 2739 2740 2741 2742 2743

Read Proverbs 16 2;

1. The first group of people who are not allowed to enter the country are those who are not citizens of the United States.

- 17The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge;
the ears of the wise seek it out.
- 18A gift opens the way for the giver
and ushers him into the presence of the great.
- 19The first to present his case seems right,
till another comes forward and questions him.
- 20Casting the lot settles disputes
and keeps strong opponents apart.
- 21An offended brother is more unyielding than a fortified city,
and disputes are like the barred gates of a citadel.
- 22From the fruit of his mouth a man's stomach is filled,
with the harvest from his lips he is satisfied.
- 23The tongue has the power of life and death,
and those who love it will eat its fruit.
- 24He who finds a wife finds what is good
and receives favor from the LORD.
- 25A poor man pleads for mercy,
but a rich man answers harshly.
- 26A man of many companions may come to ruin,
but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.
- 19** Better a poor man whose walk is blameless
than a fool whose lips are perverse.
- 2It is not good to have zeal without knowledge,
nor to be hasty and miss the way.
- 3A man's own folly ruins his life,
yet his heart rages against the LORD.
- 4Wealth brings many friends,
but a poor man's friend deserts him.
- 5A false witness will not go unpunished,
and he who pours out lies will not go free.
- 6Many curry favor with a ruler,
and everyone is the friend of a man who gives gifts.
- 7A poor man is shunned by all his relatives—
how much more do his friends avoid him!

18:24 How to Be a Good Friend

The Old Testament puts great emphasis on close family relationships. Surprisingly, however, Proverbs rates a good friend even higher, for he or she "sticks closer than a brother." Fair-weather friends are common (14:20), and the wrong kind of companions will bring you trouble. But a true friend loves you at all times, even when things are bad.

Some key proverbs on being a good friend and neighbor can be found in the following passages: 3:27-28; 11:12; 12:26; 17:9,17; 18:24; 22:24-25; 25:20; 26:18-19; 27:6,9-10,14,17; 28:23; 29:5.

- Though he pursues them with pleading,
they are nowhere to be found.
- 8He who gets wisdom loves his own soul,
he who cherishes understanding prospers.
- 9A false witness will not go unpunished,
and he who pours out lies will perish.
- 10It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury—
how much worse for a slave to rule over princes!
- 11A man's wisdom gives him patience,
it is to his glory to overlook an offense.
- 12A king's rage is like the roar of a lion,
but his favor is like dew on the grass.
- 13A foolish son is his father's ruin,
and a quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping.
- 14Houses and wealth are inherited from parents,
but a prudent wife is from the LORD.
- 15Laziness brings on deep sleep,
and the shiftless man goes hungry.
- 16He who obeys instructions guards his life,
but he who is contemptuous of his ways will die.
- 17He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD,
and he will reward him for what he has done.
- 18Discipline your son, for in that there is hope;
do not be a willing party to his death.
- 19A hot-tempered man must pay the penalty;
if you rescue him, you will have to do it again.
- 20Listen to advice and accept instruction,
and in the end you will be wise.
- 21Many are the plans in a man's heart,
but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.
- 22What a man desires is unfailing love;
better to be poor than a liar.
- 23The fear of the LORD leads to life:
Then one rests content, untouched by trouble.
- 24The sluggard buries his hand in the dish;
he will not even bring it back to his mouth!
- 25Flog a mocker, and the simple will learn prudence;
rebuke a discerning man, and he will gain knowledge.

19:25 Can the Simple Learn?

"The simple"—those who live without thinking—are rarely convinced to change, because they don't listen. One lesson may get through to them, though: seeing one of their "leading friends" punished.

*7 The meaning of the Hebrew for this sentence is uncertain.

*22 Or A man's greed is his shame.

24 ~~He~~ who robs his father and drives out his mother
is a son who brings shame and disgrace

25 ~~Not~~ listening to instruction, my son,
and you will stray from the words of
knowledge

26 A corrupt witness mocks at justice,
and the mouth of the wicked gulps down
evil

27 Penalties are prepared for mockers,
and beatings for the backs of fools

20 Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler;
whoever is led astray by them is not wise.

21 A king's wrath is like the roar of a lion;
he who angers him forfeits his life.

22 It is to a man's honor to avoid strife,
but every fool is quick to quarrel

23 A sluggard does not plow in season;
so at harvest time he looks but finds
nothing

24 The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters,
but a man of understanding draws them out.

25 Many a man claims to have unfailing love,
but a faithful man who can find?

26 The righteous man leads a blameless life;
blessed are his children after him.

27 When a king sits on his throne to judge,
he winnows out all evil with his eyes.

28 Who can say, "I have kept my heart pure;
I am clean and without sin"?

29 Differing weights and differing measures—
the LORD detests them both.

30 Even a child is known by his actions,
by whether his conduct is pure and right.

31 Ears that hear and eyes that see—
the LORD has made them both.

32 Do not love sleep or you will grow poor;
stay awake and you will have food to spare.

33 "It's no good, it's no good!" says the buyer;
then off he goes and boasts about his
purchase.

34 Gold there is, and rubies in abundance,
but lips that speak knowledge are a rare
jewel

35 Take the garment of one who puts up security
for a stranger;
hold it in pledge if he does it for a wayward
woman

36 Food gained by fraud tastes sweet to a man,
but he ends up with a mouth full of gravel.

37 Make plans by seeking advice;
if you wage war, obtain guidance.

38 A gossip betrays a confidence;
so avoid a man who talks too much

20 If a man curses his father or mother,
his lamp will be snuffed out in pitch
darkness.

21 An inheritance quickly gained at the beginning
will not be blessed at the end

22 Do not say, "I'll pay you back for this wrong!"
Wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you.

23 The LORD detests differing weights,
and dishonest scales do not please him.

24 A man's steps are directed by the LORD.
How then can anyone understand his own
way?

25 It is a trap for a man to dedicate something
rashly
and only later to consider his vows.

26 A wise king winnows out the wicked;
he drives the threshing wheel over them.

27 The lamp of the LORD searches the spirit of a
man^a;
it searches out his inmost being.

28 Love and faithfulness keep a king safe;
through love his throne is made secure.

29 The glory of young men is their strength,
gray hair the splendor of the old.

30 Blows and wounds cleanse away evil,
and beatings purge the inmost being.

21 The king's heart is in the hand of the
LORD;
he directs it like a watercourse wherever he
pleases.

2 All a man's ways seem right to him,
but the LORD weighs the heart.

3 To do what is right and just
is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

4 Haughty eyes and a proud heart,
the lamp of the wicked, are sin!

5 The plans of the diligent lead to profit
as surely as haste leads to poverty.

6 A fortune made by a lying tongue
is a fleeting vapor and a deadly snare.^b

7 The violence of the wicked will drag them
away,
for they refuse to do what is right.

8 The way of the guilty is devious,
but the conduct of the innocent is upright.

9 Better to live on a corner of the roof
than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.

10 The wicked man craves evil;
his neighbor gets no mercy from him.

11 When a mocker is punished, the simple gain
wisdom,
when a wise man is instructed, he gets
knowledge.

^a27. On The spirit of man is the LORD's lamp
for those who walk in truth.

^b6. Some Hebrew manuscripts Septuagint and Vulgate most Hebrew manuscripts vapor

- ¹²The Righteous One^a takes note of the house of the wicked and brings the wicked to ruin.
- ¹³If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered.
- ¹⁴A gift given in secret soothes anger, and a bribe concealed in the cloak pacifies great wrath.
- ¹⁵When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers.
- ¹⁶A man who strays from the path of understanding comes to rest in the company of the dead.
- ¹⁷He who loves pleasure will become poor; whoever loves wine and oil will never be rich.
- ¹⁸The wicked become a ransom for the righteous, and the unfaithful for the upright.
- ¹⁹Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife.
- ²⁰In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil, but a foolish man devours all he has.
- ²¹He who pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity^b and honor.
- ²²A wise man attacks the city of the mighty and pulls down the stronghold in which they trust.
- ²³He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity.

^a12 Or The righteous man^b21 Or righteousness^c28 Or but the words of an obedient man will live on

- ²⁴The proud and arrogant man—"Mocker"^c is his name, he behaves with overbearing pride.
- ²⁵The sluggard's craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work.
- ²⁶All day long he craves for more, but the righteous give without sparing.
- ²⁷The sacrifice of the wicked is detestable—how much more so when brought with evil intent!
- ²⁸A false witness will perish, and whoever listens to him will be destroyed forever.^c
- ²⁹A wicked man puts up a bold front, but an upright man gives thought to his ways.
- ³⁰There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the LORD.
- ³¹The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the LORD.

22 A good name is more desirable than great riches,
to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.

- ¹Rich and poor have this in common: The LORD is the Maker of them all.
- ²A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.
- ³Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life.
- ⁴In the paths of the wicked lie thorns and snares.

INSIGHT

The Problem with Laziness *Becoming a sluggard requires little effort*

A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—and poverty will come on you like a bandit. 24:33

The "sluggard" is a very lazy person. His only exercise is turning on his bed. Proverbs says he is hinged to it. Any far-fetched excuse—"there is a lion in the streets!"—will keep him from going to work. Proverbs laughs at the sluggard a little, but uses him to teach serious lessons. You can be like him very easily, for it doesn't require much: "a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest." Putting things off, making excuses, sleeping in: who doesn't sometimes fall victim to these tendencies?

The result of such a life? Poverty, frustration, broken relationships. The sluggard still wants the luxuries hard work earns, but he never gets them. "The sluggard's craving will be the death of him" (21:25).

Proverbs on laziness: 6:6-11; 10:4,26; 12:24,27; 13:4; 15:19; 19:15,24; 20:4; 21:25; 22:13; 24:30-34; 26:13-16.

Life Questions. What attributes of a sluggard do you recognize in yourself? Do you think of these as serious?

But he who guards his soul stays far from them.

¹Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.

²The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.

³He who sows wickedness reaps trouble, and the rod of his fury will be destroyed.

⁴A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.

⁵Drive out the mocker, and out goes strife; quarrels and insults are ended.

⁶He who loves a pure heart and whose speech is gracious will have the king for his friend.

⁷The eyes of the Lord keep watch over knowledge, but he frustrates the words of the unfaithful.

⁸The king says, "There is a lion outside!" or "He will be murdered in the streets!"

⁹The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit; he who falls under the Lord's wrath will fall into it.

¹⁰Truth is wound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.

¹¹He who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth,

and he who gives gifts to the rich—both come to poverty.

Sayings of the Wise

¹²Pay attention and listen to the sayings of the wise,

apply your heart to what I teach,

¹³for it is pleasing when you keep them in your heart,

and have all of them ready on your lips.

¹⁴So that your trust may be in the Lord, I teach you today, even you.

¹⁵Have I not written thirty^a sayings for you,

sayings of counsel and knowledge,

¹⁶teaching you true and reliable words so that you can give sound answers to him who sent you?

¹⁷Do not exploit the poor because they are poor, and do not crush the needy in court,

¹⁸for the Lord will take up their case and will plunder those who plunder them.

¹⁹Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered,

²⁰for you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared.

²¹Do not be a man who strikes hands in pledge or puts up security for debts;

²²if you lack the means to pay, your very bed will be snatched from under you.

²³Do not move an ancient boundary stone set up by your forefathers.

²⁴Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings; he will not serve before obscure men.

23 When you sit to dine with a ruler,

note well what is before you, and put a knife to your throat

if you are given to gluttony.

³Do not crave his delicacies, for that food is deceptive.

⁴Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint.

⁵Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.

⁶Do not eat the food of a stingy man, do not crave his delicacies;

⁷for he is the kind of man who is always thinking about the cost.⁴ "Eat and drink," he says to you, but his heart is not with you.

⁸You will vomit up the little you have eaten and will have wasted your compliments.

⁹Do not speak to a fool, for he will scorn the wisdom of your words.

¹⁰Do not move an ancient boundary stone or encroach on the fields of the fatherless,

¹¹for their Defender is strong; he will take up their case against you.

¹²Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge.

¹³Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die.

¹⁴Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death.⁵

¹⁵My son, if your heart is wise, then my heart will be glad,

¹⁶my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak what is right.

22:6 Can Good Parents Produce Bad Children?

An individual proverb shouldn't be read as either an invariable rule or a binding promise from God. Proverbs 10:4 generalizes truthfully, "diligent hands bring wealth," but you would not have to look too far to find an exception to the rule. Verse 6, a famous proverb, reinforces the importance of early training in forming a person's lifelong character. But you can find individuals who, though well brought up, choose to reject their training. Proverbs studies life the way it normally works. The general rule is this: good parents raise good children.

^a Or Seventy ^b Or not formerly written, or not written excellent for as he puts on a feast, so he is ^c Hebrew Shewl

^d Or who ^e Or for as he thinks within himself, / so he is; or

17 Do not let your heart envy sinners,
but always be zealous for the fear of the
Lord.

18 There is surely a future hope for you,
and your hope will not be cut off.

19 Listen, my son, and be wise,
and keep your heart on the right path.
20 Do not join those who drink too much wine
or gorge themselves on meat,

21 for drunkards and gluttons become poor,
and drowsiness clothes them in rags.

22 Listen to your father, who gave you life,
and do not despise your mother when she is
old.

23 Buy the truth and do not sell it,
get wisdom, discipline and understanding.

24 The father of a righteous man has great joy,
he who has a wise son delights in him.

25 May your father and mother be glad,
may she who gave you birth rejoice!

26 My son, give me your heart
and let your eyes keep to my ways,

27 for a prostitute is a deep pit
and a wayward wife is a narrow well.

28 Like a bandit she lies in wait,
and multiplies the unfaithful among men.

29 Who has woe? Who has sorrow?
Who has strife? Who has complaints?
Who has needless bruises? Who has
bloodshot eyes?

30 Those who linger over wine,
who go to sample bowls of mixed wine—

31 Do not gaze at wine when it is red,
when it sparkles in the cup,
when it goes down smoothly!

32 In the end it bites like a snake

and prowls like a viper.

33 Your eyes will see strange sights,
and your mind imagine confounding things.

34 You will be like one sleeping on the high,
lying on top of the rooftops.

35 They hit me, you will say, "but I in my turn
they beat me, but I don't feel it!"

When will I wake up
so I can find another drink?"

24 Do not envy wicked men,
do not desire their company,

2 for their hearts plot violence,
and their lips talk about making trouble.

3 By wisdom a house is built
and through understanding it is established,
4 through knowledge its rooms are filled
with rare and beautiful treasures.

5 A wise man has great power,
and a man of knowledge increases strength,
6 for waging war you need guidance,
and for victory many advisers.

7 Wisdom is too high for a fool,
in the assembly at the gate he has nothing to
say.

8 He who plots evil
will be known as a schemer.
9 The schemes of folly are sin.

23:35 The Dangers of Wine

Wine was common in biblical times, but its dangers were recognized. Proverbs contains some of the strongest warnings in the Bible against overindulgence: 20:1; 21:17; 23:20,21; 23:30-35; 31:4-7.

INSIGHT

The Supreme Gift of Wisdom

First, learn to listen

He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm. 13:20

Proverbs judges every thought or action by one standard: "Is this wise?" The word wisdom brings up pictures of gray-haired old men muttering obscure philosophic maxims. But that is almost the opposite of what Proverbs means by the word. Wisdom is above all practical and down to earth. Young people as well as old can and should have it. Wisdom teaches you how to live. It combines understanding with discipline—the kind of discipline an athlete needs in training. It also adds a healthy dose of good common sense—except that common sense isn't, and never has been, common.

How do you become a wise person? You must first begin to listen. Wisdom is freely available to those who will stop talking and start paying attention—to God and his Word, to parents, to wise counselors. Anybody can become wise, Proverbs says. Wisdom is not reserved for a brainy elite. But becoming wise requires self-discipline to study and humbly seek wisdom at every opportunity.

Proverbs on becoming a wise person: 2:1-6; 9:1-10; 10:1,5,8,14,19,23; 11:2; 12:18; 13:10,20; 14:8; 15:7,31; 16:23; 17:24; 18:15; 19:11,20; 20:1; 21:11,20,30; 23:4; 29:3,8,11,15; 30:5,6.

Life Questions Think over the last two years of your life. To whom do you listen? Who has the greatest influence on you?

and men detest a mocker

¹⁰If you falter in times of trouble,
how small is your strength!

¹¹Rescue those being led away to death;
hold back those staggering toward slaughter.

¹²If you say, "But we know nothing about this,"
does not he who weighs the heart perceive
it?

Does not he who guards your life know it?
Will he not repay each person according to
what he has done?

¹³Fat honey, my son, for it is good,
honey from the comb is sweet to your taste.

¹⁴Know also that wisdom is sweet to your soul;
if you find it, there is a future hope for you,
and your hope will not be cut off

¹⁵Do not lie in wait like an outlaw against a
righteous man's house,
do not raid his dwelling place;
¹⁶for though a righteous man falls seven times,
he rises again,
but the wicked are brought down by
calamity

¹⁷Do not gloat when your enemy falls;
when he stumbles, do not let your heart
rejoice,

¹⁸for the LORD will see and disapprove
and turn his wrath away from him.

¹⁹Do not fret because of evil men
or be envious of the wicked,
²⁰for the evil man has no future hope,
and the lamp of the wicked will be snuffed
out.

²¹Fear the LORD and the king, my son,
and do not join with the rebellious,
²²for these two will send sudden destruction
upon them,
and who knows what calamities they can
bring?

Further Sayings of the Wise

²³These also are sayings of the wise:

To show partiality in judging is not good:

²⁴Whoever says to the guilty, "You are
innocent"—
peoples will curse him and nations denounce
him.

²⁵But it will go well with those who convict the
guilty,
and rich blessing will come upon them.

²⁶An honest answer
is like a kiss on the lips.

²⁷Finish your outdoor work
and get your fields ready;
after that, build your house.

²⁸Do not testify against your neighbor without
cause,

or use your lips to deceive

²⁹Do not say, "I'll do to him as he has done to
me,

I'll pay that man back for what he did."

³⁰I went past the field of the sluggard,
past the vineyard of the man who lacks
judgment,

³¹thorns had come up everywhere,
the ground was covered with weeds,
and the stone wall was in ruins.

³²I applied my heart to what I observed
and learned a lesson from what I saw:

³³A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest—

³⁴and poverty will come on you like a bandit
and scarcity like an armed man ^a

More Proverbs of Solomon

25 These are more proverbs of Solomon, cop-
ied by the men of Hezekiah king of Judah:

²It is the glory of God to conceal a matter;
to search out a matter is the glory of kings.

³As the heavens are high and the earth is deep,
so the hearts of kings are unsearchable.

⁴Remove the dross from the silver,
and out comes material for^b the silversmith;

⁵remove the wicked from the king's presence,
and his throne will be established through
righteousness.

⁶Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence,
and do not claim a place among great men;

⁷it is better for him to say to you, "Come up
here,"
than for him to humiliate you before a
nobleman.

What you have seen with your eyes

⁸ do not bring^c hastily to court,
for what will you do in the end
if your neighbor puts you to shame?

⁹If you argue your case with a neighbor,
do not betray another man's confidence,

¹⁰or he who hears it may shame you
and you will never lose your bad reputation.

¹¹A word aptly spoken

25:1 Good Government

Proverbs lists three kings in its credits: Solomon (1:1; 10:1), Hezekiah (25:1), and Lemuel (31:1). So, naturally, it shows concern for what makes good government. The qualities needed in a king still apply to governmental heads today. Proverbs doesn't mention political philosophy or administrative efficiency. Justice and fairness matter most.

Proverbs on good government include the following: 14:35; 16:10,12-13; 20:26; 22:11; 25:4-5; 29:4,14; 31:3-5.

^a34 Or like a vagrant / and scarcity like a beggar
not go

^b4 Or comes a vessel from

^c7,8 Or nobleman / on whom you had set your eyes. ¹8Do

is like apples of gold in settings of silver.
 12 Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold
 is a wise man's rebuke to a listening ear.

13 Like the coolness of snow at harvest time
 is a trustworthy messenger to those who
 send him,
 he refreshes the spirit of his masters.

14 Like clouds and wind without rain
 is a man who boasts of gifts he does not
 give

15 Through patience a ruler can be persuaded,
 and a gentle tongue can break a bone.

16 If you find honey, eat just enough—
 too much of it, and you will vomit.

17 Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house—
 too much of you, and he will hate you.

18 Like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow
 is the man who gives false testimony against
 his neighbor.

19 Like a bad tooth or a lame foot
 is reliance on the unfaithful in times of
 trouble.

20 Like one who takes away a garment on a cold
 day,
 or like vinegar poured on soda,
 is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.

21 If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat;
 if he is thirsty, give him water to drink.

22 In doing this, you will heap burning coals on
 his head,
 and the LORD will reward you.

23 As a north wind brings rain,
 so a sly tongue brings angry looks.

24 Better to live on a corner of the roof

than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.

25 Like cold water to a weary soul
 is good news from a distant land.

26 Like a muddied spring or a polluted well
 is a righteous man who gives way to the
 wicked.

27 It is not good to eat too much honey,
 nor is it honorable to seek one's own honor.

28 Like a city whose walls are broken down
 is a man who lacks self-control.

26 Like snow in summer or rain in harvest,
 honor is not fitting for a fool.

2 Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow,
 an undeserved curse does not come to rest.

3 A whip for the horse, a halter for the donkey,
 and a rod for the backs of fools!

4 Do not answer a fool according to his folly,
 or you will be like him yourself.

5 Answer a fool according to his folly,
 or he will be wise in his own eyes.

6 Like cutting off one's feet or drinking violence
 is the sending of a message by the hand of a
 fool.

7 Like a lame man's legs that hang limp
 is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.

8 Like tying a stone in a sling
 is the giving of honor to a fool.

9 Like a thornbush in a drunkard's hand
 is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.

10 Like an archer who wounds at random
 is he who hires a fool or any passer-by.

11 As a dog returns to its vomit,
 so a fool repeats his folly.

INSIGHT

The Making of a Fool

Even a genius can be one

As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly. 26:11

Fools, in modern English, are people who lack brains. But the word has a different meaning in the Bible. Fools may have high IQs. People may admire their reputation for success. Yet a wise person views them as a disaster.

One of the Bible's worst insults is "You fool!" People become fools by ignoring the wisdom God offers them, preferring to follow the crowd or their own conceited opinions. They may think themselves very clever, but their cleverness will land them in trouble.

Proverbs aims its sharpest warnings, not against acting immorally, but against becoming a fool. If you develop such a character, no set of rules can keep you out of trouble. A wise person ought to learn to recognize a fool from far away, and stay out of his or her path.

Poignant proverbs on foolishness: 1:7; 10:8; 12:15,16,23; 14:8,9,16,24; 15:14; 17:10,12,16; 18:2,6; 20:3; 26:3,11; 27:22; 28:26; 29:11.

Life Questions: Do you know anyone whom Proverbs would call a fool? If so, how should you relate to him or her?

- ¹²Do you see a man wise in his own eyes?
There is more hope for a fool than for him.
- ¹³The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the road,
a fierce lion roaming the streets!"
- ¹⁴As a door turns on its hinges,
so a sluggard turns on his bed.
- ¹⁵The sluggard buries his hand in the dish;
he is too lazy to bring it back to his mouth.
- ¹⁶The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes
than seven men who answer discreetly.
- ¹⁷Like one who seizes a dog by the ears
is a passer-by who meddles in a quarrel not
his own
- ¹⁸Like a madman shooting
firebrands or deadly arrows
- ¹⁹is a man who deceives his neighbor
and says, "I was only joking!"
- ²⁰Without wood a fire goes out;
without gossip a quarrel dies down.
- ²¹As charcoal to embers and as wood to fire,
so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife.
- ²²The words of a gossip are like choice morsels;
they go down to a man's inmost parts.
- ²³Like a coating of glaze^a over earthenware
are fervent lips with an evil heart.
- ²⁴A malicious man disguises himself with his
lips,
but in his heart he harbors deceit.
- ²⁵Though his speech is charming, do not believe
him,
for seven abominations fill his heart.
- ²⁶His malice may be concealed by deception,
but his wickedness will be exposed in the
assembly.
- ²⁷If a man digs a pit, he will fall into it;
if a man rolls a stone, it will roll back on him.
- ²⁸A lying tongue hates those it hurts,
and a flattering mouth works ruin.

27 Do not boast about tomorrow,
for you do not know what a day may bring
forth.

- ²Let another praise you, and not your own
mouth;
someone else, and not your own lips.
- ³Stone is heavy and sand a burden,

26:13 The Excuses of a Lazy Man

At first glance some proverbs, like this one, appear incomplete and pointless. But this proverb cleverly pinpoints a lazy man's habit of seeing dangerous obstacles to every plan and making incredible excuses. He will not go anywhere (on a road) or even get out of his house (into the streets) because his imagination conjures up all the things that could go wrong.

- but provocation by a fool is heavier than both.
- ⁴Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming,
but who can stand before jealousy?
- ⁵Better is open rebuke
than hidden love.
- ⁶Wounds from a friend can be trusted,
but an enemy multiplies blows.
- ⁷He who is full loathes honey,
but to the hungry even what is bitter tastes sweet.
- ⁸Like a bird that strays from its nest
is a man who strays from his home.
- ⁹Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart,
and the pleasantness of one's friend springs
from his earnest counsel.
- ¹⁰Do not forsake your friend and the friend of
your father,
and do not go to your brother's house when
disaster strikes you—
better a neighbor nearby than a brother far
away.
- ¹¹Be wise, my son, and bring joy to my heart;
then I can answer anyone who treats me
with contempt.
- ¹²The prudent see danger and take refuge,
but the simple keep going and suffer for it.
- ¹³Take the garment of one who puts up security
for a stranger;
hold it in pledge if he does it for a wayward
woman.
- ¹⁴If a man loudly blesses his neighbor early in
the morning,
it will be taken as a curse.
- ¹⁵A quarrelsome wife is like
a constant dripping on a rainy day;
- ¹⁶restraining her is like restraining the wind
or grasping oil with the hand.
- ¹⁷As iron sharpens iron,
so one man sharpens another.
- ¹⁸He who tends a fig tree will eat its fruit,
and he who looks after his master will be
honored.
- ¹⁹As water reflects a face,
so a man's heart reflects the man.
- ²⁰Death and Destruction^b are never satisfied,
and neither are the eyes of man.
- ²¹The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold,
but man is tested by the praise he receives.
- ²²Though you grind a fool in a mortar,
grinding him like grain with a pestle,
you will not remove his folly from him.
- ²³Be sure you know the condition of your flocks,
give careful attention to your herds;
- ²⁴for riches do not endure forever,
and a crown is not secure for all generations.

^a23 With a different word division of the Hebrew; Masoretic Text of silver dress

^b20 Hebrew Shol and Abaddon

24When the hay is removed and new growth appears
and the grass from the hills is gathered in,
25the lambs will provide you with clothing,
and the goats with the price of a field.
26You will have plenty of goats' milk
to feed you and your family
and to nourish your servant girls.

28 The wicked man flees though no one pursues
but the righteous are as bold as a lion.

29When a country is rebellious, it has many rulers
but a man of understanding and knowledge maintains order.

30A ruler who oppresses the poor
is like a driving rain that leaves no crops.

31Those who forsake the law praise the wicked,
but those who keep the law resist them.

32Evil men do not understand justice,
but those who seek the LORD understand it fully.

33Better a poor man whose walk is blameless
than a rich man whose ways are perverse.

34He who keeps the law is a discerning son,
but a companion of gluttons disgraces his father.

35He who increases his wealth by exorbitant interest
amasses it for another, who will be kind to the poor.

36If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law,
even his prayers are detestable.

37He who leads the upright along an evil path
will fall into his own trap,
but the blameless will receive a good inheritance.

38A rich man may be wise in his own eyes,
but a poor man who has discernment sees through him.

39When the righteous triumph, there is great elation,
but when the wicked rise to power, men go into hiding.

40He who conceals his sins does not prosper,
but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

41Blessed is the man who always fears the LORD,
but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble.

42Like a roaring lion or a charging bear
is a wicked man ruling over a helpless people.

43A tyrannical ruler lacks judgment,
but he who hates ill-gotten gain will enjoy a long life.

44A man tormented by the guilt of murder

will be a fugitive till death;
let no one support him.

45He whose walk is blameless is kept safe,
but he whose ways are perverse will suddenly fall.

46He who works his land will have abundant food,
but the one who chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty.

47A faithful man will be richly blessed,
but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished.

48To show partiality is not good—
yet a man will do wrong for a piece of bread.

49A stingy man is eager to get rich
and is unaware that poverty awaits him.

50He who rebukes a man will in the end gain more favor
than he who has a flattering tongue.

51He who robs his father or mother
and says, "It's not wrong"—
he is partner to him who destroys.

52A greedy man stirs up dissension,
but he who trusts in the LORD will prosper.

53He who trusts in himself is a fool,
but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe.

54He who gives to the poor will lack nothing,
but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses.

55When the wicked rise to power, people go into hiding;
but when the wicked perish, the righteous thrive.

29 A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes
will suddenly be destroyed—without remedy.

2When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice;
when the wicked rule, the people groan.

3A man who loves wisdom brings joy to his father,
but a companion of prostitutes squanders his wealth.

4By justice a king gives a country stability,
but one who is greedy for bribes tears it down.

5Whoever flatters his neighbor
is spreading a net for his feet.

6An evil man is snared by his own sin,
but a righteous one can sing and be glad.

7The righteous care about justice for the poor,
but the wicked have no such concern.

8Mockers stir up a city,
but wise men turn away anger.

9If a wise man goes to court with a fool,

the fool rages and scoffs, and there is no peace.

⁹Bloodthirsty men hate a man of integrity and seek to kill the upright

¹⁰A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control

¹¹If a ruler listens to lies, all his officials become wicked

¹²The poor man and the oppressor have this in common:

The LORD gives sight to the eyes of both.

¹³If a king judges the poor with fairness, his throne will always be secure

¹⁴The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother.

¹⁵When the wicked thrive, so does sin, but the righteous will see their downfall

¹⁶Discipline your son, and he will give you peace, he will bring delight to your soul.

¹⁷Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law.

¹⁸A servant cannot be corrected by mere words, though he understands, he will not respond

¹⁹Do you see a man who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

²⁰If a man pampers his servant from youth, he will bring grief in the end.

²¹An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered one commits many sins.

²²A man's pride brings him low,

but a man of lowly spirit gains honor

²³The accomplice of a thief is his own enemy; he is put under oath and dare not testify

²⁴Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe

²⁵Many seek an audience with a ruler, but it is from the LORD that man gets justice.

²⁶The righteous detest the dishonest, the wicked detest the upright

Sayings of Agur

30 The sayings of Agur son of Jakeh—an oracle^b:

This man declared to Ithiel,
to Ithiel and to Ucal:^c

¹"I am the most ignorant of men;
I do not have a man's understanding.

²I have not learned wisdom,
nor have I knowledge of the Holy One

³Who has gone up to heaven and come down?
Who has gathered up the wind in the hollow
of his hands?

Who has wrapped up the waters in his cloak?
Who has established all the ends of the
earth?

What is his name, and the name of his son?
Tell me if you know!

⁴"Every word of God is flawless;
he is a shield to those who take refuge in
him.

⁵Do not add to his words,
or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.

⁶"Two things I ask of you, O LORD;
do not refuse me before I die:

^a21 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain
division of the Hebrew declared, "I am weary, O God, I am weary, O God, and faint

^b1 Or Jakeh of Massa

^c1 Masoretic Text; with a different word

INSIGHT

A Matter of Life and Death

More than mere survival

There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death. 14:12

Proverbs frequently talks about life and death. Wise living, it says, tends to make you live longer, while foolish living will push you into an early grave.

If you take this observation at face value, you'll have a problem: plenty of people who live foolishly survive into old age. But Proverbs's concept of life and death includes much more than physical survival. By life, Proverbs means "real living" full of peace and joy and wisdom. By death, it means spiritual as well as physical decay. A person who misses the way of wisdom may be as good as dead, even though he is still walking around.

Proverbs on "real living": 3:18,21,22; 4:23; 8:34-36; 10:11,16; 12:28; 13:12; 14:27,30; 15:4,27; 18:21; 19:23; 21:21; 28:16.

Proverbs on "real dying": 2:16-18; 5:3-6,22,23; 10:21; 14:12,32; 15:10; 19:16; 21:25; 27:20.

Life Questions Can you remember a specific experience that represents, for you, "real living"? How about "real dying"?

- ⁸Keep falsehood and lies far from me,
give me neither poverty nor riches,
but give me only my daily bread
⁹Otherwise I may have too much and disown
you
and say, "Who is the Lord?"
Or I may become poor and steal,
and so dishonor the name of my God.
- ¹⁰Do not slander a servant to his master,
or he will curse you, and you will pay for it.
- ¹¹There are those who curse their fathers
and do not bless their mothers,
¹²those who are pure in their own eyes
and yet are not cleansed of their filth,
¹³those whose eyes are ever so haughty,
whose glances are so disdainful,
¹⁴those whose teeth are swords
and whose jaws are set with knives
to devour the poor from the earth,
the needy from among mankind
- ¹⁵The leech has two daughters
Give! Give! they cry
- "There are three things that are never satisfied,
four that never say, 'Enough':
⁶the grave,^a the barren womb,
land which is never satisfied with water,
and fire, which never says, 'Enough!'
- ¹⁷The eye that mocks a father,
that scorns obedience to a mother,
will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley,
will be eaten by the vultures.
- ¹⁸"There are three things that are too amazing
for me,
four that I do not understand:
¹⁹the way of an eagle in the sky,
the way of a snake on a rock,
the way of a ship on the high seas,
and the way of a man with a maiden.
- ²⁰"This is the way of an adulteress:
She eats and wipes her mouth
and says, 'I've done nothing wrong.'
- ²¹"Under three things the earth trembles,
under four it cannot bear up.
- ^{22a}a servant who becomes king,
a fool who is full of food,
^{23a}an unloved woman who is married,
and a maidservant who displaces her
mistress
- ²⁴"Four things on earth are small,
yet they are extremely wise:
²⁵Ants are creatures of little strength,
yet they store up their food in the summer;
²⁶coney^bs are creatures of little power,
yet they make their home in the crags;
²⁷locusts have no king,
yet they advance together in ranks;
^{28a}a lizard can be caught with the hand,
yet it is found in kings' palaces.

- ²⁹"There are three things that are stately in their
stride,
four that move with stately bearing:
^{30a}a lion, mighty among beasts,
who retreats before nothing;
^{31a}a strutting rooster, a he-goat,
and a king with his army around him.
- ³²"If you have played the fool and exalted
yourself,
or if you have planned evil,
clap your hand over your mouth!
- ³³For as churning the milk produces butter,
and as twisting the nose produces blood,
so stirring up anger produces strife "

Sayings of King Lemuel

31 The sayings of King Lemuel—an oracle^d his
mother taught him:

- ²"O my son, O son of my womb,
O son of my vows,"
³do not spend your strength on women,
your vigor on those who ruin kings.
- ⁴"It is not for kings, O Lemuel—
not for kings to drink wine,
not for rulers to crave beer,
⁵lest they drink and forget what the law
decrees,
and deprive all the oppressed of their rights.
- ⁶Give beer to those who are perishing,
wine to those who are in anguish;
⁷let them drink and forget their poverty
and remember their misery no more.
- ⁸"Speak up for those who cannot speak for
themselves,
for the rights of all who are destitute.
- ⁹Speak up and judge fairly;
defend the rights of the poor and needy."

Epilogue: The Wife of Noble Character

- ¹⁰A wife of noble character who can find?
She is worth far more than rubies.
- ¹¹Her husband has full confidence in her
and lacks nothing of value.
- ¹²She brings him good, not harm,
all the days of her life.
- ¹³She selects wool and flax
and works with eager hands.
- ¹⁴She is like the merchant ships,
bringing her food from afar.
- ¹⁵She gets up while it is still dark;
she provides food for her family
and portions for her servant girls.
- ¹⁶She considers a field and buys it;
out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.
- ¹⁷She sets about her work vigorously,
her arms are strong for her tasks.
- ¹⁸She sees that her trading is profitable,
and her lamp does not go out at night.
- ¹⁹In her hand she holds the distaff

^a16 Hebrew Sheol

^b26 That is, the hyrax or rock badger

which ^c2 Or: the answer to my prayers

^d10 Verses 10-31 are an acrostic, each verse beginning with a successive letter of the

Hebrew alphabet

^e1 Or of Lemuel king of Massah

[illegible]

ECCLESIASTES

INTRODUCTION

When Life Seems Senseless

A book for our time

Meaningless! Meaningless! says the Teacher. *"Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless!"* (1:2)

In this world there are only two tragedies," said Oscar Wilde. "One is not getting what one wants—and the other is getting it." This paradoxical proverb has often proved true.

World's Richest Man

Many poor people think that if they only had more money they would be happy. Howard Hughes was the world's richest man when he was only forty-five years old. Twenty years later, at sixty-five, he still had all his money but was probably the world's most miserable man. He had retreated from society, living in small dark rooms in hotels, keeping all the sun out. He was dirty; his beard grew down to his waist and his hair fell down his back. His fingernails were two inches long. His huge body had shrunk to nothing.

A Rich King

There once was another very, very rich man who found that riches did not satisfy. His name was Solomon. He wrote a book about it called Ecclesiastes. This rich king had tasted just about everything life could offer. Wealth? No one could exceed him in luxury (2:4-9). Wisdom? The whole world knew how wise he was (1:13-18). Fame? He was king, the most famous man of his time (1:12). Systematically he sampled all of life's pleasures and powers, yet all ultimately disappointed him. All proved meaningless.

What is the point of life? he asked. You work hard, and someone else gets all the credit. You struggle to be good, and evil people take advantage of you. You accumulate money, and it just goes to spoiled children. You seek pleasure, and it turns sour on you. And everyone—rich or poor, good or evil, meets the same end. We all die. There is only one word to describe this life: meaningless.

Life Under the Sun

Ecclesiastes strikes a responsive chord in our age. No century has seen such progress, and yet such despair. What is the purpose of life anyway? Is there any ultimate meaning? "Is that all there is?" asked one songwriter after listing life's pleasures.

A key phrase in this book, "under the sun," describes the world lived on one level, apart from God and without any belief in the afterlife. If you live on that level, you may well conclude that life is meaningless.

Ecclesiastes gives some words of hope, including the final summary: "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (12:13). That's the positive message, the "lesson" of Ecclesiastes. But such positive words are almost overwhelmed by the author's powerful negative example. You could summarize his whole life in Jesus' one statement, "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?" (Matthew 16:26).

How to Read Ecclesiastes

Ecclesiastes attracts extreme reactions. For several hundred years, Jewish scholars fiercely debated whether the book should even be included in the Old Testament. Yet novelist Thomas Wolfe said of it, "Ecclesiastes is the greatest single piece of writing I have ever known, and the wisdom expressed in it the most lasting and profound."

Because of the book's unique nature, it is important to keep certain principles in mind while

reading it. Consider Ecclesiastes as a whole. The Teacher was exploring various philosophies of life. During his search, he tried different approaches, including hedonism, the unrestrained pursuit of pleasure. The book honestly records the author's search without endorsing it.

At times the author concludes with despairing statements that directly contradict other parts of the Bible (for example, the recurring phrase, "Everything is meaningless"). Read such individual statements in their context. Just as the book of Job contains arguments that God directly relented later, so Ecclesiastes contains many isolated statements that contradict its final conclusion.

Ecclesiastes performs two very valuable functions. First, it should stimulate compassion for those who are trapped in despair and live in a meaningless world, alone, without God. The author brilliantly captures the futility and meaninglessness of that world, expressing a philosophy of life widespread in the 20th century.

But the book includes more than despair. It also blends in proverbs about how life should be lived, pungent observations that can be easily overlooked. Look for these nuggets of wisdom, especially toward the end of the book. (You may also find it helpful to balance out Ecclesiastes with the more confident advice of Proverbs.)

By asking questions, the author of Ecclesiastes helped prepare for the answers God ultimately provided. The Teacher concluded, "Everything is meaningless!" under the sun, but when Jesus Christ came he promised life "to the full" (John 10:10).

PLANS FOR READING ECCLESIASTES

PLAN 1: An Overview of Ecclesiastes in 1 Day

- ☐ Day 1 Read the Introduction to Ecclesiastes and then chapter 3, perhaps the most enduring portion of the book's poetry.

PLAN 2: All of Ecclesiastes in 12 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12

Everything Is Meaningless

1 The words of the Teacher,^a son of David, king in Jerusalem:

²"Meaningless! Meaningless!"
says the Teacher.

"Utterly meaningless!
Everything is meaningless."

³What does man gain from all his labor
at which he toils under the sun?

⁴Generations come and generations go,
but the earth remains forever

⁵The sun rises and the sun sets,
and hurries back to where it rises.

⁶The wind blows to the south
and turns to the north,
round and round it goes,

ever returning on its course.

⁷All streams flow into the sea,
yet the sea is never full.

To the place the streams come from,
there they return again.

⁸All things are wearisome,
more than one can say.

The eye never has enough of seeing,
nor the ear its fill of hearing.

⁹What has been will be again,
what has been done will be done again;
there is nothing new under the sun.

¹⁰Is there anything of which one can say,
"Look! This is something new"?

It was here already, long ago;
it was here before our time.

¹¹There is no remembrance of men of old,
and even those who are yet to come

^a1 Or leader of the assembly also in verses 2 and 12

will not be remembered
by those who follow

Wisdom Is Meaningless

3] the Teacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem. 4] devoted myself to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under heaven. What a heavy burden God has laid on men! 4] have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

15] What is twisted cannot be straightened,
what is lacking cannot be counted.

16] I thought to myself, "Look, I have grown and increased in wisdom more than anyone who has reigned over Jerusalem before me. I have experienced much of wisdom and knowledge." 17] Then I applied myself to the understanding of wisdom, and also of madness and folly, but I learned that this, too, is a chasing after the wind.

18] For with much wisdom comes much sorrow,
the more knowledge, the more grief.

Pleasures Are Meaningless

2] I thought in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good." But that also proved to be meaningless. 2] Laughter, I said, is foolish. And what does pleasure accomplish? 3] I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly—my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was worthwhile for men to do under heaven during the few days of their lives.

4] I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. 5] I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. 6] I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. 7] I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. 8] I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired men and women singers and a harem as well—the delights of the heart of man. 9] I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me.

10] I denied myself nothing my eyes desired;

I refused my heart no pleasure.

My heart took delight in all my work,
and thus was the reward for all my labor.

2:1 The World Outside the Palace

The first two chapters of Ecclesiastes tell of "the Teacher's" own experience of despair and meaninglessness. The life described in this autobiographical section resembles that of King Solomon. In the rest of the book, the Teacher examines the world around him to see if others have found answers to life "under the sun." To his disappointment, he finds the same pattern repeated over and over.

11] Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done
and what I had toiled to achieve,
everything was meaningless, a chasing after
the wind,
nothing was gained under the sun.

Wisdom and Folly Are Meaningless

12] Then I turned my thoughts to consider
wisdom,

and also madness and folly.

What more can the king's successor do
than what has already been done?

13] I saw that wisdom is better than folly,
just as light is better than darkness.

14] The wise man has eyes in his head,
while the fool walks in the darkness;
but I came to realize

that the same fate overtakes them both.

15] Then I thought in my heart,

"The fate of the fool will overtake me also.
What then do I gain by being wise?"

I said in my heart,

"This too is meaningless."

16] For the wise man, like the fool, will not be long
remembered,

in days to come both will be forgotten.

Like the fool, the wise man too must die!

Toil Is Meaningless

17] So I hated life, because the work that is done
under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is

meaningless, a chasing after the wind. 18] I hated all
the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I
must leave them to the one who comes after me.

19] And who knows whether he will be a wise man
or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the work
into which I have poured my effort and skill under
the sun. This too is meaningless.

20] So my heart
began to despair over all my toilsome labor under
the sun. 21] For a man may do his work with wis-
dom, knowledge and skill, and then he must leave

all he owns to someone who has not worked for it.
This too is meaningless and a great misfortune.

22] What does a man get for all the toil and anxious
striving with which he labors under the sun? 23] All
his days his work is pain and grief, even at night
his mind does not rest. This too is meaningless.

24] A man can do nothing better than to eat and
drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I
see, is from the hand of God. 25] For without him,
who can eat or find enjoyment? 26] To the man who
pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and
happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of
gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to
the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless,
a chasing after the wind.

A Time for Everything

3] There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under
heaven:

2] a time to be born and a time to die.

10] The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain.

- a time to plant and a time to uproot,
 1 a time to kill and a time to heal,
 a time to tear down and a time to build,
 4 a time to weep and a time to laugh,
 a time to mourn and a time to dance,
 5 a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
 a time to embrace and a time to refrain,
 6 a time to search and a time to give up,
 a time to keep and a time to throw away,
 a time to tear and a time to mend,
 a time to be silent and a time to speak,
 8 a time to love and a time to hate,
 a time for war and a time for peace.

⁹What does the worker gain from his toil? ¹⁰I have seen the burden God has laid on men. ¹¹He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. ¹²I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live. ¹³That everyone may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil—this is the gift of God. ¹⁴I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that men will revere him.

¹⁵Whatever is has already been,
 and what will be has been before;
 and God will call the past to account.^a

¹⁶And I saw something else under the sun:

In the place of judgment—wickedness was there,
 in the place of justice—wickedness was there

¹⁷I thought in my heart,

"God will bring to judgment
 both the righteous and the wicked,
 for there will be a time for every activity,
 a time for every deed."

¹⁸I also thought, "As for men, God tests them so that they may see that they are like the animals. ¹⁹Man's fate is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath^b; man has no advantage over the animal. Everything is meaningless. ²⁰All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return. ²¹Who knows if the spirit of man rises upward and if the spirit of the animal^c goes down into the earth?"

3:20 Is There an Afterlife?

Old Testament writers said very little about the afterlife. Not until Jesus' coming did God reveal details about heaven and hell. In this passage, the author wonders aloud whether death will be the end of everything. Yet he also adds some intriguing hints about the future. God "has set eternity in the hearts of men," he declares (verse 11). He also refers to a time of future judgment (verse 17).

²²So I saw that there is nothing better for a man than to enjoy his work, because that is his lot. For who can bring him to see what will happen after him?

Oppression, Toil, Friendlessness

⁴ Again I looked and saw all the oppression that was taking place under the sun:

I saw the tears of the oppressed—
 and they have no comforter;
 power was on the side of their oppressors—
 and they have no comforter.

²And I declared that the dead,
 who had already died,
 are happier than the living,
 who are still alive

¹But better than both
 is he who has not yet been,
 who has not seen the evil
 that is done under the sun.

⁴And I saw that all labor and all achievement spring from man's envy of his neighbor. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

⁵The fool folds his hands
 and ruins himself.

⁶Better one handful with tranquillity
 than two handfuls with toil
 and chasing after the wind.

⁷Again I saw something meaningless under the sun:

⁸There was a man all alone;
 he had neither son nor brother.
 There was no end to his toil,
 yet his eyes were not content with his wealth.

"For whom am I toiling," he asked,
 "and why am I depriving myself of
 enjoyment?"

This too is meaningless—
 a miserable business!

⁹Two are better than one,
 because they have a good return for their work:

¹⁰If one falls down,
 his friend can help him up.

But pity the man who falls
 and has no one to help him up!

¹¹Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.

But how can one keep warm alone?

¹²Though one may be overpowered,
 two can defend themselves.

A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Advancement Is Meaningless

¹³Better a poor but wise youth than an old but foolish king who no longer knows how to take warning. ¹⁴The youth may have come from prison to the kingship, or he may have been born in poverty within his kingdom. ¹⁵I saw that all who lived and walked under the sun followed the youth, the king's successor. ¹⁶There was no end to all the

^a15 Or God calls back the past

^b19 Or spirit

^c21 Or Who knows the spirit of man, which rises upward, or the spirit of the animal which

people who were before them. But those who came later were not pleased with the successor. This too is meaningless—a chasing after the wind.

Stand in Awe of God

5 Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Listen to hear rather than to offer the word. For those who do not know that they do wrong.

Do not be quick with your mouth,
do not be hasty in your heart
to utter anything before God.
For he is in heaven

and you are on earth,
so let your words be few.

A dream comes when there are many cares,
and the speech of a fool when there are many words.

When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it. Do not let your mouth lead you astray. And do not protest to the temple messenger. My vow was a mistake. Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands? Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore stand in awe of God.

Riches Are Meaningless

If you see the poor oppressed in a district, and justice and rights denied, do not be surprised at such things, for one official is eyed by a higher one, and over them both are others higher still. The increase from the land is taken by all; the king himself profits from the fields.

Whoever loves money never has money enough,
whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income.
This too is meaningless.

As goods increase,
so do those who consume them.
And what benefit are they to the owner
except to feast his eyes on them?

The sleep of a laborer is sweet,
whether he eats little or much,
but the abundance of a rich man
permits him no sleep.

I have seen a grievous evil under the sun:
wealth hoarded to the harm of its owner,
or wealth lost through some misfortune,
so that when he has a son
there is nothing left for him.
Naked a man comes from his mother's womb,
and as he comes, so he departs.
He takes nothing from his labor
that he can carry in his hand.

This too is a grievous evil.

As a man comes, so he departs,
and what does he gain,
since he toils for the wind?

All his days he eats in darkness,

with great frustration, affliction and anger.

Then I realized that it is good and proper for a man to eat and drink, and to find satisfaction in his toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of life God has given him—for this is his lot. Moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work—this is a gift of God. He seldom reflects on the days of his life, because God keeps him occupied with gladness of heart.

6 I have seen another evil under the sun, and it weighs heavily on men: God gives a man wealth, possessions and honor, so that he lacks nothing his heart desires, but God does not enable him to enjoy them, and a stranger enjoys them instead. This is meaningless, a grievous evil.

A man may have a hundred children and live many years; yet no matter how long he lives, if he cannot enjoy his prosperity and does not receive proper burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he. It comes without meaning, it departs in darkness, and in darkness its name is shrouded. Though it never saw the sun or knew anything, it has more rest than does that man—even if he lives a thousand years twice over but fails to enjoy his prosperity. Do not all go to the same place?

All man's efforts are for his mouth,
yet his appetite is never satisfied.

What advantage has a wise man
over a fool?

What does a poor man gain
by knowing how to conduct himself before
others?

Better what the eye sees
than the roving of the appetite.
This too is meaningless,
a chasing after the wind.

Whatever exists has already been named,
and what man is has been known;
no man can contend
with one who is stronger than he.

The more the words,
the less the meaning,
and how does that profit anyone?

For who knows what is good for a man in life, during the few and meaningless days he passes through like a shadow? Who can tell him what will happen under the sun after he is gone?

5:18 Good for Something

As he tasted various attractions in life—work, food, drink, success—the Teacher decided that all are “meaningless.” None gave ultimate satisfaction. But in passages like this one, he admits that such good things are gifts from God and have a temporary value. Some possessions are better than none, wisdom is better than ignorance, life is better than death.

Wisdom

- 7** A good name is better than fine perfume,
and the day of death better than the day of birth
- 8** It is better to go to a house of mourning
than to go to a house of feasting;
for death is the destiny of every man;
the living should take this to heart.
- 9** Sorrow is better than laughter,
because a sad face is good for the heart.
- 10** The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning,
but the heart of fools is in the house of pleasure
- 11** It is better to heed a wise man's rebuke
than to listen to the song of fools.
- 12** Like the crackling of thorns under the pot,
so is the laughter of fools.
This too is meaningless
- 13** Extortion turns a wise man into a fool,
and a bribe corrupts the heart.
- 14** The end of a matter is better than its beginning,
and patience is better than pride.
- 15** Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit,
for anger resides in the lap of fools.
- 16** Do not say, "Why were the old days better
than these?"
For it is not wise to ask such questions.
- 17** Wisdom, like an inheritance, is a good thing
and benefits those who see the sun.
- 18** Wisdom is a shelter
as money is a shelter,
but the advantage of knowledge is this:
that wisdom preserves the life of its possessor
- 19** Consider what God has done:
Who can straighten
what he has made crooked?
- 20** When times are good, be happy;
but when times are bad, consider:
God has made the one
as well as the other.
Therefore, a man cannot discover
anything about his future.
- 21** In this meaningless life of mine I have seen
both of these:
a righteous man perishing in his righteousness,
and a wicked man living long in his wickedness.
- 22** Do not be overrighteous,
neither be overwise—
why destroy yourself?
- 23** Do not be overwicked,
and do not be a fool—
why die before your time?
- 24** It is good to grasp the one
and not let go of the other.
The man who fears God will avoid all extremes.^a

- 25** Wisdom makes one wise man more powerful
than ten rulers in a city.
- 26** There is not a righteous man on earth
who does what is right and never sins.
- 27** Do not pay attention to every word people say,
or you may hear your servant cursing you—
- 28** for you know in your heart
that many times you yourself have cursed others.
- 29** All this I tested by wisdom and I said,
"I am determined to be wise"—
but this was beyond me.
- 30** Whatever wisdom may be,
it is far off and most profound—
who can discover it?
- 31** So I turned my mind to understand,
to investigate and to search out wisdom and
the scheme of things
and to understand the stupidity of wickedness
and the madness of folly.
- 32** I find more bitter than death
the woman who is a snare,
whose heart is a trap
and whose hands are chains.
The man who pleases God will escape her,
but the sinner she will ensnare.
- 33** "Look," says the Teacher,^b "this is what I
have discovered:
"Adding one thing to another to discover the
scheme of things—
34 while I was still searching
but not finding—
I found one upright man among a thousand,
but not one upright woman among them
all.
- 35** This only have I found:
God made mankind upright,
but men have gone in search of many
schemes."
- 8** Who is like the wise man?
Who knows the explanation of things?
Wisdom brightens a man's face
and changes its hard appearance.

Obey the King

- 2** Obey the king's command, I say, because you

7:29 Is It God's Fault?

In many ways the book of Ecclesiastes echoes its companion book of Job. Both are "philosophical," asking the hardest questions about life. But this verse shows a difference in the approach of each. In his anguish, Job sometimes questioned the character of God himself, demanding a personal explanation. At no time did the Teacher of Ecclesiastes "blame" God for the unfairness and meaninglessness he saw around him. "God made mankind upright," he concludes, "but men have gone in search of many schemes."

^a18 Or will follow them both

^b27 Or leader of the assembly

took an oath before God. ³Do not be in a hurry to leave the king's presence. Do not stand up for a bad cause, for he will do whatever he pleases. ⁴Since a king's word is supreme, who can say to him, "What are you doing?"

⁵Whoever obeys his command will come to no harm,
and the wise heart will know the proper time
and procedure.

⁶For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter
though a man's misery weighs heavily upon him.

⁷Since no man knows the future,
who can tell him what is to come?

⁸No man has power over the wind to contain it,
so no one has power over the day of his death.

As no one is discharged in time of war,
so wickedness will not release those who practice it.

⁹All this I saw, as I applied my mind to everything done under the sun. There is a time when a man lords it over others to his own^a hurt. ¹⁰Then too, I saw the wicked buried—those who used to come and go from the holy place and receive praise^c in the city where they did this. This too is meaningless.

¹¹When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong. ¹²Although a wicked man commits a hundred crimes and still lives a long time, I know that it will go better with God-fearing men, who are reverent before God. ¹³Yet because the wicked do not fear God, it will not go well with them, and their days will not lengthen like a shadow.

¹⁴There is something else meaningless that occurs on earth: righteous men who get what the wicked deserve, and wicked men who get what the righteous deserve. This too, I say, is meaningless. ¹⁵So I commend the enjoyment of life, because nothing is better for a man under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany him in his work all the days of the life God has given him under the sun.

¹⁶When I applied my mind to know wisdom and to observe man's labor on earth—his eyes not seeing sleep day or night—¹⁷then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all his efforts to search it out, man cannot discover its meaning. Even if a wise man claims he knows, he cannot really comprehend it.

A Common Destiny for All

9 So I reflected on all this and concluded that the righteous and the wise and what they do are in God's hands, but no man knows whether love or hate awaits him. ²All share a common destiny—

the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad,^d the clean and the unclean, those who offer sacrifices and those who do not.

As it is with the good man,
so with the sinner;
as it is with those who take oaths,
so with those who are afraid to take them.

³This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all. The hearts of men, moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while they live, and afterward they join the dead. ⁴Anyone who is among the living has hope^e—even a live dog is better off than a dead lion!

⁵For the living know that they will die,
but the dead know nothing,
they have no further reward,
and even the memory of them is forgotten.

⁶Their love, their hate
and their jealousy have long since vanished;
never again will they have a part
in anything that happens under the sun.

⁷Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for it is now that God favors what you do. ⁸Always be clothed in white, and always anoint your head with oil. ⁹Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun—all your meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labor under the sun. ¹⁰Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave,^f where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.

¹¹I have seen something else under the sun:

The race is not to the swift
or the battle to the strong,
nor does food come to the wise
or wealth to the brilliant
or favor to the learned;
but time and chance happen to them all.

¹²Moreover, no man knows when his hour will come:

As fish are caught in a cruel net,
or birds are taken in a snare,

9:11 Life Is Unfair

Chapters 8 and 9 eloquently voice the unfairness of life. People don't get what they deserve, claims the Teacher. Good men suffer while wicked men prosper. Everything seems determined only by time and chance. The Teacher's doubts about the afterlife (see 3:20) affected all his thinking, because he saw the utter unfairness of life around him. In contrast, New Testament authors, with a solid belief in the afterlife, showed confidence that God would ultimately judge all people with fairness.

^a Or over his spirit to retain it
manuscripts and are forgotten
to be chosen? With all who live there is hope

^b Or to their

^c Septuagint (Aquila) Vulgate and Syriac, Hebrew does not have and the bad

^d Hebrew Sheol

^e Some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint (Aquila), most Hebrew

^f Or What then

no men are trapped by evil times
that fall unexpectedly upon them

Wisdom Better Than Folly

¹³I also saw under the sun this example of wisdom that greatly impressed me: ¹⁴There was once a small city with only a few people in it. And a powerful king came against it, surrounded it and built huge siegeworks against it. ¹⁵Now there lived in that city a man poor but wise, and he saved the city by his wisdom. But nobody remembered that poor man. ¹⁶So I said, "Wisdom is better than strength." But the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are no longer heeded

¹⁷The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded

than the shouts of a ruler of fools

¹⁸Wisdom is better than weapons of war,
but one sinner destroys much good

10 As dead flies give perfume a bad smell,
so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor

²The heart of the wise inclines to the right,
but the heart of the fool to the left.

³Even as he walks along the road,
the fool lacks sense
and shows everyone how stupid he is.

⁴If a ruler's anger rises against you,
do not leave your post;
calmness can lay great errors to rest.

⁵There is an evil I have seen under the sun,
the sort of error that arises from a ruler:

⁶Fools are put in many high positions,
while the rich occupy the low ones.

⁷I have seen slaves on horseback,
while princes go on foot like slaves.

⁸Whoever digs a pit may fall into it;
whoever breaks through a wall may be bitten
by a snake.

⁹Whoever quarries stones may be injured by them;
whoever splits logs may be endangered by them.

¹⁰If the ax is dull
and its edge unsharpened,
more strength is needed
but skill will bring success.

¹¹If a snake bites before it is charmed,
there is no profit for the charmer.

¹²Words from a wise man's mouth are gracious,
but a fool is consumed by his own lips.

¹³At the beginning his words are folly;
at the end they are wicked madness—

¹⁴and the fool multiplies words.

No one knows what is coming—
who can tell him what will happen after
him?

¹⁵A fool's work wearies him;
he does not know the way to town.

¹⁶Woe to you, O land whose king was a
servant

and whose princes feast in the morning.

¹⁷Blessed are you, O land whose king is of noble
birth

and whose princes eat at a proper time—
for strength and not for drunkenness.

¹⁸If a man is lazy, the rafters sag;
if his hands are idle, the house leaks

¹⁹A feast is made for laughter,
and wine makes life merry,
but money is the answer for everything.

²⁰Do not revile the king even in your thoughts,
or curse the rich in your bedroom,
because a bird of the air may carry your words,
and a bird on the wing may report what you
say

Bread Upon the Waters

11 Cast your bread upon the waters,
for after many days you will find it again.

²Give portions to seven, yes to eight,
for you do not know what disaster may
come upon the land.

³If clouds are full of water,
they pour rain upon the earth.
Whether a tree falls to the south or to the
north,
in the place where it falls, there will it lie.

⁴Whoever watches the wind will not plant;
whoever looks at the clouds will not reap.

⁵As you do not know the path of the wind,
or how the body is formed^b in a mother's
womb,
so you cannot understand the work of God,
the Maker of all things.

⁶Sow your seed in the morning,
and at evening let not your hands be idle,
for you do not know which will succeed,
whether this or that,
or whether both will do equally well.

Remember Your Creator While Young

⁷Light is sweet,
and it pleases the eyes to see the sun.

⁸However many years a man may live,

11:5 Beyond Understanding

Even the Teacher, a man who possessed brilliant powers of wisdom and observation, had to conclude some things are beyond understanding. Failing in his attempt to "figure out" life, he fell back on simple advice: fear God and obey him, no matter how things seem to you. In essence, he concluded in favor of a life of faith. For him, an old man, much of life had already passed; in eloquent poetry he describes the decay that was already at work in his body (12:1-7). Thus he stressed, "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth" (12:1).

^a16 Or king is a child

^b5 Or know how life (or the spirit) / enters the body being formed

let him know them all
 but let him remember the days of darkness,
 for they will be many
 everything to come is meaningless

be happy, young man, while you are young,
 and let your heart give you joy in the days of
 your youth

Follow the ways of your heart
 and whatever your eyes see,
 but know that for all these things

cast will bring you to judgment
 so then, banish anxiety from your heart
 and cast off the troubles of your body
 for youth and vigor are meaningless.

12 Remember your Creator
 in the days of your youth,
 before the days of trouble come
 and the years approach when you will say,
 "I find no pleasure in them!"—

before the sun and the light
 and the moon and the stars grow dark,
 and the clouds return after the rain;
 when the keepers of the house tremble,
 and the strong men stoop,
 when the grinders cease because they are few,
 and those looking through the windows
 grow dim;

when the doors to the street are closed
 and the sound of grinding fades;
 when men rise up at the sound of birds,
 but all their songs grow faint;
 when men are afraid of heights
 and of dangers in the streets,
 when the almond tree blossoms
 and the grasshopper drags himself along

and desire no longer is stirred
 then man goes to his eternal home
 and mourners go about the streets

"Remember him—before the silver cord is
 severed,
 or the golden bowl is broken;
 before the pitcher is shattered at the spring,
 or the wheel broken at the well,
 and the dust returns to the ground it came
 from,
 and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

"Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the
 Teacher "
 "Everything is meaningless!"

The Conclusion of the Matter

⁹Not only was the Teacher wise, but also he
 imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered
 and searched out and set in order many proverbs.
¹⁰The Teacher searched to find just the right
 words, and what he wrote was upright and true.

¹¹The words of the wise are like goads, their
 collected sayings like firmly embedded nails—giv-
 en by one Shepherd. ¹²He warned, my son, of
 anything in addition to them.

Of making many books there is no end, and
 much study wearies the body.

¹³Now all has been heard;
 here is the conclusion of the matter:
 Fear God and keep his commandments,
 for this is the whole duty of man.

¹⁴For God will bring every deed into judgment,
 including every hidden thing,
 whether it is good or evil.

SONG OF SONGS

■ INTRODUCTION ■

An Intoxicating Love

A poem about love the way it's meant to be

Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. 8:7

Snap the radio on, zip to any station, and what are you likely to hear? Love songs. Songs of new love, songs of disappointed love, songs of grateful love, songs of crazy love. Times change, but through history the flow of love songs is a constant.

Penty of people are shocked to find an explicit love song in the Bible—complete with erotic lyrics. But Song of Songs is exactly that. It shows no embarrassment about lovers enjoying each other's bodies and talking about it. Consequently, intermittent attempts have been made to rule Song of Songs out of the Bible or to make it for "Adults Only." In 16th-century Spain, for instance, professor Fray Luis de Leon was dragged out of his classroom and imprisoned for four years. His crime? He translated Song of Songs into Spanish.

Allegorical Interpretation

More often, Song of Songs has been read as though it had nothing to do with lovers at all. Many have interpreted it as an allegory of love between God and his people. Some of these interpretations identify every poetic detail with some corresponding facet of our relationship to God. For instance, the bride's hair may be interpreted as non-Jewish nations who come to Christ. The famous saint Bernard of Clairvaux, using this allegorical approach, wrote 86 sermons on the first two chapters of Song of Songs.

Nowadays, few follow that kind of interpretation. Most scholars believe that the poem was intended to celebrate love between a newly married couple. God values love between a man and a woman. That's why he placed this song in his holy Bible. It may have been sung first at a wedding.

True Love

These lovers love to look at each other. They love to tell each other what they feel. They revel in the sensuous—the beauty of nature, the scent of perfumes and spices. They are openly erotic. Their intoxication with love sounds quite up-to-date, not so different from what you hear on the radio. Yet Song of Songs conveys a very different atmosphere from most modern love songs. The explicit lyrics never become even slightly dirty. This love comes from the garden of Eden, when both man and woman were naked and unashamed. It is tender, filled with delight, natural. You sense no shame or guilt; you feel that God is with the two as they love.

The lovers act as equals. Both woman and man take the initiative in praising each other. They don't flirt or play games; they say what they mean.

Yet they show caution and dignity in their love. While at the peak of joy, the lovers repeatedly warn others not to stir up love prematurely (2:7; 3:5; 8:4). They recognize the dangerously explosive side of love. "For love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame" (8:6).

How to Read Song of Songs

Since love songs are always popular, many people approach Song of Songs with great expectations. However, readers often find the book different from what they had expected.

Two main problems may hinder today's reader. One is the poetic imagery. No modern lover would say, "Your hair is like a flock of goats" (4:1), or, "Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon" (7:4). While some images in Song of Songs appeal—"His banner over me is love" (2:4) or "Love is as strong as death" (8:6)—the majority of the book's metaphors sound strange to our ears.

Most of the comparisons aren't visual, but emotional. For instance, when the lover tells his

breasts that look like two towers — he isn't saying that her breasts look like deer antlers. He's pointing out the same tender feelings baby deer do. When you read the Song of Songs, you don't ask "What did these things (pomegranates, myrrh, etc.) look like?" but ask "What did the lovers feel when they thought of them?"

A second problem: Song of Songs is hard to follow. One part doesn't seem connected to the next. It is as if a series of photos of a couple in love — photos not necessarily in order. Put them in one photo album, they show the profound feelings of newly married lovers.

Though Song of Songs is primarily about love on the human level, many Christians and Jews have read it as a book about God's love. This was probably not the author's original intent, but it is a legitimate and inspiring way to look at the book. After all, God made human love, and other parts of the Bible suggest its similarity to God's love. (See Hosea 1-3 and Ephesians 5:22-33.) Song of Songs never makes this connection, but it does present a love so rich, so full, so unashamed that it's natural to think of God and his love for us.

PLANS FOR READING SONG OF SONGS

PLAN 1: An Overview of Song of Songs in 1 Day

Day 1 Read the Introduction to Song of Songs and chapter 2, a beautiful love poem.

PLAN 2: All of Song of Songs in 8 Days

1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 □ 8

1 Solomon's Song of Songs

Beloved:

- ²Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—
for your love is more delightful than wine.
- ³Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes;
your name is like perfume poured out.
No wonder the maidens love you!
- ⁴Take me away with you—let us hurry!
Let the king bring me into his chambers.

Friends

- We rejoice and delight in you^a;
we will praise your love more than wine.

Beloved

- How right they are to adore you^b!

⁵Dark am I, yet lovely.

O daughters of Jerusalem,
dark like the tents of Kedar,
like the tent curtains of Solomon.

⁶Do not stare at me because I am dark,
because I am darkened by the sun.

My mother's sons were angry with me
and made me take care of the vineyards,
my own vineyard I have neglected.

⁷Tell me, you whom I love, where you graze
your flock

and where you rest your sheep at midday.

Why should I be like a veiled woman
beside the flocks of your friends?

Friends

- ⁸If you do not know, most beautiful of women,
follow the tracks of the sheep
and graze your young goats
by the tents of the shepherds.

Lover

- ⁹I liken you, my darling, to a mare
harnessed to one of the chariots of Pharaoh.
- ¹⁰Your cheeks are beautiful with earrings,
your neck with strings of jewels.
- ¹¹We will make you earrings of gold,
studded with silver.

Beloved

- ¹²While the king was at his table,
my perfume spread its fragrance.
- ¹³My lover is to me a satchet of myrrh
resting between my breasts.
- ¹⁴My lover is to me a cluster of henna blossoms
from the vineyards of En Gedi.

Lover

- ¹⁵How beautiful you are, my darling!
Oh, how beautiful!
Your eyes are doves.

Beloved

- ¹⁶How handsome you are, my lover!
Oh, how charming!
And our bed is verdant.

^aPrimarily on the basis of the gender of the Hebrew pronouns used, male and female speakers are indicated in the margins by the symbols ♂ and ♀, respectively. The words of others are marked /third/. In some instances the divisions and their captions are tentative. ^bThe Hebrew is masculine singular. ^cOr silver.

Lover

The beams of our house are cedars,
our rafters are firs

Beloved

2 I am a rose^a of Sharon
2 a lily of the valleys

Lover

I like a lily among thorns
is my darling among the maidens

Beloved

I like an apple tree among the trees of the forest
is my lover among the young men
is it right to sit in his shade
and his fruit is sweet to my taste
He has taken me to the banquet hall,
and his banner over me is love
Strengthen me with raisins
refresh me with apples
for I am faint with love
His left arm is under my head,
and his right arm embraces me
Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you
by the gazelles and by the does of the field,
Do not arouse or awaken love
until it so desires

Listen, My lover!

Look! Here he comes
capering across the mountains,
bounding over the hills

My lover is like a gazelle or a young stag.
Look! There he stands behind our wall,
gazing through the windows,
peering through the lattice

My lover spoke and said to me,
Arise, my darling,
my beautiful one, and come with me.

See! The winter is past,
the rains are over and gone

Flowers appear on the earth;
the season of singing has come,
the cooing of doves
is heard in our land

The fig tree forms its early fruit;
the blossoming vines spread their fragrance.

Arise, come, my darling,
my beautiful one, come with me."

Lover

My dove in the clefts of the rock,
in the hiding places on the mountainside,

show me your face,
let me hear your voice,
for your voice is sweet,
and your face is lovely.

15 Catch for us the foxes,
the little foxes
that ruin the vineyards,
our vineyards that are in bloom.

Beloved

16 My lover is mine and I am his,
he browses among the lilies.

17 Until the day breaks
and the shadows flee,
turn, my lover,
and be like a gazelle
or like a young stag
on the rugged hills.^c

3 All night long on my bed
I looked for the one my heart loves;
I looked for him but did not find him.
21 I will get up now and go about the city,
through its streets and squares;
I will search for the one my heart loves.
So I looked for him but did not find him.

The watchmen found me
as they made their rounds in the city.
"Have you seen the one my heart loves?"

4 Scarcely had I passed them
when I found the one my heart loves.
I held him and would not let him go
till I had brought him to my mother's house,^e
to the room of the one who conceived me.

5 Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you
by the gazelles and by the does of the field:
Do not arouse or awaken love
until it so desires.

6 Who is this coming up from the desert
like a column of smoke,
perfumed with myrrh and incense
made from all the spices of the merchant?

7 Look! It is Solomon's carriage,
escorted by sixty warriors,
the noblest of Israel,

8 All of them wearing the sword,
all experienced in battle,
each with his sword at his side,
prepared for the terrors of the night.

9 King Solomon made for himself the carriage;
he made it of wood from Lebanon.

10 Its posts he made of silver,
its base of gold.

Its seat was upholstered with purple,
its interior lovingly inlaid
by^d the daughters of Jerusalem.

2:4 His Banner over Me

A "banner" was a large military flag that held a fighting unit together in battle. In the noise and dust of the fight, soldiers needed a visible sign to keep them oriented. For these lovers, a public and visible declaration of love forms a "banner," keeping them together.

3:5 Let Love Sleep

If love is so wonderful, as this poem beautifully sings, shouldn't people pursue it recklessly? Yet the beloved warns them not to. Three times she urges others not to force love, but to let it develop at its own rate. Love should wait for its proper time.

^a1 Or Lover

^b1 Possibly a member of the crocus family

^c17 Or the hills of Bethel

^d10 Or its inlaid interior a gift of love from

as they made their rounds in the city.
 They beat me, they bruised me;
 they took away my cloak,
 those watchmen of the walls!
 O daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you—
 if you find my lover,
 what will you tell him?
 Tell him I am taint with love

Friends

How is your beloved better than others,
 most beautiful of women?
 How is your beloved better than others,
 that you charge us so?

Beloved

My lover is radiant and ruddy,
 outstanding among ten thousand.
 His head is purest gold,
 his hair is wavy
 and black as a raven
 His eyes are like doves
 by the water streams,
 washed in milk,
 mounted like jewels
 His cheeks are like beds of spice
 yielding perfume.
 His lips are like lilies
 dripping with myrrh
 His arms are rods of gold
 set with chrysolite
 His body is like polished ivory
 decorated with sapphires.^a
 His legs are pillars of marble
 set on bases of pure gold.
 His appearance is like Lebanon,
 choice as its cedars
 His mouth is sweetness itself;
 he is altogether lovely.
 This is my lover, this my friend,
 O daughters of Jerusalem.

Friends

Where has your lover gone,
 most beautiful of women?
 Which way did your lover turn,
 that we may look for him with you?

Beloved

My lover has gone down to his garden,
 to the beds of spices,
 to browse in the gardens
 and to gather lilies.
 I am my lover's and my lover is mine;
 he browses among the lilies.

Lover

You are beautiful, my darling, as Tirzah,
 lovely as Jerusalem,
 majestic as troops with banners
 Turn your eyes from me,
 they overwhelm me
 Your hair is like a flock of goats
 descending from Gilead.

Your teeth are like a flock of sheep
 coming up from the washing
 Each has its twin,
 not one of them is alone.
 Your temples behind your veil
 are like the halves of a pomegranate.
 Sixty queens there may be,
 and eighty concubines,
 and virgins beyond number;
 but my dove, my perfect one, is unique,
 the only daughter of her mother,
 the favorite of the one who bore her
 The maidens saw her and called her blessed;
 the queens and concubines praised her.

Friends

Who is this that appears like the dawn,
 fair as the moon, bright as the sun,
 majestic as the stars in procession?

Lover

I went down to the grove of nut trees
 to look at the new growth in the valley,
 to see if the vines had budded
 or the pomegranates were in bloom.
 Before I realized it,
 my desire set me among the royal chariots of
 my people.^b

Friends

Come back, come back, O Shulammite;
 come back, come back, that we may gaze on
 you!

Lover

Why would you gaze on the Shulammite
 as on the dance of Mahanaim?

How beautiful your sandaled feet,
 O prince's daughter!
 Your graceful legs are like jewels,
 the work of a craftsman's hands.
 Your navel is a rounded goblet
 that never lacks blended wine.
 Your waist is a mound of wheat
 encircled by lilies.
 Your breasts are like two fawns,
 twins of a gazelle.
 Your neck is like an ivory tower.
 Your eyes are the pools of Heshbon
 by the gate of Bath Rabbim.
 Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon
 looking toward Damascus.
 Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel.
 Your hair is like royal tapestry;
 the king is held captive by its tresses.
 How beautiful you are and how pleasing,
 O love, with your delights!
 Your stature is like that of the palm,
 and your breasts like clusters of fruit
 I said, "I will climb the palm tree,
 I will take hold of its fruit."
 May your breasts be like the clusters of the
 vine,
 the fragrance of your breath like apples.

^a14 Or sign lazuli

^b12 Or among the chariots of Amminadab or among the chariots of the people of the prince

⁹ and your mouth like the best wine

Beloved

May the wine go straight to my lover,
flowing gently over lips and teeth.^a

¹⁰ belong to my lover,
and his desire is for me

¹¹ Come, my lover, let us go to the countryside,
let us spend the night in the villages.^b

¹² Let us go early to the vineyards
to see if the vines have budded,
if their blossoms have opened,
and if the pomegranates are in bloom—
there I will give you my love

¹³ The mandrakes send out their fragrance,
and at our door is every delicacy,
both new and old,
that I have stored up for you, my lover.

8 If only you were to me like a brother,
who was nursed at my mother's breasts!—
Then, if I found you outside,
I would kiss you,
and no one would despise me

² I would lead you
and bring you to my mother's house—
she who has taught me

I would give you spiced wine to drink,
the nectar of my pomegranates.

³ His left arm is under my head
and his right arm embraces me.

⁴ Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you:
Do not arouse or awaken love
until it so desires

Friends

⁵ Who is this coming up from the desert
leaning on her lover?

Beloved

Under the apple tree I roused you;
there your mother conceived you,
there she who was in labor gave you birth.

⁶ Place me like a seal over your heart,
like a seal on your arm,
for love is as strong as death,

its jealousy^c unyielding as the grave.^d
It burns like blazing fire,
like a mighty flame.^e

⁷ Many waters cannot quench love;
rivers cannot wash it away.

If one were to give
all the wealth of his house for love,
it^f would be utterly scorned.

Friends

⁸ We have a young sister,
and her breasts are not yet grown.
What shall we do for our sister
for the day she is spoken for?

⁹ If she is a wall,
we will build towers of silver on her.

If she is a door,
we will enclose her with panels of cedar.

Beloved

¹⁰ I am a wall,
and my breasts are like towers.
Thus I have become in his eyes
like one bringing contentment.

¹¹ Solomon had a vineyard in Baal Hamon;
he let out his vineyard to tenants.

Each was to bring for its fruit
a thousand shekels^g of silver.

¹² But my own vineyard is mine to give;
the thousand shekels are for you,

O Solomon,
and two hundred^h are for those who tend
its fruit.

Lover

¹³ You who dwell in the gardens
with friends in attendance,
let me hear your voice!

Beloved

¹⁴ Come away, my lover,
and be like a gazelle
or like a young stag
on the spice-laden mountains.

8:1 A Brotherly Kiss

In oriental culture, even a married couple could not express their love publicly. Only a brother and sister could openly kiss. The beloved is wishing she had the right to show their love to the world.

8:6 Love and Death

Death sweeps everything away. It yields to no one, and once you are in its power you cannot escape. So with love: it takes control of your life, and like a gigantic fire, it cannot be doused. Love must be treated with the greatest caution and respect.

^a9 Septuagint, Aquila, Vulgate and Syriac, Hebrew *lips of sleepers*

^b6 Or *like the very flame of the Lord*

^c7 Or *he*

^d12 That is, about 5 pounds (about 2.3 kilograms)

^e11 Or *henna bushes*

^f6 Or *ardor*

^g6 Hebrew *Sheol*

^h11 That is, about 25 pounds (about 11.5 kilograms), also in verse 12

ISAIAH

INTRODUCTION

Prophet, Poet, and Politician

His nation at a crossroads, Isaiah rose to meet the challenge

And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress 5.7

The prophet Isaiah was a giant of Jewish history. The New Testament quotes him more than all the other prophets combined. No other biblical author can match his rich vocabulary and use of imagery. Isaiah spent his days in the corridors of power. He served as adviser to the kings of Judah and helped set the course of his nation.

Days of Crisis

Isaiah lived at a crucial time, midway between the founding of the kingdom under Saul and David and its eventual destruction. A civil war had split the Israelites into North (Israel) and South (Judah), and Isaiah lived in the more pious Southern Kingdom.

When Isaiah began his work, the nation seemed strong and wealthy. But Isaiah saw signs of grave danger. People were using their power to harass the poor. Men went around drunk, women cared more about their clothes than about their neighbors' hunger. People gave lip service to God and kept up the outward appearance of religion but did little more.

Outside dangers loomed even larger. The armies of neighboring Israel were rattling swords and spears at the border. On all sides, monster empires were growing, especially Egypt and Assyria. Judah was caught in the middle. Should the nation choose one of the empires as an ally?

Harsh Words from an Uncompromising Prophet

The nation of Judah, said Isaiah, stood at a crossroads: it could either regain its footing or begin a dangerous slide downward. The prophet did not temper his message for the sake of popular opinion. He had harsh and unyielding words about what changes must take place.

Although he moved in royal circles, Isaiah was hardly a yes-man in politics. Sometimes he stood alone against a tide of optimism. His very name meant "The Lord saves," and he warned kings that relying on military power or wealth or any force other than God would lead to disaster.

Isaiah outlasted four kings, but he finally offended one beyond repair. King Manasseh (notorious for practicing infant sacrifice) found Isaiah's strong words too much to bear. Tradition records that he had Isaiah killed by fastening him between two planks of wood and sawing his body in half.

Manasseh has long since disappeared into obscurity. But Isaiah, through this book, endures as one of the great authors of all time. Sometimes the pen is mightier than the sword.

How to Read Isaiah

In the eighth century B.C. Isaiah wrote the book that bears his name. It is arguably the most eloquent book in the Old Testament, and you will likely recognize many verses and phrases.

Isaiah is full of profound insights into the nature of God and his plan for the earth. Due to its length and its peculiar organization, however, the book may seem hard to grasp.

Remember that Isaiah consists of a collection of many messages on various topics, pulled together into groupings. To understand Isaiah, it helps to think of the book as divided into several major groupings. Here is a summary of them:

Isaiah 1-12: Isaiah's call and messages of warning to Judah during the prosperous days of the kingdom. (These came mostly in the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham: see "A Lineup of Rulers," page 338.)

Isaiah 13-23: Isaiah's messages to all the nations around Judah—including enemies and close allies.

Isaiah 1:1-11 is a view of the earth's future (Isaiah 1:1-11) and specific messages to the people of Judah as they face the Assyrian invasion.
 Isaiah 1:12-17 is an introduction to the book of Isaiah. The focus of the book is on the Assyrian invasion of Judah.
 Isaiah 1:18-26 is an introduction to a very different situation 200 years into the future. Now, however, the Assyrian is the great enemy.
 Isaiah 1:27-31 is a word of hope about the future through the 'suffering servant'.
 Isaiah 1:32-33 is a word of hope about the future through the 'suffering servant'.

PLANS FOR TEACHING ISAIAH

Plan 1: An Overview of Isaiah 1-11

- Chapter 1: The introduction to Isaiah and also chapter 1. This chapter describes the Assyrian invasion.
- Chapter 2: The introduction to the book of Isaiah.
- Chapter 3: A word of hope about the future through the 'suffering servant'.
- Chapter 4: A word of hope about the future through the 'suffering servant'.
- Chapter 5: A word of hope about the future through the 'suffering servant'.
- Chapter 6: A word of hope about the future through the 'suffering servant'.
- Chapter 7: A word of hope about the future through the 'suffering servant'.
- Chapter 8: A word of hope about the future through the 'suffering servant'.
- Chapter 9: A word of hope about the future through the 'suffering servant'.
- Chapter 10: A word of hope about the future through the 'suffering servant'.
- Chapter 11: A word of hope about the future through the 'suffering servant'.

Plan 2: A Detailed Plan for Isaiah 1-11

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 |
| 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 | 51 |
| 52 | 53 | 54 | 55 | 56 | 57 | 58 | 59 | 60 | 61 | 62 | 63 | 64 | 65 | 66 | 67 | 68 |

1 The Lord is speaking through me and saying to the people of Judah: Hear the word of the Lord, O people of Judah, for the Lord has spoken.

A. The Lord's Message

1 Hear the word of the Lord, O people of Judah, for the Lord has spoken.
 2 The Lord has spoken and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me.
 3 He is angry with the nation,
 4 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 5 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 6 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 7 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 8 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 9 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 10 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 11 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 12 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 13 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 14 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 15 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 16 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 17 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 18 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 19 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 20 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 21 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 22 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 23 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 24 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 25 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 26 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 27 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 28 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 29 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 30 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 31 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 32 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 33 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 34 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 35 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 36 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 37 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 38 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 39 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 40 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 41 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 42 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 43 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 44 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 45 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 46 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 47 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 48 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 49 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 50 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 51 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 52 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 53 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 54 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 55 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 56 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 57 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 58 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 59 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 60 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 61 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 62 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 63 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 64 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 65 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 66 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 67 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 68 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 69 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 70 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 71 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 72 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 73 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 74 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 75 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 76 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 77 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 78 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 79 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 80 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 81 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 82 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 83 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 84 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 85 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 86 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 87 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 88 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 89 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 90 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 91 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 92 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 93 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 94 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 95 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 96 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 97 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 98 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 99 he is angry with the nation's leaders,
 100 he is angry with the nation's leaders,

from the sole of your foot to the top of your head.

There is no soundness—
 only wounds and welts
 and open sores
 not cleansed or bandaged
 or soothed with oil.

Your country is desolate,
 your cities burned with fire;
 your fields are being stripped by foreigners
 right before you,
 and waste as when overthrown by strangers.
 The Daughter of Zion is left
 like a shelter in a vineyard,
 like a hut in a field of melons,
 like a city under siege.
 Unless the Lord Almighty
 had left us some survivors,
 we would have become like Sodom,
 we would have been like Gomorrah.

11 Hear the word of the Lord,
 you rulers of Sodom,
 listen to the law of our God,
 you people of Gomorrah!
 12 The multitude of your sacrifices—
 what are they to me?" says the Lord.

I have more than enough of burnt offerings,
of rams and the fat of fattened animals;
I have no pleasure
in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats.
12 When you come to appear before me,
who has asked this of you,
this trampling of my courts?
13 Stop bringing meaningless offerings!
Your incense is detestable to me
New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations—
I cannot bear your evil assemblies
14 Your New Moon festivals and your appointed
feasts
my soul hates
They have become a burden to me;
I am weary of bearing them
15 When you spread out your hands in prayer,
I will hide my eyes from you;
even if you offer many prayers,
I will not listen
Your hands are full of blood,
16 wash and make yourselves clean.
Take your evil deeds
out of my sight!
Stop doing wrong,
17 learn to do right!
Seek justice,
encourage the oppressed.⁴
Defend the cause of the fatherless,
plead the case of the widow
18 "Come now, let us reason together,"
says the LORD
Though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red as crimson,
they shall be like wool
19 If you are willing and obedient,
you will eat the best from the land;
20 but if you resist and rebel,
you will be devoured by the sword."
For the mouth of the LORD has
spoken.
21 See how the faithful city
has become a harlot!
She once was full of justice;
righteousness used to dwell in her—
but now murderers!
22 Your silver has become dross,
your choice wine is diluted with water.
23 Your rulers are rebels,
companions of thieves;
they all love bribes
and chase after gifts.
They do not defend the cause of the fatherless;
the widow's case does not come before
them
24 Therefore the Lord, the LORD Almighty,
the Mighty One of Israel, declares:
'Ah, I will get relief from my foes
and avenge myself on my enemies.
25 I will turn my hand against you;
I will thoroughly purge away your dross
and remove all your impurities.

26 I will restore your judges as in days of old,
your counselors as at the beginning
Afterward you will be called
the City of Righteousness,
the Faithful City "
27 Zion will be redeemed with justice,
her penitent ones with righteousness.
28 But rebels and sinners will both be broken,
and those who forsake the LORD will perish.
29 "You will be ashamed because of the sacred
oaks
in which you have delighted;
you will be disgraced because of the gardens
that you have chosen.
30 You will be like an oak with fading leaves,
like a garden without water.
31 The mighty man will become tinder
and his work a spark;
both will burn together,
with no one to quench the fire."

The Mountain of the LORD

2 This is what Isaiah son of Amoz saw concern-
ing Judah and Jerusalem:

2 In the last days
the mountain of the LORD's temple will be
established
as chief among the mountains;
it will be raised above the hills,
and all nations will stream to it.
3 Many peoples will come and say,
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the
LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob.
He will teach us his ways,
so that we may walk in his paths."
The law will go out from Zion,
the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
4 He will judge between the nations
and will settle disputes for many peoples.
They will beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will not take up sword against nation,
nor will they train for war anymore.
5 Come, O house of Jacob,
let us walk in the light of the LORD.

1:23 Much Religion, Little Justice

Isaiah 1 paints a striking picture of conditions in Judah. Descriptions of luxury indicate the nation was prospering economically. There was no shortage of offerings, prayers, and religious celebrations (verses 11-17). But Isaiah condemned Judah for not putting religion into practice by defending weak people, such as widows and the fatherless. The country's prosperity had come at the poor's expense.

⁴ Or: encourage the oppressed

The Day of the Lord

- ⁶You have abandoned your people,
the house of Jacob.
They are full of superstitions from the East;
they practice divination like the Philistines
and clasp hands with pagans.
⁷Their land is full of silver and gold;
there is no end to their treasures.
Their land is full of horses;
there is no end to their chariots.
⁸Their land is full of idols;
they bow down to the work of their hands,
to what their fingers have made.
⁹So man will be brought low
and mankind humbled—
do not forgive them.^a
- ¹⁰Go into the rocks,
hide in the ground
from dread of the LORD
and the splendor of his majesty!
¹¹The eyes of the arrogant man will be humbled
and the pride of men brought low;
the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.
- ¹²The LORD Almighty has a day in store
for all the proud and lofty,
for all that is exalted
(and they will be humbled),
¹³for all the cedars of Lebanon, tall and lofty,
and all the oaks of Bashan,
¹⁴for all the towering mountains
and all the high hills,
¹⁵for every lofty tower
and every fortified wall,
¹⁶for every trading ship^b
and every stately vessel.
¹⁷The arrogance of man will be brought low
and the pride of men humbled;
the LORD alone will be exalted in that day,
¹⁸and the idols will totally disappear.
- ¹⁹Men will flee to caves in the rocks
and to holes in the ground
from dread of the LORD
and the splendor of his majesty
when he rises to shake the earth.
²⁰In that day men will throw away
to the rodents and bats
their idols of silver and idols of gold,
which they made to worship.
²¹They will flee to caverns in the rocks
and to the overhanging crags
from dread of the LORD
and the splendor of his majesty,
when he rises to shake the earth.
- ²²Stop trusting in man,
who has but a breath in his nostrils.
Of what account is he?

Judgment on Jerusalem and Judah

- 3** See now, the Lord,
the LORD Almighty,
is about to take from Jerusalem and Judah
both supply and support:

all supplies of food and all supplies of water,
² the hero and warrior,
the judge and prophet,
the soothsayer and elder,
³ the captain of fifty and man of rank,
the counselor, skilled craftsman and clever
enchanter.

⁴ I will make boys their officials;
mere children will govern them.

⁵ People will oppress each other—
man against man, neighbor against
neighbor.

The young will rise up against the old,
the base against the honorable.

⁶ A man will seize one of his brothers
at his father's home, and say,
"You have a cloak, you be our leader;
take charge of this heap of ruins!"

⁷ But in that day he will cry out,
"I have no remedy.

I have no food or clothing in my house;
do not make me the leader of the people."

⁸ Jerusalem staggers,
Judah is falling;
their words and deeds are against the LORD,
defying his glorious presence.

⁹ The look on their faces testifies against them;
they parade their sin like Sodom;
they do not hide it.

Woe to them!

They have brought disaster upon
themselves.

¹⁰ Tell the righteous it will be well with them,
for they will enjoy the fruit of their deeds.

¹¹ Woe to the wicked! Disaster is upon them!
They will be paid back for what their hands
have done.

¹² Youths oppress my people,
women rule over them.

O my people, your guides lead you astray;
they turn you from the path.

¹³ The LORD takes his place in court;
he rises to judge the people.

¹⁴ The LORD enters into judgment
against the elders and leaders of his people:
"It is you who have ruined my vineyard;
the plunder from the poor is in your houses.

¹⁵ What do you mean by crushing my people
and grinding the faces of the poor?"
declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty.

¹⁶ The LORD says,

3:6 Total Anarchy

Isaiah foresees a time of judgment on Judah, when total anarchy will prevail. Leaders will be chosen at random, and the nation's supply of young men will be decimated by war (verse 25). The vivid passage on the haughty women of Zion (3:16-4:1) shows why this book is admired for its writing style.

^a9 Or not raise them up

^b16 Hebrew every ship of Tarshish

The women of Zion are haughty,
walking along with outstretched necks,
dattling with their eyes,
tripping along with mincing steps
with ornaments jingling on their ankles.
Therefore the Lord will bring sores on the
heads of the women of Zion;
the Lord will make their scalps bald.¹

²In that day the Lord will snatch away their
finery: the bangles and headbands and crescent
necklaces, ³the earrings and bracelets and veils,
⁴the headaddresses and ankle chains and sashes,
the perfume bottles and charms, ⁵the signet rings
and nose rings, ⁶the fine robes and the capes and
cloaks, the purses, ⁷and mirrors, and the linen
garments and tiaras and shawls.

⁸Instead of fragrance there will be a stench;
instead of a sash, a rope;
instead of well-dressed hair, baldness;
instead of fine clothing, sackcloth;
instead of beauty, branding.

⁹Your men will fall by the sword,
your warriors in battle.

¹⁰The gates of Zion will lament and mourn;
deserted, she will sit on the ground.

In that day seven women
will take hold of one man
and say, "We will eat our own food
and provide our own clothes;
only let us be called by your name.
Take away our disgrace!"

The Branch of the LORD

²In that day the Branch of the LORD will be
beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will
be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel.
³Those who are left in Zion, who remain in Jerusa-
lem, will be called holy, all who are recorded
among the living in Jerusalem. ⁴The Lord will
wash away the filth of the women of Zion; he will
cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit^a
of judgment and a spirit^a of fire. ⁵Then the LORD
will create over all of Mount Zion and over those
who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a
glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will
be a canopy. ⁶It will be a shelter and shade from
the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place
from the storm and rain.

The Song of the Vineyard

I will sing for the one I love
a song about his vineyard:
My loved one had a vineyard
on a fertile hillside.
²He dug it up and cleared it of stones
and planted it with the choicest vines.
He built a watchtower in it
and cut out a winepress as well.
Then he looked for a crop of good grapes,
but it yielded only bad fruit.

³"Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and men of
Judah,

judge between me and my vineyard."
⁴What more could have been done for my
vineyard
than I have done for it?

When I looked for good grapes,
why did it yield only bad?

⁵Now I will tell you
what I am going to do to my vineyard:

I will take away its hedge,
and it will be destroyed,

I will break down its wall,
and it will be trampled.

⁶I will make it a wasteland,
neither pruned nor cultivated,
and briers and thorns will grow there.

I will command the clouds
not to rain on it."^a

⁷The vineyard of the LORD Almighty
is the house of Israel,
and the men of Judah

are the garden of his delight.

And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed;
for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.

Woes and Judgments

⁸Woe to you who add house to house
and join field to field
till no space is left
and you live alone in the land.

⁹The LORD Almighty has declared in my hear-
ing.

"Surely the great houses will become desolate,
the fine mansions left without occupants.

¹⁰A ten-acre^b vineyard will produce only a
bath^c of wine,
a homer^d of seed only an ephah^e of grain."

¹¹Woe to those who rise early in the morning
to run after their drinks,
who stay up late at night
till they are inflamed with wine.

¹²They have harps and lyres at their banquets,
tambourines and flutes and wine,
but they have no regard for the deeds of the
LORD,
no respect for the work of his hands.

5:4 What More Could God Have Done?

The "Song of the Vineyard" beautifully summarizes God's message to Judah. Although he had done everything possible to care for the nation, his "vineyard"—the house of Israel—had produced only wild grapes. What else could he do but allow it to grow wild and uncultivated? Jesus used a related analogy in some of his parables (Matthew 20:1-16; 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 13:6-9; 20:9-19).

^a Or the Spirit
gallons (about 22 liters)

^b Hebrew ten-yoke, that is, the land plowed by 10 yoke of oxen in one day

^c That is, probably about 6 bushels (about 220 liters)

^d That is, probably about 3/5 bushel (about 22 liters)

Therefore my people will go into exile
for lack of understanding;
their men of rank will die of hunger
and their masses will be parched with thirst.
14 Therefore the grave enlarges its appetite
and opens its mouth without limit;
into it will descend their nobles and masses
with all their brawlers and revelers.
15 So man will be brought low
and mankind humbled,
the eyes of the arrogant humbled
16 But the LORD Almighty will be exalted by his
justice,
and the holy God will show himself holy by
his righteousness.
17 Then sheep will graze as in their own pasture;
lambs will feed among the ruins of the rich.
18 Woe to those who draw sin along with cords of
deceit,
and wickedness as with cart ropes,
19 to those who say, "Let God hurry,
let him hasten his work
so we may see it
Let it approach,
let the plan of the Holy One of Israel come,
so we may know it."
20 Woe to those who call evil good
and good evil,
who put darkness for light
and light for darkness,
who put bitter for sweet
and sweet for bitter.
21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes
and clever in their own sight.
22 Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine
and champions at mixing drinks,
23 who acquit the guilty for a bribe,
but deny justice to the innocent.
24 Therefore, as tongues of fire lick up straw
and as dry grass sinks down in the flames,
so their roots will decay
and their flowers blow away like dust;
for they have rejected the law of the LORD
Almighty
and spurned the word of the Holy One of
Israel.
25 Therefore the LORD's anger burns against his
people;
his hand is raised and he strikes them down.
The mountains shake,
and the dead bodies are like refuse in the
streets.
Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away,
his hand is still upraised.
26 He lifts up a banner for the distant nations,
he whistles for those at the ends of the earth.
Here they come,
swiftly and speedily!
27 Not one of them grows tired or stumbles,
not one slumbers or sleeps;

not a belt is loosened at the waist,
not a sandal thong is broken.
28 Their arrows are sharp,
all their bows are strung;
their horses' hoofs seem like flint,
their chariot wheels like a whirlwind.
29 Their roar is like that of the lion,
they roar like young lions;
they growl as they seize their prey
and carry it off with no one to rescue.
30 In that day they will roar over it
like the roaring of the sea.
And if one looks at the land,
he will see darkness and distress;
even the light will be darkened by the
clouds.

Isaiah's Commission

6 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the
Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and
the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him
were seraphs, each with six wings: With two
wings they covered their faces, with two they
covered their feet, and with two they were flying.
3 And they were calling to one another:
"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory."

4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and
thresholds shook and the temple was filled with
smoke.

5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a
man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of
unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the
LORD Almighty."

6 Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live
coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs
from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and
said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is
taken away and your sin atoned for."

8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying,
"Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"
And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

9 He said, "Go and tell this people:

"Be ever hearing, but never understanding;
be ever seeing, but never perceiving."

10 Make the heart of this people calloused;
make their ears dull
and close their eyes.^c

Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts,
and turn and be healed."

6:2 A Message from God

Isaiah experienced a dramatic call from God to
become a prophet. The message was personally
delivered by *seraphs*, a term that appears only here
and means "something burning and dazzling."
Evidently, seraphs were angels who acted as
spokesmen for God.

¹⁴ Hebrew *Shool* ¹⁷ Septuagint, Hebrew / *strangers will eat*
understanding you will be ever seeing but never perceiving ²⁰ This people's heart has become calloused, they hardly hear with their ears, and
they have closed their eyes

^{9,10} Hebrew; Septuagint You will be ever hearing, but never
understanding

¹¹Then I said, "For how long, O Lord?"
And he answered.

"Until the cities lie ruined
and without inhabitant,
until the houses are left deserted
and the fields ruined and ravaged,
¹²until the LORD has sent everyone far away
and the land is utterly forsaken.
¹³And though a tenth remains in the land,
it will again be laid waste.

But as the terebinth and oak
leave stumps when they are cut down,
so the holy seed will be the stump in the
land."

The Sign of Immanuel

7 When Ahaz son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, was king of Judah, King Rezin of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel marched up to fight against Jerusalem, but they could not overpower it.

INSIGHT

Faith in God or the Military?

Where does a weak nation turn for help?

This is the plan determined for the whole world; this is the hand stretched out over all nations. 14:26

What can a small nation do when facing a military giant? Judah found itself in that predicament early in Isaiah's career. When two neighboring nations invaded, the tiny kingdom suffered heavy losses. King Ahaz and the people of Judah were shaken, "as the trees of the forest are shaken by the wind" (7:2). Panicked, Ahaz sought Isaiah's advice.

Isaiah had received a "call" to ministry as dramatic as any recorded in the Bible (chapter 6). King Ahaz knew that Isaiah would deliver a message straight from God, no matter how unpopular. Still, Ahaz was hardly prepared for what Isaiah said: Stay calm, don't worry, simply trust God.

The attacking kings were mere "smoldering stubs of firewood," Isaiah declared (7:4). Whatever happens, don't seek help from an empire like Assyria; if you do, you will invite in the very army that will one day destroy you.

The Long Slide Begins

But Ahaz, reeling from the invasion, wanted quick relief. Ignoring Isaiah's warnings, he negotiated a treaty with mighty Assyria, using as a bribe the treasury of the temple in Jerusalem.

In the short term, Ahaz's decision brought results. No army of that day could match the Assyrian war machine, and all Judah's enemies fell to the onslaught. Israel, to the north, was wiped off the map. At last Judah had peace. But at what cost?

Perhaps as part of the treaty with Assyria, Ahaz began corrupting the Jewish religion. He first closed the doors of the temple to worship, and later replaced the sacred altar to God with a foreign one. He officially adopted Assyria's state religion, going so far as to make a human sacrifice of his sons in a fire. In every way King Ahaz became a puppet king, under the thumb of Assyria. Foreign armies stayed in Judah. Indeed, Assyria's help had come with strings attached.

Messages for Then and Now

The prophet Isaiah was furious. He had grown up in a boom time in Judah, under a good king. Suddenly he saw his country become a mere pawn of Assyria, trading away even its great religious heritage.

Chapters 7-19 record his passionate words, not only against Judah, but against her neighbors also. He told of a reckoning day, when each nation would be punished for its sin and rebellion. The immediate future looked very bleak, and Isaiah minced no words in describing it.

But Isaiah did not stop there. He went on to project far into the future, in familiar words that still stir up hope and longing. This section begins with a question from a king about where to turn for help. It ends with a grand sweep of all of history.

Life Questions. What do you think Isaiah would say if he were alive today about the major countries of the world?

²Now the house of David was told "Aram has allied itself with Ephraim" so the hearts of Ahaz and his people were shaken, as the trees of the forest are shaken by the wind.

³Then the LORD said to Isaiah, "Go out, you and your son Shear Jashub," to meet Ahaz at the end of the aqueduct of the Upper Pool, on the road to the Washerwoman's Field. ⁴Say to him, "Be careful, keep calm and don't be afraid. Do not lose heart because of these two smoldering stubs of firewood—because of the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram and of the son of Remaliah. "Aram, Ephraim and Remaliah's son have plotted your ruin, saying, ⁵"Let us invade Judah, let us tear it apart and divide it among ourselves, and make the son of Tabael king over it." Yet this is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"It will not take place,
it will not happen,

⁶for the head of Aram is Damascus,
and the head of Damascus is only Rezin.
Within sixty-five years

Ephraim will be too shattered to be a people.
⁷The head of Ephraim is Samana,
and the head of Samana is only Remaliah's son.

If you do not stand firm in your faith,
you will not stand at all."

⁸Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, ¹¹"Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights."

¹²But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, I will not put the LORD to the test."

¹³Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the LORD himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and⁴ will call him Immanuel.⁵ ¹⁵He will eat curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right. ¹⁶But before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste. ¹⁷The LORD will bring on you and on

your people and on the house of your father a time unlike any since Ephraim broke away from Judah—he will bring the king of Assyria."

¹⁸In that day the LORD will whistle for flies from the distant streams of Egypt and for bees from the land of Assyria. ¹⁹They will all come and settle in the steep ravines and in the crevices in the rocks, on all the thornbushes and at all the water holes. ²⁰In that day the LORD will use a razor hired from beyond the River⁶—the king of Assyria—to shave your head and the hair of your legs, and to take off your beards also. ²¹In that day, a man will keep alive a young cow and two goats. ²²And because of the abundance of the milk they give, he will have curds to eat. All who remain in the land will eat curds and honey. ²³In that day, in every place where there were a thousand vines worth a thousand silver shekels,⁷ there will be only briars and thorns. ²⁴Men will go there with bow and arrow, for the land will be covered with briars and thorns. ²⁵As for all the hills once cultivated by the hoe, you will no longer go there for fear of the briars and thorns, they will become places where cattle are turned loose and where sheep run.

Assyria, the Lord's Instrument

8 The LORD said to me, "Take a large scroll and write on it with an ordinary pen. Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz."² And I will call in Uriah the priest and Zechariah son of Jeberechiah as reliable witnesses for me."

³Then I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and gave birth to a son. And the LORD said to me, "Name him Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. ⁴Before the boy knows how to say 'My father' or 'My mother,' the wealth of Damascus and the plunder of Samana will be carried off by the king of Assyria."

⁵The LORD spoke to me again:

⁶"Because this people has rejected
the gently flowing waters of Shiloah
and rejoices over Rezin
and the son of Remaliah,

⁷therefore the LORD is about to bring against
them

the mighty floodwaters of the River—
the king of Assyria with all his pomp.
It will overflow all its channels,
run over all its banks

⁸and sweep on into Judah, swirling over it,
passing through it and reaching up to the neck.

Its outspread wings will cover the breadth of
your land.

O Immanuel!"

⁹Raise the war cry, you nations, and be
shattered!

Listen, all you distant lands.

Prepare for battle, and be shattered!

Prepare for battle, and be shattered!

¹⁰Devise your strategy, but it will be thwarted;

7:14 A Famous Sign

Like so many prophecies, this one probably had two meanings: one for Isaiah's time and another much later. Isaiah urged King Ahaz to seek a sign from God about Judah's safety from its neighbors. Ahaz, notoriously stubborn and ungodly, refused.

Isaiah told of the sign anyway: a young boy would be born, and before he grew out of childhood Judah's feared enemies would be destroyed. Only 12 years after this prediction, the Northern Kingdom of Israel fell. The New Testament sees a further meaning in this prophecy, applying it to the birth of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:23).

⁴² Or has set up against us.
Sea Scrolls and he or and they
pounds (about 11.5 kilograms)
your camp.

⁴³ Shear Jashub means a remnant will return.
¹⁴ Immanuel means God with us.

¹ Maher Shalal Hash Baz means quick to the plunder, swift to the spoil, also in verse 3.

¹⁴ The Hebrew is plural.

²⁰ That is, the Euphrates.

¹⁴ Masoretic Text. Dead

²³ That is, about 24

⁹ Or Do

propose your plan, but it will not stand,
for God is with us.^a

Fear God

¹¹The LORD spoke to me with his strong hand upon me, warning me not to follow the way of this people. He said:

¹²"Do not call conspiracy
everything that these people call
conspiracy^b,
do not fear what they fear,
and do not dread it.

¹³The LORD Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy,
he is the one you are to fear,
he is the one you are to dread,

¹⁴and he will be a sanctuary;
but for both houses of Israel he will be
a stone that causes men to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall.
And for the people of Jerusalem he will be
a trap and a snare.

¹⁵Many of them will stumble;
they will fall and be broken,
they will be snared and captured."

¹⁶Bind up the testimony
and seal up the law among my disciples

¹⁷I will wait for the LORD,
who is hiding his face from the house of
Jacob

I will put my trust in him.

¹⁸Here am I, and the children the LORD has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the LORD Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion.

¹⁹When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? ²⁰To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn. ²¹Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land, when they are famished, they will become enraged and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God. ²²Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness.

To Us a Child Is Born

9 Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan—

²The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light,
on those living in the land of the shadow of
death—

a light has dawned

³You have enlarged the nation
and increased their joy,
they rejoice before you

as people rejoice at the harvest,
as men rejoice

when dividing the plunder.
⁴For as in the day of Midian's defeat,
you have shattered
the yoke that burdens them,
the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor.

⁵Every warrior's boot used in battle
and every garment rolled in blood
will be destined for burning,
will be fuel for the fire.

⁶For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his
shoulders.

And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor,^d Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷Of the increase of his government and peace
there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,

establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.

The Lord's Anger Against Israel

⁸The Lord has sent a message against Jacob;
it will fall on Israel.

⁹All the people will know it—
Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria—
who say with pride
and arrogance of heart,

¹⁰"The bricks have fallen down,
but we will rebuild with dressed stone,
the fig trees have been felled,
but we will replace them with cedars."

¹¹But the LORD has strengthened Rezin's foes
against them
and has spurred their enemies on.

¹²Arameans from the east and Philistines from
the west

have devoured Israel with open mouth.

Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away,
his hand is still upraised.

¹³But the people have not returned to him who
struck them,
nor have they sought the LORD Almighty

9:6 A Child Is Born

Isaiah includes many direct predictions of the coming Messiah, including this passage, which established that the Messiah will come from Galilee (verse 1). The lands Isaiah mentions as "humbled" in verse 1 are the very regions devastated by Assyria's armies (2 Kings 15:29). Thus Isaiah offers a word of distant hope for those parts of his nation most affected by war.

^a10 Hebrew Immanuel
Wonderful Counselor

^b12 Or Do not call for a treaty every time these people call for a treaty

^c2 Or land of darkness

^d4 Or

14 So the LORD will cut off from Israel both head and tail,
both palm branch and reed in a single day;
15 the elders and prominent men are the head,
the prophets who teach lies are the tail.
16 Those who guide this people mislead them,
and those who are guided are led astray.
17 Therefore the Lord will take no pleasure in the young men,
nor will he pity the fatherless and widows,
for everyone is ungodly and wicked,
every mouth speaks vileness.
Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away,
his hand is still upraised.

18 Surely wickedness burns like a fire;
it consumes briars and thorns,
it sets the forest thickets ablaze,
so that it rolls upward in a column of smoke.
19 By the wrath of the LORD Almighty
the land will be scorched
and the people will be fuel for the fire;
no one will spare his brother.
20 On the right they will devour,
but still be hungry;
on the left they will eat,
but not be satisfied
Each will feed on the flesh of his own offspring.
21 Manasseh will feed on Ephraim, and
Ephraim on Manasseh;
together they will turn against Judah.

Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away,
his hand is still upraised.

10 Woe to those who make unjust laws,
to those who issue oppressive decrees,
2 to deprive the poor of their rights
and withhold justice from the oppressed of
my people,
making widows their prey
and robbing the fatherless.
3 What will you do on the day of reckoning,
when disaster comes from afar?
To whom will you run for help?
Where will you leave your riches?
4 Nothing will remain but to cringe among the
captives
or fall among the slain.

Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away,
his hand is still upraised.

God's Judgment on Assyria

5 "Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger,
in whose hand is the club of my wrath!
6 I send him against a godless nation,
I dispatch him against a people who anger
me,
to seize loot and snatch plunder,
and to trample them down like mud in the
streets.
7 But this is not what he intends,
this is not what he has in mind,
his purpose is to destroy,

to put an end to many nations
8 "Are not my commanders all kings?" he says.
9 "Has not Calno fared like Carchemish?
Is not Hamath like Arpad,
and Samaria like Damascus?
10 As my hand seized the kingdoms of the idols,
kingdoms whose images excelled those of
Jerusalem and Samaria—
11 shall I not deal with Jerusalem and her images
as I dealt with Samaria and her idols?" "

12 When the Lord has finished all his work
against Mount Zion and Jerusalem, he will say, "I
will punish the king of Assyria for the willful pride
of his heart and the haughty look in his eyes." 13 For
he says:

"By the strength of my hand I have done this,
and by my wisdom, because I have
understanding

I removed the boundaries of nations,
I plundered their treasures;
like a mighty one I subdued^b their kings.

14 As one reaches into a nest,
so my hand reached for the wealth of the
nations;
as men gather abandoned eggs,
so I gathered all the countries;
not one flapped a wing,
or opened its mouth to chirp."

15 Does the ax raise itself above him who swings
it,
or the saw boast against him who uses it?
As if a rod were to wield him who lifts it up,
or a club brandish him who is not wood!
16 Therefore, the Lord, the LORD Almighty,
will send a wasting disease upon his sturdy
warriors;

under his pomp a fire will be kindled
like a blazing flame.

17 The Light of Israel will become a fire,
their Holy One a flame;
in a single day it will burn and consume
his thorns and his briars.

18 The splendor of his forests and fertile fields
it will completely destroy,
as when a sick man wastes away.

19 And the remaining trees of his forests will be
so few
that a child could write them down.

The Remnant of Israel

20 In that day the remnant of Israel,

10:7 God's Hand in History

In this comment, God reveals how he works
through history in hidden, indirect ways. The
pagan empire Assyria had no idea it was being used
by the true God—it dealt with Jerusalem just as it
dealt with any nation and its idols (verse 11).
Nevertheless, Assyria would serve God's purpose,
and would one day be punished for its own pride
and greed (verse 12).

^a20 Or arms ^b13 Or I subdued the mighty

the survivors of the house of Jacob,
will no longer rely on him
who struck them down
but will truly rely on the LORD,
the Holy One of Israel.

²¹A remnant will return,^a a remnant of Jacob
will return to the Mighty God

²²Though your people O Israel, be like the sand
by the sea,

only a remnant will return.
Destruction has been decreed,
overwhelming and righteous.

²³The LORD the LORD Almighty will carry out
the destruction decreed upon the whole
land.

²⁴Therefore this is what the LORD, the LORD Al-
mighty, says:

O my people who live in Zion,
do not be afraid of the Assyrians,
who beat you with a rod

and lift up a club against you as Egypt did
²⁵Very soon my anger against you will end
and my wrath will be directed to their
destruction

²⁶The LORD Almighty will lash them with a
whip,
as when he struck down Midian at the rock
of Oreb,

and he will raise his staff over the waters,
as he did in Egypt.

²⁷In that day their burden will be lifted from
your shoulders,
their yoke from your neck,
the yoke will be broken
because you have grown so fat.^b

²⁸They enter Aiath,
they pass through Migron;
they store supplies at Micmash

²⁹They go over the pass, and say,
"We will camp overnight at Geba."
Raman trembles,
Copeah of Saul flees

³⁰Cry out, O Daughter of Gallim!
Listen, O Laishah!
Poor Anathoth!

³¹Madmenah is in flight,
the people of Gebim take cover

³²This day they will halt at Nob,
they will shake their fist
at the mount of the Daughter of Zion,
at the hill of Jerusalem.

³³See, the LORD, the LORD Almighty,
will rip off the boughs with great power.
The lofty trees will be felled,
the tall ones will be brought low.

³⁴He will cut down the forest thickets with an ax;
Lebanon will fall before the Mighty One.

The Branch From Jesse

11 A shoot will come up from the stump of
Jesse,

from his roots a Branch will bear fruit
²The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of power,
the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the
LORD—

³and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.
He will not judge by what he sees with his
eyes,

or decide by what he hears with his ears;
⁴but with righteousness he will judge the
needy,

with justice he will give decisions for the
poor of the earth.

He will strike the earth with the rod of his
mouth;

with the breath of his lips he will slay the
wicked.

⁵Righteousness will be his belt
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

⁶The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling^c
together,
and a little child will lead them.

⁷The cow will feed with the bear,
their young will lie down together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

⁸The infant will play near the hole of the cobra,
and the young child put his hand into the
viper's nest.

⁹They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of
the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

¹⁰In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a
banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to
him, and his place of rest will be glorious. ¹¹In that
day the LORD will reach out his hand a second time
to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people
from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper
Egypt,^d from Cush,^e from Elam, from Babylo-
nia,^f from Hamath and from the islands of the
sea

¹²He will raise a banner for the nations
and gather the exiles of Israel;
he will assemble the scattered people of Judah
from the four quarters of the earth.

11:1 The Good Old Days

To express his message of hope to the Jewish
people, Isaiah appealed to their fondest memories.
This chapter borrows images from three of the
greatest events from the past: the prosperous
dynasty of David when Israel was united (verse 1);
the Garden of Eden (verses 6-9); and the miracles
of the exodus from Egypt (verse 15). Whatever the
state of "the good old days," the future time of
peace will exceed it.

^a Hebrew *shear-jashub* (verse 22)
and ^b Hebrew from *fatness*

^c Hebrew Septuagint broken from your shoulders
^d That is, the upper Nile region

^e Hebrew, Septuagint *lion* will

^f Hebrew *Shinar*

¹⁴Ephraim's jealousy will vanish,
and Judah's enemies will be cut off;
Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah,
nor Judah hostile toward Ephraim.
¹⁴They will swoop down on the slopes of
Philistia to the west,
together they will plunder the people to the
east.
They will lay hands on Edom and Moab,
and the Ammonites will be subject to them.
¹⁵The Lord will dry up
the gulf of the Egyptian sea,
with a scorching wind he will sweep his hand
over the Euphrates River.^b
He will break it up into seven streams
so that men can cross over in sandals.
¹⁶There will be a highway for the remnant of his
people
that is left from Assyria,
as there was for Israel
when they came up from Egypt.

Songs of Praise

12 In that day you will say:
"I will praise you, O Lord
Although you were angry with me,
your anger has turned away
and you have comforted me.
²Surely God is my salvation;
I will trust and not be afraid.
The Lord, the Lord, is my strength and my
song,
he has become my salvation."
³With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.
⁴In that day you will say:
"Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name;
make known among the nations what he has
done,
and proclaim that his name is exalted.
⁵Sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious
things,
let this be known to all the world.
⁶Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion,
for great is the Holy One of Israel among
you."

A Prophecy Against Babylon

13 An oracle concerning Babylon that Isaiah
son of Amoz saw:
²Raise a banner on a bare hilltop,

12:6 A Key Phrase

The first 12 chapters contain specific messages to Judah. But now Isaiah shifts his focus to surrounding nations. He ends the first section with a reference to the "Holy One of Israel," a key phrase that hints at the special relationship between God and his covenant nation. The phrase appears only five times in the rest of the Old Testament, but 26 times in Isaiah.

shout to them;
beckon to them
to enter the gates of the nobles
³I have commanded my holy ones;
I have summoned my warriors to carry out
my wrath—
those who rejoice in my triumph.

⁴Listen, a noise on the mountains,
like that of a great multitude!
Listen, an uproar among the kingdoms,
like nations massing together!
The Lord Almighty is mustering
an army for war.
⁵They come from faraway lands,
from the ends of the heavens—
the Lord and the weapons of his wrath—
to destroy the whole country.
⁶Wail, for the day of the Lord is near;
it will come like destruction from the
Almighty.^c
⁷Because of this, all hands will go limp,
every man's heart will melt.
⁸Terror will seize them,
pain and anguish will grip them;
they will writhe like a woman in labor.
They will look aghast at each other,
their faces aflame.

⁹See, the day of the Lord is coming
—a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger—
to make the land desolate
and destroy the sinners within it.
¹⁰The stars of heaven and their constellations
will not show their light.
The rising sun will be darkened
and the moon will not give its light.
¹¹I will punish the world for its evil,
the wicked for their sins.
I will put an end to the arrogance of the
haughty
and will humble the pride of the ruthless.
¹²I will make man scarcer than pure gold,
more rare than the gold of Ophir.
¹³Therefore I will make the heavens tremble;
and the earth will shake from its place
at the wrath of the Lord Almighty,
in the day of his burning anger.

¹⁴Like a hunted gazelle,
like sheep without a shepherd,
each will return to his own people,
each will flee to his native land.
¹⁵Whoever is captured will be thrust through;
all who are caught will fall by the sword.
¹⁶Their infants will be dashed to pieces before
their eyes;
their houses will be looted and their wives
ravished.

¹⁷See, I will stir up against them the Medes,
who do not care for silver
and have no delight in gold.
¹⁸Their bows will strike down the young men;
they will have no mercy on infants.

¹³ Or hostility

¹⁵ Hebrew the River

¹⁶ Hebrew Shaddai

nor will they look with compassion on children.

¹⁹Babylon, the jewel of kingdoms,
the glory of the Babylonians'^a pride,
will be overthrown by God
like Sodom and Gomorrah.

²⁰She will never be inhabited
or lived in through all generations,
no Arab will pitch his tent there,
no shepherd will rest his flocks there.

²¹But desert creatures will lie there,
jackals will fill her houses;
there the owls will dwell,
and there the wild goats will leap about

²²Hyenas will howl in her strongholds,
jackals in her luxurious palaces.

Her time is at hand,
and her days will not be prolonged.

14 The LORD will have compassion on Jacob,
once again he will choose Israel
and will settle them in their own land.
Aliens will join them
and unite with the house of Jacob.
²Nations will take them
and bring them to their own place.
And the house of Israel will possess the nations
as menservants and maidservants in the
LORD's land.
They will make captives of their captors
and rule over their oppressors.

³On the day the LORD gives you relief from suffering and turmoil and cruel bondage, ⁴you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon:

How the oppressor has come to an end!
How his fury^b has ended!

⁵The LORD has broken the rod of the wicked,
the scepter of the rulers,

⁶which in anger struck down peoples
with unceasing blows,
and in fury subdued nations
with relentless aggression.

⁷All the lands are at rest and at peace;
they break into singing.

⁸Even the pine trees and the cedars of Lebanon
exult over you and say,

"Now that you have been laid low,
no woodsman comes to cut us down."

⁹The grave^c below is all astir
to meet you at your coming;
it rouses the spirits of the departed to greet you—

all those who were leaders in the world;
it makes them rise from their thrones—
all those who were kings over the nations.

¹⁰They will all respond,
they will say to you,

"You also have become weak, as we are;
you have become like us."

¹¹All your pomp has been brought down to the
grave,
along with the noise of your harps;

maggots are spread out beneath you
and worms cover you.

¹²How you have fallen from heaven,
O morning star, son of the dawn!
You have been cast down to the earth,
you who once laid low the nations!

¹³You said in your heart,
"I will ascend to heaven;

I will raise my throne
above the stars of God;

I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly,
on the utmost heights of the sacred
mountain.^d

¹⁴I will ascend above the tops of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High."

¹⁵But you are brought down to the grave,
to the depths of the pit.

¹⁶Those who see you stare at you,
they ponder your fate:

"Is this the man who shook the earth
and made kingdoms tremble,

¹⁷the man who made the world a desert,
who overthrew its cities
and would not let his captives go home?"

¹⁸All the kings of the nations lie in state,
each in his own tomb.

¹⁹But you are cast out of your tomb
like a rejected branch;
you are covered with the slain,
with those pierced by the sword,
those who descend to the stones of the pit.

Like a corpse trampled underfoot,
²⁰ you will not join them in burial,
for you have destroyed your land
and killed your people.

The offspring of the wicked
will never be mentioned again.

²¹Prepare a place to slaughter his sons
for the sins of their forefathers;
they are not to rise to inherit the land
and cover the earth with their cities.

²²"I will rise up against them,"
declares the LORD Almighty.

"I will cut off from Babylon her name and
survivors,

14:12 Fall of the Morning Star

A name used of Satan—Lucifer, or "morning star"—comes from this verse. The word *Lucifer* refers to Venus, one of the brightest objects in the sky. Yet, when the sun rises, the light of even the brightest morning star is totally eclipsed.

In context, Isaiah was describing the cruelly oppressive king of Babylon, who swelled with pride but would be brought down to defeat. However, Isaiah may be hinting at a force behind the human king: Satan himself. Isaiah's metaphor of the faded morning star aptly describes the eclipse of the haughty king of Babylon—and of Satan.

^a19 Or Chaldeans

^d4 Dead Sea Scrolls Septuagint and Syriac the meaning of the word in the Masoretic Text is uncertain

^c9 Hebrew Sheol, also in verses 11 and 15

^d13 Or the north, Hebrew Zaphan

her offspring and descendants,"
declares the LORD.

23 "I will turn her into a place for owls
and into swampland.

I will sweep her with the broom of
destruction,"
declares the LORD Almighty.

A Prophecy Against Assyria

24 The LORD Almighty has sworn,

"Surely, as I have planned, so it will be,
and as I have purposed, so it will stand.
25 I will crush the Assyrian in my land,
on my mountains I will trample him down.
His yoke will be taken from my people,
and his burden removed from their
shoulders."

26 This is the plan determined for the whole
world,
this is the hand stretched out over all
nations.

27 For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who
can thwart him?

His hand is stretched out, and who can turn
it back?

A Prophecy Against the Philistines

28 This oracle came in the year King Ahaz died:

29 Do not rejoice, all you Philistines,
that the rod that struck you is broken;
from the root of that snake will spring up a
viper,
its fruit will be a darting, venomous serpent.

30 The poorest of the poor will find pasture,
and the needy will lie down in safety.
But your root I will destroy by famine;
it will slay your survivors.

31 Wail, O gate! Howl, O city!
Melt away, all you Philistines!
A cloud of smoke comes from the north,
and there is not a straggler in its ranks.

32 What answer shall be given
to the envoys of that nation?

"The LORD has established Zion,
and in her his afflicted people will find
refuge."

A Prophecy Against Moab

15 An oracle concerning Moab:

Ar in Moab is ruined,
destroyed in a night!

Kir in Moab is ruined,
destroyed in a night!

2 Dibon goes up to its temple,
to its high places to weep;
Moab wails over Nebo and Medeba.

Every head is shaved
and every beard cut off.

3 In the streets they wear sackcloth;
on the roofs and in the public squares
they all wail,
prostrate with weeping.

4 Heshbon and Elealeh cry out,
their voices are heard all the way to Jahaz.
Therefore the armed men of Moab cry out,
and their hearts are faint.

5 My heart cries out over Moab;
her fugitives flee as far as Zoar,
as far as Eglath Shelishiyah.
They go up the way to Luhith,
weeping as they go;
on the road to Horonaim
they lament their destruction.

6 The waters of Nimrim are dried up
and the grass is withered;
the vegetation is gone
and nothing green is left.

7 So the wealth they have acquired and stored
up
they carry away over the Ravine of the
Poplars.

8 Their outcry echoes along the border of Moab;
their wailing reaches as far as Eglaim,
their lamentation as far as Beer Elim.

9 Dimon's^a waters are full of blood,
but I will bring still more upon Dimon—
a lion upon the fugitives of Moab
and upon those who remain in the land.

16 Send lambs as tribute
to the ruler of the land,
from Sela, across the desert,
to the mount of the Daughter of Zion.

2 Like fluttering birds
pushed from the nest,
so are the women of Moab
at the fords of the Arnon.

3 "Give us counsel,
render a decision.
Make your shadow like night—
at high noon.

Hide the fugitives,
do not betray the refugees.

4 Let the Moabite fugitives stay with you;
be their shelter from the destroyer."

The oppressor will come to an end,
and destruction will cease;
the aggressor will vanish from the land.

5 In love a throne will be established;
in faithfulness a man will sit on it—
one from the house^b of David—
one who in judging seeks justice
and speeds the cause of righteousness.

6 We have heard of Moab's pride—
her overweening pride and conceit,
her pride and her insolence—
but her boasts are empty.

7 Therefore the Moabites wail,
they wail together for Moab.
Lament and grieve
for the men^c of Kir Hareseth.

8 The fields of Heshbon wither,
the vines of Sibmah also.
The rulers of the nations

^a9 Masoretic Text, Dead Sea Scrolls, some Septuagint manuscripts and Vulgate Dibon
wordplay

^b5 Hebrew tent

^c7 Or "ruism colors," a

have trampled down the choicest vines,
which once reached Jazer
and spread toward the desert
Their shoots spread out
and went as far as the sea

⁹So I weep, as Jazer weeps,
for the vines of Sibmah
O Heshbon, O Elealeh,
I drench you with tears!

The shouts of joy over your ripened fruit
and over your harvests have been stifled

¹⁰Joy and gladness are taken away from the
orchards,

no one sings or shouts in the vineyards,
no one treads out wine at the presses,
for I have put an end to the shouting

¹¹My heart laments for Moab like a harp,
my inmost being for Kir Hareseth

¹²When Moab appears at her high place,
she only wears herself out,
when she goes to her shrine to pray,
it is to no avail

¹³This is the word the LORD has already spoken
concerning Moab. ¹⁴But now the LORD says:
"Within three years, as a servant bound by con-
tract would count them, Moab's splendor and all
her many people will be despised, and her survi-
vors will be very few and feeble."

An Oracle Against Damascus

17 An oracle concerning Damascus:

"See, Damascus will no longer be a city
but will become a heap of ruins.

²The cities of Aroer will be deserted
and left to flocks, which will lie down,
with no one to make them afraid.

³The fortified city will disappear from Ephraim,
and royal power from Damascus;
the remnant of Aram will be
like the glory of the Israelites,"

declares the LORD Almighty.

⁴"In that day the glory of Jacob will fade;
the fat of his body will waste away.

⁵It will be as when a reaper gathers the standing
grain

and harvests the grain with his arm—
as when a man gleanes heads of grain
in the Valley of Rephaim.

⁶Yet some gleanings will remain,
as when an olive tree is beaten,
leaving two or three olives on the topmost
branches,

four or five on the fruitful boughs,"
declares the LORD, the God of Israel.

⁷In that day men will look to their Maker
and turn their eyes to the Holy One of Israel.

⁸They will not look to the altars,
the work of their hands,
and they will have no regard for the Asherah
poles
and the incense altars their fingers have
made

⁹In that day their strong cities, which they left
because of the Israelites, will be like places aban-
doned to thickets and undergrowth. And all will
be desolation.

¹⁰You have forgotten God your Savior;
you have not remembered the Rock, your
fortress

Therefore, though you set out the finest plants
and plant imported vines,

¹¹though on the day you set them out, you make
them grow,
and on the morning when you plant them,
you bring them to bud,
yet the harvest will be as nothing
in the day of disease and incurable pain.

¹²Oh, the raging of many nations—
they rage like the raging sea!
Oh, the uproar of the peoples—
they roar like the roaring of great waters!

¹³Although the peoples roar like the roar of
surging waters,
when he rebukes them they flee far away,
driven before the wind like chaff on the hills,
like tumbleweed before a gale.

¹⁴In the evening, sudden terror!
Before the morning, they are gone!
This is the portion of those who loot us,
the lot of those who plunder us.

A Prophecy Against Cush

18 Woe to the land of whirring wings^a
along the rivers of Cush,^c

²which sends envoys by sea
in papyrus boats over the water.

Go, swift messengers,
to a people tall and smooth-skinned,
to a people feared far and wide,
an aggressive nation of strange speech,
whose land is divided by rivers.

16:9 A Prophet's Pain

Although Isaiah often delivered bad news to the nations around him, he never took pleasure in it. Remarkably, he often deeply identified with the pain of other, non-Jewish nations such as Moab (see 15:5). Chapters 15-16 were likely used as sources for Jeremiah 48. (Jeremiah was another prophet who suffered greatly.)

18:2 A People Tall and Smooth-skinned

Isaiah was never afraid of direct political involvement. He consistently spoke out against alliances with any foreign powers. Here, he warned against the "envoys by sea" coming from Cush, a region near Ethiopia or Sudan. Judah's king was often tempted to make alliances with Ethiopia or Egypt, but according to Isaiah, both nations would meet disaster.

^a8 That is, symbols of the goddess Asherah

^c1 Or of locusts

^c1 That is, the upper Nile region

³All you people of the world,
you who live on the earth,
when a banner is raised on the mountains,
you will see it,
and when a trumpet sounds,
you will hear it.

⁴This is what the LORD says to me:
"I will remain quiet and will look on from
my dwelling place,
like shimmering heat in the sunshine,
like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest."
⁵For, before the harvest, when the blossom is
gone
and the flower becomes a ripening grape,
he will cut off the shoots with pruning knives,
and cut down and take away the spreading
branches.

⁶They will all be left to the mountain birds of
prey
and to the wild animals;
the birds will feed on them all summer,
the wild animals all winter

⁷At that time gifts will be brought to the LORD
Almighty

from a people tall and smooth-skinned,
from a people feared far and wide,
an aggressive nation of strange speech,
whose land is divided by rivers—

the gifts will be brought to Mount Zion, the place
of the Name of the LORD Almighty.

A Prophecy About Egypt

19 An oracle concerning Egypt:

See, the LORD rides on a swift cloud
and is coming to Egypt.
The idols of Egypt tremble before him,
and the hearts of the Egyptians melt within
them.

²"I will stir up Egyptian against Egyptian—
brother will fight against brother,
neighbor against neighbor,
city against city,

INSIGHT

Catastrophes Through God's Eyes

An endless cycle of war and death—what did it mean?

At this my body is racked with pain, pangs seize me, like those of a woman in labor; I am staggered by what I hear, I am bewildered by what I see. 21:3

There is one easy way to picture the Middle East of Isaiah's day: simply follow today's newspaper headlines and project backward in time. Then, as now, one nation would invade its neighbor, leveling cities and devastating the land and its people. The prophet Isaiah longed for an end to the cycle, much as modern-day residents of Lebanon or Israel do today.

Isaiah looked at the world with a kind of split vision. Around him, he saw spiritual decay and the dreary cycle of war and death. Yet God had given him a clear vision of what his nation could one day become—a pure people, faithful to God, living in peace with "war no more."

A Kingdom for a Purpose

With God's view of the future shining brightly before him, Isaiah went about reinterpreting history. Others in Judah looked upon military invasions as terrible catastrophes. In contrast, Isaiah—though he felt anguish over the events—saw glimpses of a higher purpose.

Isaiah said that Judah had to endure pain and suffering in order to be purified. He counseled against making political alliances to forestall the punishment. God's people had to go through the fire, and from the trials a *remnant*—a small remaining number of persons—would emerge that God could then use to accomplish his work. Isaiah went so far as to name his own son "a remnant will return" as a walking object lesson of his message to Judah (see Isaiah 7:3 and footnote).

Why had the Jews been called by God in the first place? They were to be a "light to the Gentiles," Isaiah said, a nation used by God to bring his truth to other nations. And out of the land of Judah God would raise up a great Prince who would rule over all the earth.

Who Is in Charge?

In short, God had not discarded his people, no matter how bleak things looked. The Israelites would ultimately become a missionary nation, pointing others to God.

Above all messages, Isaiah stressed this one: God is in charge of history. To Judah—surrounded by enemies, staggering from invasion, weary of bloodshed—God seemed faraway and distant. Isaiah assured them that the great powers of earth were mere tools in God's hands; he would use them and fling them aside.

Life Questions Isaiah described people who felt afraid and abandoned by God. Have you ever felt like that? How does Isaiah's message offer hope for us today?

kingdom against kingdom.

³The Egyptians will lose heart,
and I will bring their plans to nothing,
they will consult the idols and the spirits of the
dead,

the mediums and the spiritists.

⁴I will hand the Egyptians over
to the power of a cruel master,
and a fierce king will rule over them,"
declares the Lord, the Lord Almighty.

⁵The waters of the river will dry up,
and the riverbed will be parched and dry.

⁶The canals will stink,
the streams of Egypt will dwindle and dry
up

The reeds and rushes will wither,

⁷ also the plants along the Nile,
at the mouth of the river

Every sown field along the Nile
will become parched, will blow away and be
no more

⁸The fishermen will groan and lament,
all who cast hooks into the Nile;
those who throw nets on the water
will pine away.

⁹Those who work with combed flax will
despair,
the weavers of fine linen will lose hope.

¹⁰The workers in cloth will be dejected,
and all the wage earners will be sick at heart.

¹¹The officials of Zoan are nothing but fools;
the wise counselors of Pharaoh give
senseless advice.

How can you say to Pharaoh,
"I am one of the wise men,
a disciple of the ancient kings"?

¹²Where are your wise men now?
Let them show you and make known
what the Lord Almighty
has planned against Egypt.

¹³The officials of Zoan have become fools,
the leaders of Memphis^a are deceived;
the cornerstones of her peoples
have led Egypt astray

¹⁴The Lord has poured into them
a spirit of dizziness;
they make Egypt stagger in all that she does,
as a drunkard staggers around in his vomit.

¹⁵There is nothing Egypt can do—
head or tail, palm branch or reed.

¹⁶In that day the Egyptians will be like women.
They will shudder with fear at the uplifted hand
that the Lord Almighty raises against them. ¹⁷And
the land of Judah will bring terror to the Egyptians;
everyone to whom Judah is mentioned will be ter-
rified, because of what the Lord Almighty is plan-
ning against them.

¹⁸In that day five cities in Egypt will speak the
language of Canaan and swear allegiance to the
Lord Almighty. One of them will be called the City
of Destruction.^b

¹⁹In that day there will be an altar to the Lord in

the heart of Egypt, and a monument to the Lord at
its border. ²⁰It will be a sign and witness to the
Lord Almighty in the land of Egypt. When they
cry out to the Lord because of their oppressors, he
will send them a savior and defender, and he will
rescue them. ²¹So the Lord will make himself
known to the Egyptians, and in that day they will
acknowledge the Lord. They will worship with
sacrifices and grain offerings, they will make vows
to the Lord and keep them. ²²The Lord will strike
Egypt with a plague, he will strike them and heal
them. They will turn to the Lord, and he will
respond to their pleas and heal them.

²³In that day there will be a highway from Egypt
to Assyria. The Assyrians will go to Egypt and the
Egyptians to Assyria. The Egyptians and Assyri-
ans will worship together. ²⁴In that day Israel will
be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a
blessing on the earth. ²⁵The Lord Almighty will
bless them, saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people,
Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheri-
tance."

A Prophecy Against Egypt and Cush

20 In the year that the supreme commander,
sent by Sargon king of Assyria, came to
Ashdod and attacked and captured it— ^{2a}at that
time the Lord spoke through Isaiah son of Amoz.
He said to him, "Take off the sackcloth from your
body and the sandals from your feet." And he did
so, going around stripped and barefoot.

³Then the Lord said, "Just as my servant Isaiah
has gone stripped and barefoot for three years, as a
sign and portent against Egypt and Cush,^c ⁴so the
king of Assyria will lead away stripped and bare-
foot the Egyptian captives and Cushite exiles,
young and old, with buttocks bared—to Egypt's
shame. ⁵Those who trusted in Cush and boasted in
Egypt will be afraid and put to shame. ⁶In that day
the people who live on this coast will say, 'See
what has happened to those we relied on, those
we fled to for help and deliverance from the king of
Assyria! How then can we escape?' "

A Prophecy Against Babylon

21 An oracle concerning the Desert by the Sea:

Like whirlwinds sweeping through the
southland,
an invader comes from the desert,
from a land of terror.

^{2A} A dire vision has been shown to me:

20:2 A Dramatic Object Lesson

Isaiah was an educated and urbane prophet, at
home in the corridors of power. His reputation
must have made this object lesson very shocking:
for three years he walked around stripped and
barefoot, in the guise of a slave, to protest a
planned alliance with Egypt and Cush. He had
originally opposed an alliance with Assyria. Now
he opposed a treaty with other nations as well.

^a13 Hebrew Noph

^b18 Most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, some manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, Dead Sea Scrolls and
Vulgate City of the Sun (that is, Hebopolis)

^c3 That is, the upper Nile region, also in verse 5

The traitor betrays, the looter takes loot.
 Flam, attack! Media, lay siege!¹
 I will bring to an end all the groaning she
 caused

³At this my body is racked with pain,
 pangs seize me, like those of a woman in
 labor.

I am staggered by what I hear,
 I am bewildered by what I see.

⁴My heart falters,
 fear makes me tremble,
 the twilight I longed for
 has become a horror to me.

⁵They set the tables,
 they spread the rugs,
 they eat, they drink!
 Get up, you officers,
 oil the shields!

⁶This is what the Lord says to me:

"Go, post a lookout
 and have him report what he sees.

⁷When he sees chariots
 with teams of horses,
 riders on donkeys
 or riders on camels,
 let him be alert,
 fully alert."

⁸And the lookout^a shouted,

"Day after day, my lord, I stand on the
 watchtower;
 every night I stay at my post.

⁹Look, here comes a man in a chariot
 with a team of horses.
 And he gives back the answer:
 'Babylon has fallen, has fallen!
 All the images of its gods
 lie shattered on the ground!'"

¹⁰O my people, crushed on the threshing floor,
 I tell you what I have heard
 from the LORD Almighty,
 from the God of Israel

A Prophecy Against Edom

¹¹An oracle concerning Dumah^b:

Someone calls to me from Seir,
 "Watchman, what is left of the night?
 Watchman, what is left of the night?"

¹²The watchman replies,
 "Morning is coming, but also the night.
 If you would ask, then ask;
 and come back yet again."

A Prophecy Against Arabia

¹³An oracle concerning Arabia:

You caravans of Dedanites,
 who camp in the thickets of Arabia,
¹⁴bring water for the thirsty;
 you who live in Tema,
 bring food for the fugitives.
¹⁵They flee from the sword,

from the drawn sword,
 from the bent bow
 and from the heat of battle.

¹⁶This is what the Lord says to me: "Within one
 year, as a servant bound by contract would count
 it, all the pomp of Kedar will come to an end. ¹⁷The
 survivors of the bowmen, the warriors of Kedar,
 will be few." The LORD, the God of Israel, has
 spoken.

A Prophecy About Jerusalem

22 An oracle concerning the Valley of Vision

What troubles you now,
 that you have all gone up on the roofs,

²⁰O town full of commotion,
 O city of tumult and revelry?

Your slain were not killed by the sword,
 nor did they die in battle

³All your leaders have fled together;
 they have been captured without using the
 bow

All you who were caught were taken prisoner
 together,
 having fled while the enemy was still far
 away

⁴Therefore I said, "Turn away from me;
 let me weep bitterly.
 Do not try to console me
 over the destruction of my people."

⁵The Lord, the LORD Almighty, has a day
 of tumult and trampling and terror
 in the Valley of Vision,
 a day of battering down walls
 and of crying out to the mountains.

⁶Elam takes up the quiver,
 with her charioteers and horses;
 Kir uncovers the shield.

⁷Your choicest valleys are full of chariots,
 and horsemen are posted at the city gates;
⁸the defenses of Judah are stripped away.

And you looked in that day
 to the weapons in the Palace of the Forest,
⁹you saw that the City of David
 had many breaches in its defenses;
 you stored up water
 in the Lower Pool.

¹⁰You counted the buildings in Jerusalem
 and tore down houses to strengthen the
 wall.

¹¹You built a reservoir between the two walls
 for the water of the Old Pool,
 but you did not look to the One who made it,
 or have regard for the One who planned it
 long ago.

¹²The Lord, the LORD Almighty,
 called you on that day
 to weep and to wail,
 to tear out your hair and put on sackcloth.

¹³But see, there is joy and revelry,
 slaughtering of cattle and killing of sheep,
 eating of meat and drinking of wine!

"Let us eat and drink," you say,

^a Dead Sea Scrolls and Syriac. Masoretic Text A lion

^b11 Dumah means silence or stillness, a wordplay on Edom

...and left without house or harbor.
From the land of Cyprus⁹
word has come to them.
Be silent, you people of the island
and you merchants of Sidon,
whom the seafarers have enriched.
On the great waters
came the grain of the Shihor;
the harvest of the Nile¹⁰ was the revenue of
Tyre,
and she became the marketplace of the
nations.
Be ashamed, O Sidon, and you, O fortress of
the sea
for the sea has spoken:
I have neither been in labor nor given birth;
I have neither reared sons nor brought up
daughters."
When word comes to Egypt,
they will be in anguish at the report from
Tyre.
Cross over to Tarshish,
wail, you people of the island.
Is this your city of revelry,
the old, old city,
whose feet have taken her
to settle in far-off lands?
Who planned this against Tyre,
the restorer of crowns,
whose merchants are princes,
whose traders are renowned in the earth?
The Lord Almighty planned it,
to bring low the pride of all glory
and to humble all who are renowned on the
earth.
Till your land as along the Nile,
O Daughter of Tarshish,
for you no longer have a harbor.
The Lord has stretched out his hand over the
...
and made its kingdoms tremble.
He has given an order concerning Phoenicia
that her fortresses be destroyed.
He said, "No more of your reveling,
O Virgin Daughter of Sidon, now crushed!
Up, cross over to Cyprus;
even there you will find no rest."
Look at the land of the Babylonians,¹¹
this people that is now of no account!
The Assyrians have made it

A Prophecy About Tyre

23 A prophecy concerning Tyre
and the people of Tarshish
For Tyre is destroyed

22:12 Smiles Instead of Tears

This chapter may refer to Jerusalem's deliverance recorded in Isaiah 36-37. Isaiah was distressed because in the face of great devastation, Jerusalem was celebrating, not mourning. People had reinforced walls and built water reservoirs to prepare for war, but had not turned to God for help (verse 11). Jews at that time had a certain cockiness about the city of Jerusalem, believing that God would never allow it to fall into enemy hands.

23:1 The Decline of Tyre

In Isaiah's day the city of Tyre was a major power, dominating the sea trade in the eastern Mediterranean. Her many colonies included the island of Cyprus, and her merchants traveled as far as the Indian Ocean and the English Channel. But not long after this prophecy Assyria conquered the city, and Tyre's king fled to Cyprus.

⁹23 Or Cyprus
the great waters
the sea

¹⁰12 Hebrew Kabbah
The grain of the Shihor,
the harvest of the Nile.
¹¹13 Hebrew Canaan

¹²23 Masoretic Text; one Dead Sea Scroll Sidon, / who cross over the sea; / your envoys have on
¹⁴10 Dead Sea Scrolls and some Septuagint manuscripts, Masoretic
¹³13 Or Chaldeans

and a shade from the heat.
 For the breath of the ruthless
 is like a storm driving against a wall
 and like the heat of the desert.
 You silence the uproar of foreigners;
 as heat is reduced by the shadow of a cloud,
 so the song of the ruthless is stilled.

⁶On this mountain the LORD Almighty will
 prepare

a feast of rich food for all peoples,
 a banquet of aged wine—
 the best of meats and the finest of wines.

⁷On this mountain he will destroy
 the shroud that enfolds all peoples,
 the sheet that covers all nations;

⁸ he will swallow up death forever.

The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears
 from all faces;

he will remove the disgrace of his people
 from all the earth

The LORD has spoken.

⁹In that day they will say,

"Surely this is our God;
 we trusted in him, and he saved us.

This is the LORD, we trusted in him;

let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation."

¹⁰The hand of the LORD will rest on this
 mountain;

but Moab will be trampled under him
 as straw is trampled down in the manure.

¹¹They will spread out their hands in it,
 as a swimmer spreads out his hands to
 swim.

God will bring down their pride
 despite the cleverness of their hands.

¹²He will bring down your high fortified walls
 and lay them low;

he will bring them down to the ground,
 to the very dust.

A Song of Praise

26 In that day this song will be sung in the land
 of Judah:

We have a strong city;
 God makes salvation
 its walls and ramparts.

²Open the gates
 that the righteous nation may enter,
 the nation that keeps faith.

³You will keep in perfect peace

25:6 A Promise of Eternal Life

The Old Testament includes only a few hints about resurrection and the afterlife, and this is one of the strongest. Isaiah follows a devastating chapter on God's judgment of the whole earth (chapter 24) with a bright promise of a future life. Then, death and pain will be abolished (see 25:6-8 and 26:19), and God will reign with perfect justice.

him whose mind is steadfast,
 because he trusts in you.

⁴Trust in the LORD forever,
 for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal.

⁵He humbles those who dwell on high,
 he lays the lofty city low;

he levels it to the ground
 and casts it down to the dust.

⁶Feet trample it down—
 the feet of the oppressed,
 the footsteps of the poor.

⁷The path of the righteous is level;
 O upright One, you make the way of the
 righteous smooth.

⁸Yes, LORD, walking in the way of your laws,^b
 we wait for you;

your name and renown
 are the desire of our hearts.

⁹My soul yearns for you in the night;
 in the morning my spirit longs for you.

When your judgments come upon the earth,
 the people of the world learn righteousness.

¹⁰Though grace is shown to the wicked,
 they do not learn righteousness;
 even in a land of uprightness they go on doing
 evil

and regard not the majesty of the LORD.

¹¹O LORD, your hand is lifted high,
 but they do not see it.

Let them see your zeal for your people and be
 put to shame;

let the fire reserved for your enemies
 consume them.

¹²LORD, you establish peace for us;
 all that we have accomplished you have
 done for us.

¹³O LORD, our God, other lords besides you have
 ruled over us,

but your name alone do we honor.

¹⁴They are now dead, they live no more;
 those departed spirits do not rise.

You punished them and brought them to ruin;
 you wiped out all memory of them.

¹⁵You have enlarged the nation, O LORD;
 you have enlarged the nation.

You have gained glory for yourself;
 you have extended all the borders of the
 land.

¹⁶LORD, they came to you in their distress;
 when you disciplined them,
 they could barely whisper a prayer.^c

¹⁷As a woman with child and about to give birth
 writhes and cries out in her pain,
 so were we in your presence, O LORD.

¹⁸We were with child, we writhed in pain,
 but we gave birth to wind.

We have not brought salvation to the earth;
 we have not given birth to people of the
 world.

¹⁹But your dead will live;
 their bodies will rise.
 You who dwell in the dust,

^a11 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain
 uncertain

^b8 Or judgments

^c16 The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is

wake up and shout for joy.
Your dew is like the dew of the morning,
the earth will give birth to her dead.

²See, my people enter your rooms
and shut the doors behind you;
they reserve for a little while
but their wrath has passed by
and the LORD is coming out of his dwelling
to punish the people of the earth for their
iniquity.

The earth will disclose the blood shed upon
her,
she will conceal her slain no longer.

Deliverance of Israel

27 In that day
the LORD will punish with his sword,
his fierce, great and powerful sword,
Leviathan the gliding serpent,
Leviathan the coiling serpent;
he will slay the monster of the sea.
In that day—

Sing about a fruitful vineyard
I, the LORD, watch over it;
I water it continually
I guard it day and night
so that no one may harm it
I am not angry
only there were briars and thorns
confronting me!
I would march against them in battle;
I would set them all on fire
Or else let them come to me for refuge;
let them make peace with me,
yes, let them make peace with me."

Days to come Jacob will take root,
Israel will bud and blossom
and fill all the world with fruit

Has the LORD struck her
as he struck down those who struck her?
Has she been killed
as those were killed who killed her?
⁵By warfare^a and exile you contend with her—
with his fierce blast he drives her out,
as on a day the east wind blows.
⁶By this, then, will Jacob's guilt be atoned for,
and this will be the full fruitage of the
removal of his sin
When he makes all the altar stones
to be like chalk stones crushed to pieces,
Asherah poles^b or incense altars
will be left standing

27-1 A Prophecy for the World

Most of Isaiah 1-39 concerns specific nations in the prophet's own time. But chapters 24 to 27 form a unit that seems to sum up all world history. Those chapters contain some of Isaiah's strongest imagery.

¹⁰The fortified city stands desolate,
an abandoned settlement, forsaken like the
desert,

there the calves graze,
there they lie down;
they strip its branches bare.

¹¹When its twigs are dry, they are broken off
and women come and make fires with them.
For this is a people without understanding;
so their Maker has no compassion on them,
and their Creator shows them no favor.

¹²In that day the LORD will thresh from the flow-
ing Euphrates to the Wadi of Egypt, and you, O
Israelites, will be gathered up one by one. ¹³And in
that day a great trumpet will sound. Those who
were perishing in Assyria and those who were
exiled in Egypt will come and worship the LORD on
the holy mountain in Jerusalem.

Woe to Ephraim

28 Woe to that wreath, the pride of Ephraim's
drunkards,

to the fading flower, his glorious beauty,
set on the head of a fertile valley—
to that city, the pride of those laid low by
wine!

²See, the LORD has one who is powerful and
strong.

Like a hailstorm and a destructive wind,
like a driving rain and a flooding downpour,
he will throw it forcefully to the ground.

³That wreath, the pride of Ephraim's
drunkards,
will be trampled underfoot.

⁴That fading flower, his glorious beauty,
set on the head of a fertile valley,
will be like a fig ripe before harvest—
as soon as someone sees it and takes it in his
hand,
he swallows it.

⁵In that day the LORD Almighty
will be a glorious crown,
a beautiful wreath
for the remnant of his people.

⁶He will be a spirit of justice
to him who sits in judgment,
a source of strength
to those who turn back the battle at the gate.

⁷And these also stagger from wine
and reel from beer:

Priests and prophets stagger from beer
and are befuddled with wine;
they reel from beer,

they stagger when seeing visions,
they stumble when rendering decisions.

⁸All the tables are covered with vomit
and there is not a spot without filth.

⁹"Who is it he is trying to teach?

To whom is he explaining his message?
To children weaned from their milk,
to those just taken from the breast?

¹⁰For it is

^a *by war*; the meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain
^b *idols*

¹⁴ That is, symbols of the goddess Asherah

Do and do, do and do,
rule on rule, rule on rule;
a little here, a little there."

11 Very well then, with foreign lips and strange
tongues

God will speak to this people,

12 to whom he said,

"This is the resting place, let the weary rest";

and, "This is the place of repose"—

but they would not listen

13 So then, the word of the LORD to them will
become:

Do and do, do and do,
rule on rule, rule on rule;
a little here, a little there—

so that they will go and fall backward,
be injured and snared and captured.

14 Therefore hear the word of the LORD, you
scoffers

who rule this people in Jerusalem.

15 You boast, "We have entered into a covenant
with death,

with the grave^b we have made an
agreement.

When an overwhelming scourge sweeps by,
it cannot touch us,

for we have made a lie our refuge
and falsehood^c our hiding place."

16 So this is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a tested stone,

a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation;
the one who trusts will never be dismayed.

17 I will make justice the measuring line
and righteousness the plumb line;

hail will sweep away your refuge, the lie,
and water will overflow your hiding place.

18 Your covenant with death will be annulled;
your agreement with the grave will not
stand.

When the overwhelming scourge sweeps by,
you will be beaten down by it.

19 As often as it comes it will carry you away;
morning after morning, by day and by night,
it will sweep through."

The understanding of this message
will bring sheer terror.

20 The bed is too short to stretch out on,
the blanket too narrow to wrap around you.

21 The LORD will rise up as he did at Mount
Perazim,

he will rouse himself as in the Valley of
Gibeon—

to do his work, his strange work,
and perform his task, his alien task.

22 Now stop your mocking,

or your chains will become heavier;

the LORD, the LORD Almighty, has told me
of the destruction decreed against the whole
land.

23 Listen and hear my voice;
pay attention and hear what I say.

24 When a farmer plows for planting, does he
plow continually?

Does he keep on breaking up and harrowing
the soil?

25 When he has leveled the surface,
does he not sow caraway and scatter
cummin?

Does he not plant wheat in its place,^d
barley in its plot,^d
and spelt in its field?

26 His God instructs him
and teaches him the right way.

27 Caraway is not threshed with a sledge,
nor is a cartwheel rolled over cummin,
caraway is beaten out with a rod,
and cummin with a stick.

28 Grain must be ground to make bread;
so one does not go on threshing it forever.
Though he drives the wheels of his threshing
cart over it,

his horses do not grind it.

29 All this also comes from the LORD Almighty,
wonderful in counsel and magnificent in
wisdom.

Woe to David's City

29 Woe to you, Ariel, Ariel,
the city where David settled!

Add year to year
and let your cycle of festivals go on.

2 Yet I will besiege Ariel;
she will mourn and lament,
she will be to me like an altar hearth.^e

3 I will encamp against you all around;
I will encircle you with towers
and set up my siege works against you.

4 Brought low, you will speak from the ground;
your speech will mumble out of the dust.
Your voice will come ghostlike from the earth;
out of the dust your speech will whisper.

5 But your many enemies will become like fine
dust,

the ruthless hordes like blown chaff.

Suddenly, in an instant,

6 the LORD Almighty will come
with thunder and earthquake and great noise,
with windstorm and tempest and flames of a
devouring fire.

28:24 Like a Wise Farmer

Drawing an analogy from farming, Isaiah shows that God varies his treatment of nations, depending on conditions. Just as different crops—grain, barley, caraway, cummin—require different farming techniques, so each nation requires individual treatment. Those who readily repent need only light punishment, while stubborn nations need further discipline.

^a11 Hebrew *sar lasar sar lasar kat lakat kar lakat* (possibly meaningless sounds, perhaps a mimicking of the prophet's words, as in verse 13) ^b15 Hebrew *Sheol*, also in verse 18 ^c15 Or false gods ^d25 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain

^e2 The Hebrew for altar hearth sounds like the Hebrew for Ariel

Then the hordes of all the nations that fight
against Ariel
that attack her and her fortress and besiege
her

will be as it is with a dream,
with a vision in the night—
as when a hungry man dreams that he is
eating

but he awakens, and his hunger remains;
as when a thirsty man dreams that he is
drinking

but he awakens faint, with his thirst
unquenched
So will it be with the hordes of all the nations
that fight against Mount Zion

⁹Be stunned and amazed
blind yourselves and be sightless,
be drunk, but not from wine,
stagger, but not from beer

¹⁰The Lord has brought over you a deep sleep;
He has sealed your eyes (the prophets),
he has covered your heads (the seers).

¹¹For you this whole vision is nothing but words
sealed in a scroll. And if you give the scroll to
someone who can read, and say to him, "Read
this, please," he will answer, "I can't; it is sealed."
¹²Or if you give the scroll to someone who cannot
read, and say, "Read this, please," he will answer,
"I don't know how to read."

¹³The Lord says

"These people come near to me with their
mouth
and honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me
Their worship of me
is made up only of rules taught by men."

¹⁴Therefore once more I will astound these
people
with wonder upon wonder,
the wisdom of the wise will perish,
the intelligence of the intelligent will
vanish

¹⁵Woe to those who go to great depths
to hide their plans from the Lord,
who do their work in darkness and think,
"Who sees us? Who will know?"

¹⁶You turn things upside down,
as if the potter were thought to be like the
clay!

Shall what is formed say to him who formed it,
"He did not make me"?
Can the pot say of the potter,
"He knows nothing"?

¹⁷In a very short time, will not Lebanon be
turned into a fertile field
and the fertile field seem like a forest?

¹⁸In that day the deaf will hear the words of the
scroll,
and out of gloom and darkness
the eyes of the blind will see

¹⁹Once more the humble will rejoice in the Lord;

the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of
Israel.

²⁰The ruthless will vanish,
the mockers will disappear,
and all who have an eye for evil will be cut
down—

²¹those who with a word make a man out to be
guilty,
who ensnare the defender in court
and with false testimony deprive the
innocent of justice.

²²Therefore this is what the Lord, who re-
deemed Abraham, says to the house of Jacob:

"No longer will Jacob be ashamed;
no longer will their faces grow pale.

²³When they see among them their children,
the work of my hands,
they will keep my name holy;
they will acknowledge the holiness of the
Holy One of Jacob,
and will stand in awe of the God of Israel.

²⁴Those who are wayward in spirit will gain
understanding;
those who complain will accept instruction."

Woe to the Obstinate Nation

30 "Woe to the obstinate children,"
declares the Lord,
"to those who carry out plans that are not
mine,

forming an alliance, but not by my Spirit,
heaping sin upon sin;

²who go down to Egypt
without consulting me;
who look for help to Pharaoh's protection,
to Egypt's shade for refuge.

³But Pharaoh's protection will be to your
shame,

Egypt's shade will bring you disgrace.

⁴Though they have officials in Zoan
and their envoys have arrived in Hanes,

⁵everyone will be put to shame
because of a people useless to them,
who bring neither help nor advantage,
but only shame and disgrace."

30:1 Isaiah in His Prime

Isaiah delivered the messages of chapters 28-35 at the peak of his ministry, under Hezekiah. He unleashed six great "woes," or warnings: (1) to drunken, scoffing politicians, 28:1; (2) to those who carry on the form of religion, without true faith, 29:1; (3) to those who hide their plans from God (possibly referring to secret political intrigues), 29:15; (4) to the pro-Egyptian party lobbying for a political alliance, 30:1; (5) to those who trust in military power (horses and chariots) instead of God, 31:1; and (6) to the Assyrian destroyer, 33:1. Seemingly invincible at the time, the Assyrian Empire, too, would face a judgment day.

“An oracle concerning the animals of the Negev
Through a land of hardship and distress,
of lions and lionesses,
of adders and darting snakes,
the envoys carry their riches on donkeys’
backs,
their treasures on the humps of camels,
to that unprofitable nation,
to Egypt whose help is utterly useless
Therefore I call her
Rahab the Do-Nothing.
“Go now, write it on a tablet for them,
inscribe it on a scroll,
that for the days to come

it may be an everlasting witness
“These are rebellious people, deceitful
children,
children unwilling to listen to the Lord’s
instruction
“They say to the seers,
“See no more visions!”
and to the prophets,
“Give us no more visions of what is right!
Tell us pleasant things,
prophesy illusions.
“Leave this way,
get off this path,
and stop confronting us
with the Holy One of Israel!”

INSIGHT

A Time of Crisis

Defeat seemed certain to everyone but Isaiah

Assyria will fall by a sword that is not of man.” 31:8

After two dismal decades under King Ahaz, Judah finally saw a ray of hope when Hezekiah ascended the throne. Second Kings summarizes his reign this way: “There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him” (2 Kings 18:5).

Isaiah reached the peak of his ministry under King Hezekiah, who often sought his advice. The king needed Isaiah’s help; he had inherited a kingdom in mortal danger from Assyria.

Protesting a Foolish Rebellion

How could Judah break free from Assyrian domination? Like other kings before him, Hezekiah thought of joining with other countries. Both Egypt and a rising Babylon seemed eager to court Judah as an ally.

Isaiah, however, said no. He urged Hezekiah to trust only in God. To dramatize his point, the court prophet did a shocking thing: he stalked around stripped and barefoot for three years as a protest against the pro-Egypt lobby (20:1-6). This protest forms the background for some of the strongest speeches in Isaiah’s book (chapters 18-20, 30-31).

Isaiah’s protest failed, however. Not even Hezekiah could resist the temptation to oppose Assyria. First, he shored up the defenses of Jerusalem and built up the city’s water supplies. Then, he formed an alliance of small kingdoms and led an outright rebellion against Assyria.

Revenge of an Empire

Assyria fought back. Its armies smashed into Judah, leveling 46 walled cities and carrying away 200,150 captives. The Assyrian king demanded huge sums of money from Hezekiah, whom he mockingly described as “a bird in a cage.”

Hezekiah, cowering under siege in Jerusalem, once more turned to Isaiah for advice. Should he surrender? Assyrian soldiers were already pressing in around the walls, hurling insults at the demoralized citizens inside.

Isaiah avoided an “I told you so” attitude. Against all odds, he again recommended prayer and reliance on the power of God. Have faith, he said, don’t surrender, don’t fear. Assyria will return home, wounded (37:5-7).

Isaiah’s deep courage and optimism raised the morale of all Jerusalem. And in a spectacular way (37:36; also 2 Kings 19), God took care of the Assyrian army.

An Authentic Hero

Chapters 18-35 contain Isaiah’s messages from this period, including many of the very words that stirred a desperate nation to faith. Without his inspiring example, Jerusalem might have surrendered.

Many of the prophets of Israel and Judah were loners, voices “crying in the wilderness.” Isaiah was an exception. He had the king’s ear at a critical moment in Judah’s history. Because of his effectiveness, Isaiah went down in history as a great statesman and hero.

Life Questions: In your life, what experience has called for the most courage and faith? How did you respond at the time?

Therefore, this is what the Holy One of Israel says

Because you have rejected this message
and an oppression
and depended on deceit
this sin will become for you
like a high wall, cracked and bulging
that collapses suddenly, in an instant
It will break in pieces like pottery
shattered so mercilessly
that among its pieces not a fragment will be
found
for taking coals from a hearth
or sweeping water out of a cistern

This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel says

In repentance and rest is your salvation
in quietness and trust is your strength
but you would have none of it
You said 'No we will flee on horses.'
Therefore you will flee!
You said 'We will ride off on swift horses.'
Therefore your pursuers will be swift!
A thousand will flee
at the threat of one
at the threat of five
you will all flee away
till you are left
like a flagstaff on a mountaintop
like a banner on a hill "

Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you,
he rises to show you compassion
For the Lord is a God of justice
Blessed are all who wait for him!

O people of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you. Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more; with your own eyes you will see them. Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it." Then you will denile your idols overlaid with silver and your images covered with gold, you will throw them away like a menstrual cloth and say to them, "Away with you!"

He will also send you rain for the seed you sow in the ground, and the food that comes from the land will be rich and plentiful. In that day your cattle will graze in broad meadows. The oxen and donkeys that work the soil will eat fodder and mash, spread out with fork and shovel. In the day of great slaughter, when the towers fall, streams of water will flow on every high mountain and every lofty hill. The moon will shine like the sun, and the sunlight will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven full days, when the Lord binds up the bruises of his people and heals the wounds he inflicted

See, the Name of the Lord comes from afar,

with burning anger and dense clouds of smoke

his lips are full of wrath,
and his tongue is a consuming fire
his breath is like a rushing torrent
rising up to the rock
He shakes the nations in the sieve of destruction.

he places in the jaws of the peoples
a bit that leads them astray

And you will sing
as on the night you celebrate a holy festival;
your hearts will rejoice
as when people go up with flutes
to the mountain of the Lord,
to the Rock of Israel

The Lord will cause men to hear his majestic voice

and will make them see his arm coming down

with raging anger and consuming fire,
with cloudburst, thunderstorm and hail.

The voice of the Lord will shatter Assyria;
with his scepter he will strike them down.

Every stroke the Lord lays on them
with his punishing rod
will be to the music of tambourines and harps,
as he fights them in battle with the blows of his arm.

Topheth has long been prepared;
it has been made ready for the king.
Its fire pit has been made deep and wide,
with an abundance of fire and wood;
the breath of the Lord,
like a stream of burning sulfur,
sets it ablaze.

Woe to Those Who Rely on Egypt

31 Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help,

who rely on horses,
who trust in the multitude of their chariots
and in the great strength of their horsemen,
but do not look to the Holy One of Israel,
or seek help from the Lord.

Yet he too is wise and can bring disaster;
he does not take back his words.

He will rise up against the house of the wicked,
against those who help evildoers.

But the Egyptians are men and not God;
their horses are flesh and not spirit.

When the Lord stretches out his hand,
he who helps will stumble,
he who is helped will fall;
both will perish together.

30:27 An End to Punishment

Isaiah spares no words in his fierce descriptions of the punishment awaiting Judah. But as this chapter shows, the punishment will reach an end, and then God will turn on the surrounding evil nations. The fire of judgment will culminate in Topheth (verse 33), a valley near Jerusalem where human sacrifices were offered to the god Molech.

⁴This is what the LORD says to me

"As a lion growls,
a great lion over his prey—
and though a whole band of shepherds
is called together against him,
he is not frightened by their shouts
or disturbed by their clamor—
so the LORD Almighty will come down
to do battle on Mount Zion and on its
heights.

⁵Like birds hovering overhead,
the LORD Almighty will shield Jerusalem;
he will shield it and deliver it,
he will 'pass over' it and will rescue it."

⁶Return to him you have so greatly revolted
against, O Israelites. ⁷For in that day every one of
you will reject the idols of silver and gold your
sinful hands have made

⁸"Assyria will fall by a sword that is not of man;
a sword, not of mortals, will devour them.
They will flee before the sword
and their young men will be put to forced
labor

⁹Their stronghold will fall because of terror;
at sight of the battle standard their
commanders will panic,"

declares the LORD,
whose fire is in Zion,
whose furnace is in Jerusalem

The Kingdom of Righteousness

32 See, a king will reign in righteousness
and rulers will rule with justice
²Each man will be like a shelter from the wind
and a refuge from the storm,
like streams of water in the desert
and the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty
land.

³Then the eyes of those who see will no longer
be closed,
and the ears of those who hear will listen.

⁴The mind of the rash will know and
understand,
and the stammering tongue will be fluent
and clear.

⁵No longer will the fool be called noble
nor the scoundrel be highly respected.

⁶For the fool speaks folly,
his mind is busy with evil:
He practices ungodliness
and spreads error concerning the LORD;
the hungry he leaves empty
and from the thirsty he withholds water.

⁷The scoundrel's methods are wicked,

he makes up evil schemes
to destroy the poor with lies,
even when the plea of the needy is just
⁸But the noble man makes noble plans,
and by noble deeds he stands.

The Women of Jerusalem

⁹You women who are so complacent,
rise up and listen to me;
you daughters who feel secure,
hear what I have to say!

¹⁰In little more than a year
you who feel secure will tremble;
the grape harvest will fail,
and the harvest of fruit will not come.

¹¹Tremble, you complacent women;
shudder, you daughters who feel secure!
Strip off your clothes,
put sackcloth around your waists.

¹²Beat your breasts for the pleasant fields,
for the fruitful vines

¹³and for the land of my people,
a land overgrown with thorns and briers—
yes, mourn for all houses of merriment
and for this city of revelry.

¹⁴The fortress will be abandoned,
the noisy city deserted;
citadel and watchtower will become a
wasteland forever,

the delight of donkeys, a pasture for flocks,
¹⁵till the Spirit is poured upon us from on high,
and the desert becomes a fertile field,
and the fertile field seems like a forest.

¹⁶Justice will dwell in the desert
and righteousness live in the fertile field.

¹⁷The fruit of righteousness will be peace;
the effect of righteousness will be quietness
and confidence forever.

¹⁸My people will live in peaceful dwelling places,
in secure homes,
in undisturbed places of rest.

¹⁹Though hail flattens the forest
and the city is leveled completely,

²⁰how blessed you will be,
sowing your seed by every stream,
and letting your cattle and donkeys range
free.

Distress and Help

33 Woe to you, O destroyer,
you who have not been destroyed!
Woe to you, O traitor,
you who have not been betrayed!
When you stop destroying,
you will be destroyed;
when you stop betraying,
you will be betrayed.

²O LORD, be gracious to us;
we long for you.

Be our strength every morning,
our salvation in time of distress.

³At the thunder of your voice, the peoples flee;
when you rise up, the nations scatter.

⁴Your plunder, O nations, is harvested as by
young locusts;

32:1 Shifting Stance in Time

Isaiah's writings often shift confusingly, describing the present surroundings and then moving on to predict the future. At times Isaiah even projects himself into the future, writing in the past tense about events that have not yet happened. Note the shifting time sequence in this chapter.

like a swarm of locusts men pounce on it
 7The LORD is exalted, for he dwells on high;
 he will fill Zion with justice and
 righteousness
 8He will be the sure foundation for your times,
 a rich store of salvation and wisdom and
 knowledge
 the fear of the LORD is the key to this
 treasure^a

Look their brave men cry aloud in the streets;
 the envoys of peace weep bitterly.
 9The highways are deserted
 no travelers are on the roads
 The treaty is broken,
 its witnesses^b are despised,
 no one is respected
 10The land mourns^c and wastes away,
 Lebanon is ashamed and withers;
 Sharon is like the Arabah,
 and Bashan and Carmel drop their leaves.

Now will I arise," says the LORD.

Now will I be exalted,
 now will I be lifted up

11You conceive chaff

you give birth to straw,
 your breath is a fire that consumes you.

12The peoples will be burned as if to lime;
 like cut thornbushes they will be set ablaze."

"You who are far away, hear what I have done;
 you who are near, acknowledge my power!

14The sinners in Zion are terrified,
 trembling grips the godless
 Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire?
 Who of us can dwell with everlasting
 burning?"

15He who walks righteously
 and speaks what is right,
 who rejects gain from extortion
 and keeps his hand from accepting bribes,
 who stops his ears against plots of murder
 and shuts his eyes against contemplating
 evil

16this is the man who will dwell on the heights,
 whose refuge will be the mountain fortress.
 His bread will be supplied,
 and water will not fail him.

17Your eyes will see the king in his beauty
 and view a land that stretches afar.

18In your thoughts you will ponder the former
 terror:

"Where is that chief officer?
 Where is the one who took the revenue?
 Where is the officer in charge of the towers?"

19You will see those arrogant people no more,
 those people of an obscure speech,
 with their strange, incomprehensible tongue.

20Look upon Zion, the city of our festivals;
 your eyes will see Jerusalem,
 a peaceful abode, a tent that will not be
 moved;

its stakes will never be pulled up,

nor any of its ropes broken.

21There the LORD will be our Mighty One.
 It will be like a place of broad rivers and
 streams

No galley with oars will ride them,
 no mighty ship will sail them.

22For the LORD is our judge,
 the LORD is our lawgiver,
 the LORD is our king;
 it is he who will save us.

23Your rigging hangs loose:
 The mast is not held secure,
 the sail is not spread.

Then an abundance of spoils will be divided
 and even the lame will carry off plunder.

24No one living in Zion will say, "I am ill";
 and the sins of those who dwell there will be
 forgiven.

Judgment Against the Nations

34 Come near, you nations, and listen,
 pay attention, you peoples!

Let the earth hear, and all that is in it,
 the world, and all that comes out of it!

2The LORD is angry with all nations;
 his wrath is upon all their armies.

He will totally destroy^d them,
 he will give them over to slaughter.

3Their slain will be thrown out,
 their dead bodies will send up a stench;
 the mountains will be soaked with their
 blood.

4All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved
 and the sky rolled up like a scroll;
 all the starry host will fall
 like withered leaves from the vine,
 like shriveled figs from the fig tree.

5My sword has drunk its fill in the heavens;
 see, it descends in judgment on Edom,
 the people I have totally destroyed.

6The sword of the LORD is bathed in blood,
 it is covered with fat—
 the blood of lambs and goats,
 fat from the kidneys of rams.

For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah
 and a great slaughter in Edom.

7And the wild oxen will fall with them,
 the bull calves and the great bulls.
 Their land will be drenched with blood,
 and the dust will be soaked with fat.

34:1 Isaiah the Historian

Isaiah's book includes many references to nations and leaders of his day. Perhaps more than any other prophet, Isaiah had a deep sense of history. In fact, he wrote a life of King Uzziah and a record of the rulers of Israel and Judah (see 2 Chronicles 26:22; 32:32). Although neither of these books has survived, the one that bears his name gives a blow-by-blow analysis of all the nations of his time.

^a Or is a treasure from him

^b Dead Sea Scrolls, Masoretic Text the cities

^c Or dries up

^d The Hebrew term refers to

the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them, also in verse 5

⁸For the LORD has a day of vengeance,
 a year of retribution, to uphold Zion's cause,
⁹Edom's streams will be turned into pitch,
 her dust into burning sulfur;
 her land will become blazing pitch!
¹⁰It will not be quenched night and day;
 its smoke will rise forever
 From generation to generation it will lie
 desolate,
 no one will ever pass through it again
¹¹The desert owl and screech owl will possess
 it,
 the great owl and the raven will nest there.
 God will stretch out over Edom
 the measuring line of chaos
 and the plumb line of desolation.
¹²Her nobles will have nothing there to be called
 a kingdom,
 all her princes will vanish away
¹³Thorns will overrun her citadels,
 nettles and brambles her strongholds.
 She will become a haunt for jackals,
 a home for owls.
¹⁴Desert creatures will meet with hyenas,
 and wild goats will bleat to each other;
 there the night creatures will also repose
 and find for themselves places of rest.
¹⁵The owl will nest there and lay eggs,
 she will hatch them, and care for her young
 under the shadow of her wings;
 there also the falcons will gather,
 each with its mate.

¹⁶Look in the scroll of the LORD and read:

None of these will be missing,
 not one will lack her mate.
 For it is his mouth that has given the order,
 and his Spirit will gather them together.
¹⁷He allots their portions;
 his hand distributes them by measure.
 They will possess it forever
 and dwell there from generation to
 generation.

Joy of the Redeemed

35 The desert and the parched land will be
 glad;
 the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.
 Like the crocus, ²it will burst into bloom;
 it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.
 The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,
 the splendor of Carmel and Sharon;
 they will see the glory of the LORD,
 the splendor of our God.

³Strengthen the feeble hands,
 steady the knees that give way;
⁴say to those with fearful hearts,
 "Be strong, do not fear;
 your God will come,
 he will come with vengeance;
 with divine retribution
 he will come to save you."

⁵Then will the eyes of the blind be opened

and the ears of the deaf unstopped.
⁶Then will the lame leap like a deer,
 and the mute tongue shout for joy.
 Water will gush forth in the wilderness
 and streams in the desert
⁷The burning sand will become a pool,
 the thirsty ground bubbling springs.
 In the haunts where jackals once lay,
 grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.

⁸And a highway will be there,
 it will be called the Way of Holiness.
 The unclean will not journey on it;
 it will be for those who walk in that Way;
 wicked fools will not go about on it.
⁹No lion will be there,
 nor will any ferocious beast get up on it;
 they will not be found there.
 But only the redeemed will walk there,
¹⁰and the ransomed of the LORD will return.
 They will enter Zion with singing;
 everlasting joy will crown their heads.
 Gladness and joy will overtake them,
 and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Sennacherib Threatens Jerusalem

36 In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's
 reign, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked
 all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them.
²Then the king of Assyria sent his field com-
 mander with a large army from Lachish to King
 Hezekiah at Jerusalem. When the commander
 stopped at the aqueduct of the Upper Pool, on the
 road to the Washerman's Field, ³Eliakim son of
 Hilkiyah the palace administrator, Shebna the sec-
 retary, and Joah son of Asaph the recorder went
 out to him.

⁴The field commander said to them, "Tell Heze-
 kiah,

"This is what the great king, the king of
 Assyria, says: On what are you basing this
 confidence of yours? ⁵You say you have strat-
 egy and military strength—but you speak
 only empty words. On whom are you de-
 pending, that you rebel against me? ⁶Look
 now, you are depending on Egypt, that splint-
 ered reed of a staff, which pierces a man's
 hand and wounds him if he leans on it! Such is
 Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who depend on
 him. ⁷And if you say to me, "We are depend-
 ing on the LORD our God"—isn't he the one
 whose high places and altars Hezekiah re-
 moved, saying to Judah and Jerusalem, "You
 must worship before this altar"?

⁸"Come now, make a bargain with my
 master, the king of Assyria: I will give you two
 thousand horses—if you can put riders on
 them! ⁹How then can you repulse one officer
 of the least of my master's officials, even
 though you are depending on Egypt for chari-
 ots and horsemen? ¹⁰Furthermore, have I
 come to attack and destroy this land without
 the LORD? The LORD himself told me to march
 against this country and destroy it."

^{•11} The precise identification of these birds is uncertain

^{•8} Or / the temple will not stray from it

Then Eliakim, Shebna and Joah said to the field commander: "Please speak to our servants in Aramaic, since we understand it. Don't speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people on the wall."

The commander replied: "Was it only to your master and you that my master sent me to say these things, and not to the men sitting on the wall? They will have to eat their own flesh and drink their own urine?"

Then the commander stood and called out in Hebrew, "Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria! This is what the king says: Do not let Hezekiah deceive you. He cannot deliver you! Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the LORD when he says, 'The LORD will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.'"

"Do not listen to Hezekiah. This is what the king of Assyria says: Make peace with me and come out to me. Then every one of you will eat from his own vine and fig tree and drink water from his own cistern, until I come and take you to a land like your own—a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards."

"Do not let Hezekiah mislead you when he says, 'The LORD will deliver us.' Has the god of any nation ever delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they rescued Samaria from my hand? Who of all the gods of these countries has been able to save his land from me? How then can the LORD deliver Jerusalem from my hand?"

But the people remained silent and said nothing in reply, because the king had commanded, "Do not answer him."

Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary, and Joah son of Asaph the recorder went to Hezekiah, with their clothes torn, and told him what the field commander had said.

Jerusalem's Deliverance Foretold

37 When King Hezekiah heard this, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and went into the temple of the LORD. He sent Eliakim the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary, and the leading priests, all wearing sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. They told him, "This is what Hezekiah says: This day is a day of distress and rebuke and disgrace, as when children come to the point of birth and there is no strength to

deliver them. It may be that the LORD your God will hear the words of the field commander when he speaks to his master the king of Assyria, that he will turn back from the living God, and that he will not come to this city. Therefore pray for the remnant that still remains."

When King Hezekiah's officials came to Isaiah, Isaiah said to them: "Tell your master: This is what the LORD says: Do not be afraid of what you have heard—those words with which the messengers of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Listen! I am going to put a spirit in him so that when he hears a certain report, he will return to his own country, and there I will have him cut down with the sword."

When the field commander heard that the king of Assyria had left Lachish, he withdrew and found the king fighting against Libnah.

Now Sennacherib received a report that Tirhakah, the Cushite king of Egypt, was marching out to fight against him. When he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah with this word: "Say to Hezekiah king of Judah: Do not let the god you depend on deceive you when he says, 'Jerusalem will not be handed over to the king of Assyria.' Surely you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the countries, destroying them completely. And will you be delivered? Did the gods of the nations that were destroyed by my forefathers deliver them—the gods of Cizzan, Hilaran, Rezeph and the people of Eden who were in Tel Assar? Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharvaim, or of Hena or Ivah?"

Hezekiah's Prayer

Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the LORD and spread it out before the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed to the LORD: "O LORD, Almighty God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Give ear, O LORD, and hear; open your eyes, O LORD, and see; listen to all the words Sennacherib has sent to insult the living God."

It is true, O LORD, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste all these peoples and their lands. They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by human hands. Now, O LORD our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, O LORD, are God."

Sennacherib's Fall

Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent a message to Hezekiah: "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Because you have prayed to me concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria, this is the word the LORD has spoken against him:

"The Virgin (Daughter of Zion) despises and mocks you,
The Daughter of Jerusalem."

³⁷ That is, from the upper part of the region.

³⁸ "O LORD, our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, O LORD, are God."

tosses her head as you flee
 23Who is it you have insulted and blasphemed?
 Against whom have you raised your voice
 and lifted your eyes in pride?
 Against the Holy One of Israel!

24By your messengers
 you have heaped insults on the Lord
 And you have said,
 'With my many chariots
 I have ascended the heights of the mountains,
 the utmost heights of Lebanon,
 I have cut down its tallest cedars,
 the choicest of its pines
 I have reached its remotest heights,
 the finest of its forests
 25I have dug wells in foreign lands^a
 and drunk the water there
 With the soles of my feet
 I have dried up all the streams of Egypt.'

26'Have you not heard?
 Long ago I ordained it.
 In days of old I planned it;
 now I have brought it to pass,
 that you have turned fortified cities
 into piles of stone

27Their people, drained of power,
 are dismayed and put to shame.
 They are like plants in the field,
 like tender green shoots,
 like grass sprouting on the roof,
 scorched^b before it grows up.

28'But I know where you stay
 and when you come and go
 and how you rage against me.

29Because you rage against me
 and because your insolence has reached my
 ears,

I will put my hook in your nose
 and my bit in your mouth,
 and I will make you return
 by the way you came.

30'This will be the sign for you, O Hezekiah:

'This year you will eat what grows by itself,
 and the second year what springs from that.
 But in the third year sow and reap,
 plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

31Once more a remnant of the house of Judah
 will take root below and bear fruit above.

32For out of Jerusalem will come a remnant,
 and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors.
 The zeal of the LORD Almighty
 will accomplish this.

33'Therefore this is what the LORD says concern-
 ing the king of Assyria:

'He will not enter this city
 or shoot an arrow here
 He will not come before it with shield
 or build a siege ramp against it.

34By the way that he came he will return;

he will not enter this city."

^adeclares the LORD

35'I will defend this city and save it,
 for my sake and for the sake of David my
 servant!"

36Then the angel of the LORD went out and put
 to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men
 in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the
 next morning, there were all the dead bodies.^c 37
 Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and with-
 drew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there.

38One day, while he was worshiping in the tem-
 ple of his god Nisroch, his sons Adrammelech and
 Sharezer cut him down with the sword, and they
 escaped to the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his
 son succeeded him as king.

Hezekiah's Illness

38 In those days Hezekiah became ill and was
 at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son
 of Amoz went to him and said, "This is what the
 LORD says: Put your house in order, because you
 are going to die; you will not recover."

2Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed
 to the LORD, 3'Remember, O LORD, how I have
 walked before you faithfully and with wholeheart-
 ed devotion and have done what is good in your
 eyes." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

4Then the word of the LORD came to Isaiah: 5'Go
 and tell Hezekiah, 'This is what the LORD, the God
 of your father David, says: I have heard your
 prayer and seen your tears, I will add fifteen years
 to your life. 6And I will deliver you and this city
 from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend
 this city.

7'"This is the LORD's sign to you that the LORD
 will do what he has promised. 8I will make the
 shadow cast by the sun go back the ten steps it has
 gone down on the stairway of Ahaz.'" So the
 sunlight went back the ten steps it had gone down.

9A writing of Hezekiah king of Judah after his
 illness and recovery:

38:1 A Bridge Between Two Parts

Unlike the rest of the book, chapters 36-39 mainly
 consist of history, not Isaiah's messages. These
 chapters (which closely follow 2 Kings
 18:19-20:19) record the central crises in the lives
 of Isaiah and King Hezekiah, and form a
 connecting bridge in the book. They introduce the
 shift in emphasis from Assyria (chapters 1-35) to
 Babylon (chapters 40-66).

The account begins with Assyria's final assault
 on Jerusalem. It ends with Hezekiah's biggest
 blunder, which occurs during a fateful visit from
 the emissaries of Babylon. In response, Isaiah
 scolds the king and predicts a future invasion:
 Jerusalem, miraculously saved from Assyria, will
 finally fall to Babylon.

^a25 Dead Sea Scrolls (see also 2 Kings 19:24); Masoretic Text does not have in foreign lands

^b26 Dead Sea Scrolls and some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 2 Kings 19:26); most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text read and
 terraced fields

^c27 Some manuscripts of the Masoretic

¹⁰I said, "In the prime of my life
must I go through the gates of death^a
and be robbed of the rest of my years?"

¹¹I said, "I will not again see the Lord,
the Lord, in the land of the living,
no longer will I look on mankind,
or be with those who now dwell in this
world."

Like a shepherd's tent my house
has been pulled down and taken from me.

Like a weaver I have rolled up my life,
and he has cut me off from the loom,
day and night you made an end of me.

¹³I waited patiently till dawn,
but like a lion he broke all my bones;
day and night you made an end of me.

¹⁴I cried like a swift or thrush,
I moaned like a mourning dove.
My eyes grew weak as I looked to the heavens.
I am troubled; O Lord, come to my aid!"

¹⁵But what can I say?

He has spoken to me, and he himself has
done this.

I will walk humbly all my years
because of this anguish of my soul.

¹⁶Lord, by such things men live;
and my spirit finds life in them too.
You restored me to health
and let me live.

¹⁷Surely it was for my benefit
that I suffered such anguish.

In your love you kept me
from the pit of destruction;
you have put all my sins
behind your back.

¹⁸For the grave^a cannot praise you,
death cannot sing your praise;
those who go down to the pit
cannot hope^b for your faithfulness.

¹⁹The living, the living—they praise you,
as I am doing today,
fathers tell their children
about your faithfulness.

²⁰The LORD will save me,
and we will sing with stringed instruments
all the days of our lives
in the temple of the LORD.

²¹Isaiah had said, "Prepare a poultice of figs and
apply it to the boil, and he will recover."

²²Hezekiah had asked, "What will be the sign
that I will go up to the temple of the LORD?"

Envoys From Babylon

39 At that time Merodach-Baladan son of Bala-
dan king of Babylon sent Hezekiah letters
and a gift, because he had heard of his illness and
recovery. ²Hezekiah received the envoys gladly
and showed them what was in his storehouses—
the silver, the gold, the spices, the fine oil, his
entire armory and everything found among his
treasures. There was nothing in his palace or in all

his kingdom that Hezekiah did not show them.

³Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah
and asked, "What did those men say, and where
did they come from?"

"From a distant land," Hezekiah replied, "They
came to me from Babylon."

⁴The prophet asked, "What did they see in your
palace?"

"They saw everything in my palace," Hezekiah
said. "There is nothing among my treasures that I
did not show them."

⁵Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word
of the LORD Almighty: ⁶The time will surely come
when everything in your palace, and all that your
fathers have stored up until this day, will be car-
ried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the
LORD. ⁷And some of your descendants, your own
flesh and blood who will be born to you, will be
taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the
palace of the king of Babylon."

⁸"The word of the LORD you have spoken is
good," Hezekiah replied. For he thought, "There
will be peace and security in my lifetime."

Comfort for God's People

40 Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.

²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and proclaim to her
that her hard service has been completed,
that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.

³A voice of one calling:

"In the desert prepare
the way for the LORD;
make straight in the wilderness
a highway for our God."⁴

⁴Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.

⁵And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,
and all mankind together will see it.

For the mouth of the LORD has
spoken."

⁶A voice says, "Cry out."

And I said, "What shall I cry?"

"All men are like grass,
and all their glory is like the flowers of the
field.

⁷The grass withers and the flowers fall,
because the breath of the LORD blows⁵ on
them.

Surely the people are grass.

⁸The grass withers and the flowers fall,
but the word of our God stands forever."

⁹You who bring good tidings to Zion,
go up on a high mountain.

You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem,⁶
lift up your voice with a shout,

^a10 18 Hebrew Sheol.

^b11 A few Hebrew manuscripts, most Hebrew manuscripts in the place of cessation
calling in the desert. ^c Prepare the way for the LORD.

^d3 Hebrew; Septuagint make straight the paths of our God.

^e4 If good tidings, I go up on a high mountain. ^f O Jerusalem, bringer of good tidings.

⁵ Or A voice of one.

⁶ Or O Zion, bringer.

A New Song

A dramatic change in tone: comfort and hope for the worst of times

Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. 40:31

You can sense the change in the very first words of chapter 40. "Comfort, comfort my people," says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed." Soft, reassuring words replace the harsh warnings of Isaiah's earlier chapters.

During much of Isaiah's life, Judah was confident and strong. But the prophecies beginning in chapter 40 project forward to a radically different scene. The land of Judah has been devastated, and the Jews have been taken captive. Jerusalem lies in ruins. Some 200 years separate what is described in the first part of Isaiah from the latter part. (Many scholars believe these later prophecies were given by another prophet.)

What Happened in the Meantime

To understand the rest of the book of Isaiah, you need to understand what happened in those 200 years. The confident nation Isaiah once knew slid further and further downward. At the same time a new empire, Babylon, gained strength. This new enemy invaded Judah.

The armies of Babylon did something no army had accomplished since King David's time: they conquered Jerusalem itself. Siege engines breached the walls. Judah's king was led out of Jerusalem, blinded. Their homes destroyed, most of the city's inhabitants followed their king in chains. The dark period of Babylonian captivity began.

Prophets of this period, and those who prophesied in advance about the coming catastrophes, faced huge questions. Was God abandoning his "eternal" throne of David? How could he watch in silence as his own nation—his own temple—was ripped to shreds by pagan armies?

Three Great Hopes

Reflecting the change in circumstances, Isaiah 40-66 shifts into a new key. Gone are the bleak predictions of judgment on the Jews. Instead, a majestic message of hope and joy and light breaks in, beginning with the opening words of comfort. The prophet sets out to re-establish faith in God.

What happened to Judah, Isaiah teaches, was not God's defeat. God had in mind a new thing, a plan far more grand than anything seen before.

The author of Isaiah expresses the plan as a series of wonderful reasons for hope. First, he says, will come deliverance from the Babylonian captivity. A new star, a ruler named Cyrus, will arise in the east and set the Jews free. He will allow them to return to Jerusalem to begin the long task of rebuilding a city and a nation. Chapters 40-48 detail God's confident predictions about Cyrus and the relief he would give captive Jews.

Indeed, just such a ruler did ascend to the throne in ancient Persia (present-day Iran). Cyrus smashed Babylon's armies in one decisive battle. As recorded in Ezra 1:1-4, he granted the Jews permission to return to their city and rebuild.

In words that have become very familiar, the book of Isaiah tells of two further hopes for the future. A mysterious figure called "the servant" appears in chapter 49. That servant, through his suffering, would provide a way to rescue the entire world. Finally, in conclusion, the prophet turns to a faraway time, when God will usher in peace for all in a new heaven and new earth. "The Holy One of Israel" (one of Isaiah's favorite names for God) will rule as the God of the whole earth.

Surviving Tough Times

Isaiah 40-66 had immense practical value for the people who first heard it. The Jews, facing a series of great crises, needed the prophet's message of hope: forgiveness was on the way; the Jews, though scattered, would one day be gathered "one by one."

Further, Isaiah teaches that no matter how difficult the circumstances, God can use them for our benefit. Again and again in the Israelites' history, good times led to decadence. In contrast, times of suffering tested and refined the true people of God. Ultimately, suffering would lead to the salvation of all the world.

Life Questions: Try to put yourself in the circumstances of the Jews back then. Would you have found the prophet's words comforting?

lift it up, do not be afraid,
say to the towns of Judah,
"Here is your God!"

¹⁰See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power,
and his arm rules for him;
¹¹See, his reward is with him,
and his recompense accompanies him.

¹²He tends his flock like a shepherd;
He gathers the lambs in his arms
and carries them close to his heart;
he gently leads those that have young.

¹³Who has measured the waters in the hollow of
his hand
or with the breadth of his hand marked off
the heavens?

Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket,
or weighed the mountains on the scales
and the hills in a balance?

¹⁴Who has understood the mind^a of the Lord,
or instructed him as his counselor?

¹⁵Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him,
and who taught him the right way?
Who was it that taught him knowledge
or showed him the path of understanding?

¹⁶Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket,
they are regarded as dust on the scales,
he weighs the islands as though they were
fine dust.

¹⁷Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires,
nor its animals enough for burnt offerings.

¹⁸Before him all the nations are as nothing,
they are regarded by him as worthless
and less than nothing.

¹⁹To whom, then, will you compare God?
What image will you compare him to?

²⁰As for an idol, a craftsman casts it,
and a goldsmith overlays it with gold
and fashions silver chains for it.

²¹A man too poor to present such an offering
selects wood that will not rot.

He looks for a skilled craftsman
to set up an idol that will not topple.

²²Do you not know?

Have you not heard?

Has it not been told you from the beginning?

Have you not understood since the earth
was founded?

²³He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth,
and its people are like grasshoppers.

He stretches out the heavens like a canopy,
and spreads them out like a tent to live in.

²⁴He brings princes to naught
and reduces the rulers of this world to
nothing.

²⁵No sooner are they planted,
no sooner are they sown,
no sooner do they take root in the ground,
than he blows on them and they wither,
and a whirlwind sweeps them away like
chaff.

²⁶"To whom will you compare me?

Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One.

²⁷Lift your eyes and look to the heavens:
Who created all these?

He who brings out the starry host one by one,
and calls them each by name

Because of his great power and mighty
strength,
not one of them is missing.

²⁸Why do you say, O Jacob,

and complain, O Israel,

"My way is hidden from the Lord;
my cause is disregarded by my God?"

²⁹Do you not know?

I have you not heard?

The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He will not grow tired or weary,
and his understanding no one can fathom.

³⁰He gives strength to the weary
and increases the power of the weak.

³¹Even youths grow tired and weary,
and young men stumble and fall;

³²but those who hope in the Lord
will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.

The Helper of Israel

41 "Be silent before me, you islands!
Let the nations renew their strength!
Let them come forward and speak,
let us meet together at the place of
judgment.

²"Who has stirred up one from the east,
calling him in righteousness to his service^b?

He hands nations over to him
and subdues kings before him.

He turns them to dust with his sword,
to windblown chaff with his bow.

³He pursues them and moves on unscathed,
by a path his feet have not traveled before.

⁴Who has done this and carried it through,
calling forth the generations from the
beginning?

I, the Lord—with the first of them
and with the last—I am he."

⁵The islands have seen it and fear;

41:4 How to Understand God

Chapters 40–46 echo the majestic chapters at the end of Job. God shows himself as master of the universe. Before him, nations are like a drop in a bucket (40:15) and people are like grasshoppers (40:22). He taunts all other so-called "gods": such idols are carved of the same tree used to cook supper! (44:12–20). The true God, the God of the Israelites, is the one who created the universe (45:12, 18), who called Abraham (41:8), who rescued the Jews from slavery in Egypt. For the dispirited Jewish survivors of Babylon's invasion, this exalted view of God was a reminder that God had neither vanished nor rejected them.

^a13 Or Spirit; or spirit

^b2 Or / whom victory meets at every step

The voice of the earth trembles
and the foundations of the earth are moved
and shall begin to shake
and say to his destroyer, "Be strong!"
The nations encourage the godlessness
and he who smites with the hammer
shall be full with their idols the day
of the wrath of the Lord. "It is good."
The earth shall shake the idols so it will not topple.

"The Lord is doing for me
what I have chosen
and I shall be like Abraham my friend
and I shall see the end of the earth
from its furthest corners. I called you
and you are my servant."
I have chosen you and have not rejected
you.

No do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you,
and I will set my righteous right
hand over you.

All who rage against you
will surely be ashamed and disgraced;
all who hate you
will be like chaff and stubble,
and they will be blown away like chaff
by the wind. Do not fear
the wrath of the Lord, for he will not
punish you forever.
He will have compassion on the humble
and will comfort the lowly and will
lead the humble and lowly out of
darkness into light.

Do not be afraid, O Jerusalem,
for I am with you, declares the Lord,
and I will strengthen you, and I will
help you, and I will set my right
hand over you. I will make you into a
threshing sledge, and you shall
thresh the mountains and crush them
and you shall tread the high places
and you shall break them down, and the
wind will pick them up.

And I will bring down their
high places, and I will bring down
the towers of the strong, and I will
bring down the towers of the strong,
and I will bring down the towers of the strong.

The poor and needy search for water
but there is none,
they are parched with thirst,
but I will answer them,
I will say to the God of Israel, "I will not
forsake them."
I will make rivers flow on barren heights,
and springs within the valleys.

I will turn the desert into pools of water,
and the parched ground into springs;
I will put in the desert
the cedar and the acacia, the myrtle and the
olive,
I will set pine in the wasteland
and juniper and cypress together,
and the people shall see and know
and shall recognize and understand
that the hand of the Lord has done this.

that the Holy One of Israel has created it.

"Present your case," says the Lord,
"set forth your arguments," says Jacob's
King.

"Bring in your idols to tell us
what is going to happen;
tell us what the former things were,
so that we may consider them
and know their final outcome."

"Or declare to us the things to come;
tell us what the future holds
so we may know that you are gods."
Do something, whether good or bad,
so that we will be dismayed and filled with
fear.

But you are less than nothing
and your works are utterly worthless,
he who chooses you is detestable.

"I have stirred up one from the north, and he
comes—
one from the rising sun who calls on my
name.

He treads on rulers as if they were mortar,
as if he were a potter treading the clay.
Who told of this from the beginning, so we
could know,
or beforehand, so we could say, 'He was
right'?

No one told of this,
no one foretold it,
no one heard any words from you.
I was the first to tell Zion, 'Look, here they
are!'

I gave to Jerusalem a messenger of good
tidings.

But look, but there is no one—
no one among them to give counsel,
no one to give answer when I ask them.

"See, they are all false!
Their deeds amount to nothing,
their images are but wind and confusion."

The Servant of the LORD

42 Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen one in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him
and he will bring justice to the nations.

He will not shout or cry out,
or raise his voice in the streets.

A bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;

he will not falter or be discouraged
till he establishes justice on earth.
In his law the islands will put their hope."

This is what God the LORD says—
he who created the heavens and stretched
them out,
who spread out the earth and all that comes
out of it,
who gives breath to its people,
and life to those who walk on it:
"I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness;
I will take hold of your hand.

I will keep you and will make you
to be a covenant for the people
and a light for the Gentiles,
to open eyes that are blind
to free captives from prison
and to release from the dungeon those who
sit in darkness.

* I am the LORD, that is my name!
I will not give my glory to another
or my praise to idols.
* See, the former things have taken place,
and new things I declare,
before they spring into being
I announce them to you."

Song of Praise to the Lord

- 10 Sing to the LORD a new song,
his praise from the ends of the earth,
you who go down to the sea, and all that is in
it,
you islands, and all who live in them.
11 Let the desert and its towns raise their voices;
let the settlements where Kedar lives rejoice.
Let the people of Sela sing for joy,
let them shout from the mountaintops.
12 Let them give glory to the LORD
and proclaim his praise in the islands.
13 The LORD will march out like a mighty man,
like a warrior he will stir up his zeal;
with a shout he will raise the battle cry
and will triumph over his enemies.
14 "For a long time I have kept silent,
I have been quiet and held myself back.
But now, like a woman in childbirth,
I cry out, I gasp and pant.
15 I will lay waste the mountains and hills
and dry up all their vegetation;
I will turn rivers into islands
and dry up the pools.
16 I will lead the blind by ways they have not
known,
along unfamiliar paths I will guide them,
I will turn the darkness into light before them
and make the rough places smooth.
These are the things I will do;
I will not forsake them.
17 But those who trust in idols,
who say to images, "You are our gods,"
will be turned back in utter shame.

Israel Blind and Deaf

- 18 "Hear, you deaf,
look, you blind, and see!
19 Who is blind but my servant,

and deaf like the messenger I send?
Who is blind like the one committed to me,
blind like the servant of the LORD?
20 You have seen many things, but have paid no
attention

your ears are open, but you hear nothing."
21 I pleased the LORD
for the sake of his righteousness
to make his law great and glorious.
22 But this is a people plundered and looted,
all of them trapped in pits
or hidden away in prisons.
They have become plunder,
with no one to rescue them;
they have been made loot,
with no one to say, "Send them back."

- 23 Which of you will listen to this
or pay close attention in time to come?
24 Who handed Jacob over to become loot,
and Israel to the plunderers?
Was it not the LORD,
against whom we have sinned?
For they would not follow his ways;
they did not obey his law.
25 So he poured out on them his burning anger,
the violence of war.
It enveloped them in flames, yet they did not
understand;
it consumed them, but they did not take it to
heart.

Israel's Only Savior

- 43 But now, this is what the LORD says—
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have summoned you by name; you are
mine.
2 When you pass through the waters,
I will be with you;
and when you pass through the rivers,
they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire,
you will not be burned;
the flames will not set you ablaze.
3 For I am the LORD, your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior;
I give Egypt for your ransom,
Cush* and Seba in your stead.
4 Since you are precious and honored in my
sight,
and because I love you,
I will give men in exchange for you,
and people in exchange for your life.

42:14 Does God Care?

After telling of his power, God goes on to describe the depth of his feelings for his people. He uses tender and sometimes shocking language, especially in this comparison of his pain to that of childbirth.

43:3 Ransom for the Captives

God speaks of providing the nations of Egypt, Cush, and Seba as a ransom or reward for allowing the Jews to return to their land. Historically, Cyrus of Persia permitted the Jews to resettle in the sixth century B.C. Shortly after that, Persia conquered the territories mentioned here.

* That is, the upper Nile region.

⁵Do not be afraid, for I am with you;
I will bring your children from the east
and gather you from the west.
⁶I will say to the north, "Give them up!"
and to the south, "Do not hold them back."
Bring my sons from afar
and my daughters from the ends of the
earth—
⁷everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made."
⁸Lead out those who have eyes but are blind,
who have ears but are deaf.
⁹All the nations gather together
and the peoples assemble
Which of them foretold this
and proclaimed to us the former things?
Let them bring in their witnesses to prove they
were right,
so that others may hear and say, "It is true."
¹⁰"You are my witnesses," declares the LORD,
"and my servant whom I have chosen,
so that you may know and believe me
and understand that I am he.
Before me no god was formed,
nor will there be one after me.
¹¹I, even I, am the LORD,
and apart from me there is no savior
¹²I have revealed and saved and proclaimed—
I, and not some foreign god among you.
You are my witnesses," declares the LORD,
"that I am God
¹³Yes, and from ancient days I am he.
No one can deliver out of my hand.
When I act, who can reverse it?"

God's Mercy and Israel's Unfaithfulness

¹⁴This is what the LORD says—
your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.
"For your sake I will send to Babylon
and bring down as fugitives all the
Babylonians,^a
in the ships in which they took pride.
¹⁵I am the LORD, your Holy One,
Israel's Creator, your King."
¹⁶This is what the LORD says—
he who made a way through the sea,
a path through the mighty waters,
¹⁷who drew out the chariots and horses,
the army and reinforcements together,
and they lay there, never to rise again,
extinguished, snuffed out like a wick:
¹⁸"Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.
¹⁹See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the desert
and streams in the wasteland.
²⁰The wild animals honor me,
the jackals and the owls,
because I provide water in the desert
and streams in the wasteland,
to give drink to my people, my chosen,

²¹the people I formed for myself
that they may proclaim my praise
²²"Yet you have not called upon me, O Jacob,
you have not wearied yourselves for me,
O Israel
²³You have not brought me sheep for burnt
offerings,
nor honored me with your sacrifices.
I have not burdened you with grain offerings
nor wearied you with demands for incense
²⁴You have not bought any fragrant calamus for
me,
or lavished on me the fat of your sacrifices.
But you have burdened me with your sins
and wearied me with your offenses
²⁵"I, even I, am he who blots out
your transgressions, for my own sake,
and remembers your sins no more
²⁶Review the past for me,
let us argue the matter together;
state the case for your innocence.
²⁷Your first father sinned;
your spokesmen rebelled against me.
²⁸So I will disgrace the dignitaries of your
temple,
and I will consign Jacob to destruction^b
and Israel to scorn.

Israel the Chosen

44 "But now listen, O Jacob, my servant,
Israel, whom I have chosen.
²This is what the LORD says—
he who made you, who formed you in the
womb,
and who will help you:
Do not be afraid, O Jacob, my servant,
Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.
³For I will pour water on the thirsty land,
and streams on the dry ground;
I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring,
and my blessing on your descendants.
⁴They will spring up like grass in a meadow,
like poplar trees by flowing streams.
⁵One will say, 'I belong to the LORD';
another will call himself by the name of
Jacob;
still another will write on his hand, 'The
LORD's,'
and will take the name Israel.

The Lord, Not Idols

⁶"This is what the LORD says—
Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD
Almighty:
I am the first and I am the last;
apart from me there is no God.
⁷Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it.
Let him declare and lay out before me
what has happened since I established my
ancient people,
and what is yet to come—
yes, let him foretell what will come.
⁸Do not tremble, do not be afraid.

^a14 Or Chaldeans
destroying them

^b28 The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the Lord, often by totally

11 I will give them and to all I will
 12 And you will know in their day that
 13 I am the Lord
 14 Now this is the latter thing I know that you
 15 And you will know in their day that
 16 I am the Lord
 17 And you will know in their day that
 18 I am the Lord
 19 And you will know in their day that
 20 I am the Lord
 21 And you will know in their day that
 22 I am the Lord
 23 And you will know in their day that
 24 I am the Lord
 25 And you will know in their day that
 26 I am the Lord
 27 And you will know in their day that
 28 I am the Lord
 29 And you will know in their day that
 30 I am the Lord
 31 And you will know in their day that
 32 I am the Lord
 33 And you will know in their day that
 34 I am the Lord
 35 And you will know in their day that
 36 I am the Lord
 37 And you will know in their day that
 38 I am the Lord
 39 And you will know in their day that
 40 I am the Lord
 41 And you will know in their day that
 42 I am the Lord
 43 And you will know in their day that
 44 I am the Lord
 45 And you will know in their day that
 46 I am the Lord
 47 And you will know in their day that
 48 I am the Lord
 49 And you will know in their day that
 50 I am the Lord
 51 And you will know in their day that
 52 I am the Lord
 53 And you will know in their day that
 54 I am the Lord
 55 And you will know in their day that
 56 I am the Lord
 57 And you will know in their day that
 58 I am the Lord
 59 And you will know in their day that
 60 I am the Lord
 61 And you will know in their day that
 62 I am the Lord
 63 And you will know in their day that
 64 I am the Lord
 65 And you will know in their day that
 66 I am the Lord
 67 And you will know in their day that
 68 I am the Lord
 69 And you will know in their day that
 70 I am the Lord
 71 And you will know in their day that
 72 I am the Lord
 73 And you will know in their day that
 74 I am the Lord
 75 And you will know in their day that
 76 I am the Lord
 77 And you will know in their day that
 78 I am the Lord
 79 And you will know in their day that
 80 I am the Lord
 81 And you will know in their day that
 82 I am the Lord
 83 And you will know in their day that
 84 I am the Lord
 85 And you will know in their day that
 86 I am the Lord
 87 And you will know in their day that
 88 I am the Lord
 89 And you will know in their day that
 90 I am the Lord
 91 And you will know in their day that
 92 I am the Lord
 93 And you will know in their day that
 94 I am the Lord
 95 And you will know in their day that
 96 I am the Lord
 97 And you will know in their day that
 98 I am the Lord
 99 And you will know in their day that
 100 I am the Lord

11 I will give them and to all I will
 12 And you will know in their day that
 13 I am the Lord
 14 Now this is the latter thing I know that you
 15 And you will know in their day that
 16 I am the Lord
 17 And you will know in their day that
 18 I am the Lord
 19 And you will know in their day that
 20 I am the Lord
 21 And you will know in their day that
 22 I am the Lord
 23 And you will know in their day that
 24 I am the Lord
 25 And you will know in their day that
 26 I am the Lord
 27 And you will know in their day that
 28 I am the Lord
 29 And you will know in their day that
 30 I am the Lord
 31 And you will know in their day that
 32 I am the Lord
 33 And you will know in their day that
 34 I am the Lord
 35 And you will know in their day that
 36 I am the Lord
 37 And you will know in their day that
 38 I am the Lord
 39 And you will know in their day that
 40 I am the Lord
 41 And you will know in their day that
 42 I am the Lord
 43 And you will know in their day that
 44 I am the Lord
 45 And you will know in their day that
 46 I am the Lord
 47 And you will know in their day that
 48 I am the Lord
 49 And you will know in their day that
 50 I am the Lord
 51 And you will know in their day that
 52 I am the Lord
 53 And you will know in their day that
 54 I am the Lord
 55 And you will know in their day that
 56 I am the Lord
 57 And you will know in their day that
 58 I am the Lord
 59 And you will know in their day that
 60 I am the Lord
 61 And you will know in their day that
 62 I am the Lord
 63 And you will know in their day that
 64 I am the Lord
 65 And you will know in their day that
 66 I am the Lord
 67 And you will know in their day that
 68 I am the Lord
 69 And you will know in their day that
 70 I am the Lord
 71 And you will know in their day that
 72 I am the Lord
 73 And you will know in their day that
 74 I am the Lord
 75 And you will know in their day that
 76 I am the Lord
 77 And you will know in their day that
 78 I am the Lord
 79 And you will know in their day that
 80 I am the Lord
 81 And you will know in their day that
 82 I am the Lord
 83 And you will know in their day that
 84 I am the Lord
 85 And you will know in their day that
 86 I am the Lord
 87 And you will know in their day that
 88 I am the Lord
 89 And you will know in their day that
 90 I am the Lord
 91 And you will know in their day that
 92 I am the Lord
 93 And you will know in their day that
 94 I am the Lord
 95 And you will know in their day that
 96 I am the Lord
 97 And you will know in their day that
 98 I am the Lord
 99 And you will know in their day that
 100 I am the Lord

44:28 Cyrus the Shepherd
 God demonstrated his control over human history
 by using a foreigner, the emperor of a new
 Medo-Persian empire, to accomplish his will. "I
 summon you by name and bestow on you a title of
 honor," said God, "though you do not
 acknowledge me" (45:4). As predicted in this
 verse, Cyrus freed the Jewish captives in Babylon
 and allowed them to return to Jerusalem to rebuild
 the temple.

17 I will break down gates of bronze
and cut through bars of iron.
I will give you the treasures of darkness
and hidden things which you did not know.
I will show you that I am the Lord,
the God of Israel, who summons you by name.

18 Even the water of the sea will be dried up
and the land will be broken up.
I will make the sea into dry land
and the rivers into dry streams.
I will give you the sea for a plain
and the rivers for dry streams.
I will give you the sea for a plain
and the rivers for dry streams.
I will give you the sea for a plain
and the rivers for dry streams.

19 I am the Lord, and there is no other.
I will strengthen you
though you have not acknowledged me.
I will save you from the hand of the king
and from the power of the king.
I will save you from the hand of the king
and from the power of the king.
I will save you from the hand of the king
and from the power of the king.

20 You heavens above, rain down righteousness,
and the clouds shower it down.
Let the earth open wide
and let salvation spring up.
Let righteousness grow with it,
the Lord have created it.

21 Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker,
to him who is but a potsherd among the
potsherds on the ground.
Does the clay say to the potter,
What are you making?

22 Does your work say,
He has no hands?
Woe to him who says to his father,
What have you begotten?
to his mother,
What have you brought to birth?

This is what the Lord says—
the Holy One of Israel, and its Maker.
Concerning things to come,
do you question me about my children,
or give me orders about the work of my
hands?

23 It is I who made the earth
and created mankind upon it.
My own hands stretched out the heavens;
I marshaled their starry hosts.

24 I will raise up Cyrus^b in my righteousness:
I will make all his ways straight.
He will rebuild my city
and set my exiles free,
but not for a price or reward,
says the Lord Almighty.

25 This is what the Lord says:

"The products of Egypt and the merchandise of
Cush,
and those tall Sabeans—

they will come over to you
and will be yours.
They will bring gold and silver
and clothing for you in chains.
They will bow down before you
and plead with you, saying,
Truly God is with you, and there is no other,
there is no other god.

26 Truly you are a God who hides himself,
O God and Savior of Israel.

27 All the makers of idols will be put to shame
and disgraced.
They will go off into disgrace together.
But Israel will be saved by the Lord
with an everlasting salvation.
You will never be put to shame or disgraced,
in ages everlasting.

28 For this is what the Lord says—
he who created the heavens,
he is God;
he who fashioned and made the earth,
he founded it;
he did not create it to be empty,
but formed it to be inhabited—
he says.

"I am the Lord,
and there is no other.

29 I have not spoken in secret,
from somewhere in a land of darkness,
I have not said to Jacob's descendants,
"Seek me in vain."
I, the Lord, speak the truth;
I declare what is right.

30 "Gather together and come,
assemble, you fugitives from the nations.
Ignorant are those who carry about idols of
wood,

who pray to gods that cannot save.

31 Declare what is to be, present it—
let them take counsel together.
Who foretold this long ago,
who declared it from the distant past?
Was it not I, the Lord?

And there is no God apart from me,
a righteous God and a Savior;
there is none but me.

32 "Turn to me and be saved,
all you ends of the earth;
for I am God, and there is no other.

33 By myself I have sworn,

45:21 Foretelling the Future

Isaiah contains many predictions of future events. These chapters tell of the rise of Cyrus from the east. Elsewhere, the prophet gives specific predictions about the coming Messiah and about events near the end of time. God uses these predictions as proof of his power and knowledge, challenging the pagan gods to foretell anything (41:23).

^a Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint, the meaning of the word in the Masoretic Text is uncertain
^b the upper Nile region

^{b13} Hebrew him

¹⁴ That is,

its strength has passed in all integrity
 a word that will not be reversed
 those who ever knew will know
 by the rivers Babylon will weep
 others will say of me: In the LORD alone
 are righteousness and strength
 all who are LORD against him
 will be ashamed to put to shame
 the LORD all the descendants of Israel
 will be found righteous and will exult

Gods of Babylon

46 ¹ Babylon's strong gods oppress him
 they are borne by beasts of burden
 they are carried about are
 weary
² they sit in the midst
 they sit down together
 they rest the burden
 they do not go out into captivity
³ they do not return to house or land
 they do not return to the house of Israel
 they do not have a shield since you were
 forsaken
⁴ they are silent since your birth
 they are silent and gray hairs
 they are silent who will sustain you
 they are silent who will carry you
 they are silent and I will rescue you
⁵ they are silent you compare me or count me
 equal
⁶ when will you liken me that we may be
 equal
⁷ they are silent and from their bags
 and weights silver on the scales
 they are silent to make it into a god
 and they bow down and worship it
⁸ they set it on their shoulders and carry it
 they set it up in its place, and there it stands
 they are silent it cannot move
 though they cry out to it, it does not answer
 though they have him from his troubles
⁹ Remember this, Babylonians
 take heed, you rebels
¹⁰ Remember the former things those of long
 ago
¹¹ I am GOD and there is no other
¹² I am GOD and there is none like me
¹³ I make known the end from the beginning
 from ancient times what is still to come
¹⁴ I am My purpose will stand
 and I will do all that I please
¹⁵ From the east I summon a bird of prey:
 from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my
 purpose
¹⁶ What I have said, that will I bring about,
 what I have planned, that will I do.
¹⁷ Listen to me, you stubborn-hearted
 you who are far from righteousness
¹⁸ I am bringing my righteousness near,
 it is not far away
¹⁹ and my salvation will not be delayed
²⁰ I will grant salvation to Zion

my splendor to Israel

The Fall of Babylon

47 ¹ Lie down, sit in the dust,
 Virgin Daughter of Babylon;
 sit on the ground without a throne,
 Daughter of the Babylonians.
² No more will you be called
 tender or delicate
³ Take millstones and grind flour;
 take off your veil.
⁴ Lift up your skirts, bare your legs,
 and wade through the streams
⁵ Your nakedness will be exposed
 and your shame uncovered
⁶ I will take vengeance,
 I will spare no one.
⁷ Our Redeemer—the LORD Almighty is his
 name—
 is the Holy One of Israel.
⁸ Sit in silence, go into darkness,
 Daughter of the Babylonians;
 no more will you be called
 queen of kingdoms.
⁹ I was angry with my people
 and desecrated my inheritance;
 I gave them into your hand,
 and you showed them no mercy.
 Even on the aged
 you laid a very heavy yoke.
¹⁰ You said, 'I will continue forever—
 the eternal queen'
 But you did not consider these things
 or reflect on what might happen.
¹¹ Now then, listen, you wanton creature,
 lounging in your security
 and saying to yourself,
 'I am, and there is none besides me.
 I will never be a widow
 or suffer the loss of children.'
¹² Both of these will overtake you
 in a moment, on a single day:
 loss of children and widowhood.
 They will come upon you in full measure,
 in spite of your many sorceries
 and all your potent spells.
¹³ You have trusted in your wickedness
 and have said, 'No one sees me.'
 Your wisdom and knowledge mislead you

47:1 An Evil Queen

Over the centuries, Babylon became a byword for evil among the Jews, for she was the nation that had destroyed Jerusalem and its temple. Psalm 137, composed by captive Jews in Babylon, expresses their anguish. But God predicts that the great queen will become a harlot, surprised by a sudden catastrophe. The tone of this chapter is echoed in the book of Revelation, which applies the symbolism of "Babylon the Great" to another evil empire (Revelation 18).

They are created now and not long ago
you have not heard of them before today
You cannot say
Yes, I know of them
You have neither heard nor understood
from of old your ear has not been open
Well do I know how treacherous you are,
you were called a rebel from birth
For my own name's sake I delay my wrath,
for the sake of my praise I hold it back from
you

so as not to cut you off
I have refined you in the furnace of affliction
How can I let myself be defamed?
I will not yield my glory to another
Listen to me, O Jacob,
Israel, whom I have called:
I am he;
I am the first and I am the last
My own hand laid the foundations of the
earth,
and my right hand spread out the heavens;
when I summon them,
they all stand up together.

Come together, all of you, and listen:
Which of the idols has foretold these things?
The Lord's chosen ally
will carry out his purpose against Babylon;
his arm will be against the Babylonians.
even I, have spoken,
yes, I have called him
I will bring him,
and he will succeed in his mission.
Come near me and listen to this:
"From the first announcement I have not
spoken in secret,
at the time it happens, I am there."
And now the Sovereign Lord has sent me,
with his Spirit

Stubborn Israel

18 Listen to this, O house of Jacob,
you who are called by the name of Israel
and come from the line of Judah,
you who take oaths in the name of the Lord
and invoke the God of Israel—
but not in truth or righteousness—
You who call yourselves citizens of the holy
city
and rely on the God of Israel—
the Lord Almighty is his name
I foretold the former things long ago
my mouth announced them and I made
them known,
then suddenly I acted, and they came to
pass
For I knew how stubborn you were,
the sinews of your neck were iron,
your forehead was bronze
Therefore I told you these things long ago;
before they happened I announced them to
you
so that you could not say,
My idols did them
my wooden image and metal god ordained
them
You have heard these things, look at them all
Will you not admit them?
From now on I will tell you of new things,
of hidden things unknown to you

19 This is what the Lord says—
your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:
"I am the Lord your God,
who teaches you what is best for you,
who directs you in the way you should go.
If only you had paid attention to my
commands,
your peace would have been like a river,
your righteousness like the waves of the sea
Your descendants would have been like the
sand,
your children like its numberless grains;
their name would never be cut off
nor destroyed from before me."
Leave Babylon,
flee from the Babylonians!
Announce this with shouts of joy
and proclaim it
Send it out to the ends of the earth,

Israel Freed

20 Listen to me, O Jacob,
Israel, whom I have called:
I am he;
I am the first and I am the last
My own hand laid the foundations of the
earth,
and my right hand spread out the heavens;
when I summon them,
they all stand up together.
Come together, all of you, and listen:
Which of the idols has foretold these things?
The Lord's chosen ally
will carry out his purpose against Babylon;
his arm will be against the Babylonians.
even I, have spoken,
yes, I have called him
I will bring him,
and he will succeed in his mission.
Come near me and listen to this:
"From the first announcement I have not
spoken in secret,
at the time it happens, I am there."
And now the Sovereign Lord has sent me,
with his Spirit

say, "The LORD has redeemed his servant Jacob

They did not thirst when he led them through the deserts;
he made water flow for them from the rock,
he split the rock
and water gushed out

"There is no peace," says the LORD, "for the wicked

The Servant of the LORD

49 Listen to me, you islands,
hear this, you distant nations
Before I was born the LORD called me
from my birth he has made mention of my name

He made my mouth like a sharpened sword,
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me into a polished arrow
and concealed me in his quiver

He said to me, "You are my servant,
Israel, in whom I will display my splendor."

But I said, "I have labored to no purpose;
I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing

Yet what is due me is in the LORD's hand,
and my reward is with my God."

And now the LORD says—
he who formed me in the womb to be his servant

to bring Jacob back to him
and gather Israel to himself,
for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD
and my God has been my strength—

he says

"It is too small a thing for you to be my servant
to restore the tribes of Jacob
and bring back those of Israel I have kept.
I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,
that you may bring my salvation to the ends
of the earth."

This is what the LORD says—
the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel—
to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation,

to the servant of rulers:

"Kings will see you and rise up,
princes will see and bow down,
because of the LORD, who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

49:6 Israel's Final Destiny

The book of Isaiah spells out Israel's ultimate destiny: to be a light for the Gentiles and bring salvation to the ends of the earth. Isaiah is not introducing a brand-new thought—God had made clear his intentions in the original covenant (Genesis 22:18). But, along the way, Israel and Judah's desire for political greatness had obscured their original calling.

Restoration of Israel

"This is what the LORD says:

"In the time of my favor I will answer you,
and in the day of salvation I will help you,
I will keep you and will make you
to be a covenant for the people,
to restore the land

and to reassign its desolate inheritances,
to say to the captives, 'Come out,'
and to those in darkness, 'Be free'"

"They will feed beside the roads
and find pasture on every barren hill.

They will neither hunger nor thirst,
nor will the desert heat or the sun beat upon them

He who has compassion on them will guide them

and lead them beside springs of water.

I will turn all my mountains into roads,
and my highways will be raised up.

See, they will come from afar—
some from the north, some from the west,
some from the region of Aswan."

Shout for joy, O heavens;

rejoice, O earth;

burst into song, O mountains!

For the LORD comforts his people

and will have compassion on his afflicted ones

But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me,
the Lord has forgotten me."

"Can a mother forget the baby at her breast
and have no compassion on the child she
has borne?

Though she may forget,
I will not forget you!

See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands;

your walls are ever before me.

Your sons hasten back,

and those who laid you waste depart from you.

Lift up your eyes and look around;

all your sons gather and come to you.

As surely as I live," declares the LORD,

"you will wear them all as ornaments;

you will put them on, like a bride.

Though you were ruined and made desolate
and your land laid waste,
now you will be too small for your people,
and those who devoured you will be far
away.

The children born during your bereavement
will yet say in your hearing,

"This place is too small for us;

give us more space to live in."

Then you will say in your heart,

"Who bore me these?

I was bereaved and barren;

I was exiled and rejected.

Who brought these up?

Where have they come from?
 This is what the Sovereign LORD says:
 I will look to the Gentiles
 will fill up my house to the peoples
 they will bring your sons in their arms
 and carry your daughters on their shoulders
 Women will be your foster mothers
 they will nurse your motherless
 they will know that I am the LORD
 now who hope in me will not be
 ashamed
 No murder will be taken from warriors
 no more rescued from the fierce
 This is what the LORD says
 No more will be taken from warriors
 no more retrieved from the fierce
 and contend with those who contend with
 me
 I will save
 my people from their oppressors
 they will eat their own flesh
 they will be drunk on their own blood, as
 with wine
 Then all mankind will know
 that I, the LORD, am your Savior,
 your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."

Israel's Sin and the Servant's Obedience

50 This is what the LORD says:
 "Where is your mother's certificate of
 divorce
 with which I sent her away?
 Or to which of my creditors
 did I owe you?
 Because of your sins you were sold,
 because of your transgressions your mother
 was sent away
 When I came, why was there no one?
 When I called, why was there no one to
 answer?
 Was my arm too short to ransom you?
 Do I lack the strength to rescue you?
 By a mere rebuke I dry up the sea,
 I turn rivers into a desert;
 their fish rot for lack of water
 and die of thirst.
 I clothe the sky with darkness
 and make sackcloth its covering."
51 The Sovereign LORD has given me an
 instructed tongue,
 to know the word that sustains the weary.
 He wakens me morning by morning,
 wakens my ear to listen like one being
 taught.
52 The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears,
 and I have not been rebellious;
 I have not drawn back.

53 I offered my back to those who beat me,
 my cheeks to those who pulled out my
 beard
 I did not hide my face
 from mocking and spitting
54 Because the Sovereign LORD helps me,
 I will not be disgraced
 Therefore have I set my face like flint,
 and I know I will not be put to shame.
55 He who vindicates me is near
 Who then will bring charges against me?
 Let us face each other!
 Who is my accuser?
 Let him confront me!
56 It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me.
 Who is he that will condemn me?
 They will all wear out like a garment,
 the moth will eat them up.
57 Who among you fears the LORD
 and obeys the word of his servant?
 Let him who walks in the dark,
 who has no light,
 trust in the name of the LORD
 and rely on his God
58 But now, all you who light fires
 and provide yourselves with flaming
 torches,
 go, walk in the light of your fires
 and of the torches you have set ablaze.
 This is what you shall receive from my hand:
 You will lie down in torment.

Everlasting Salvation for Zion

51 "Listen to me, you who pursue
 righteousness
 and who seek the LORD:
 Look to the rock from which you were cut
 and to the quarry from which you were
 hewn;
52 Look to Abraham, your father,
 and to Sarah, who gave you birth.
 When I called him he was but one,
 and I blessed him and made him many.
53 The LORD will surely comfort Zion
 and will look with compassion on all her
 ruins;
 he will make her deserts like Eden,
 her wastelands like the garden of the LORD.
 Joy and gladness will be found in her,
 thanksgiving and the sound of singing.
54 "Listen to me, my people;
 hear me, my nation:
 The law will go out from me;
 my justice will become a light to the nations.
55 My righteousness draws near speedily,
 my salvation is on the way,
 and my arm will bring justice to the nations.
 The islands will look to me
 and wait in hope for my arm.
56 Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
 look at the earth beneath;
 the heavens will vanish like smoke,
 the earth will wear out like a garment

⁵⁴ Dead Sea Scrolls, Vulgate and Syriac (see also Septuagint and verse 25), Masoretic Text *righteous*

and its inhabitants die like flies
But my salvation will last forever,
my righteousness will never fail

⁷"Hear me, you who know what is right,
you people who have my law in your hearts:
Do not fear the reproach of men
or be terrified by their insults.

⁸For the moth will eat them up like a garment;
the worm will devour them like wool.
But my righteousness will last forever,
my salvation through all generations."

⁹Awake, awake! Clothe yourself with strength,
O arm of the LORD,
awake, as in days gone by,
as in generations of old.

Was it not you who cut Rahab to pieces,
who pierced that monster through?

¹⁰Was it not you who dried up the sea,
the waters of the great deep,
who made a road in the depths of the sea
so that the redeemed might cross over?

¹¹The ransomed of the LORD will return
They will enter Zion with singing;
everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

¹²"I, even I, am he who comforts you.
Who are you that you fear mortal men,
the sons of men, who are but grass,

¹³that you forget the LORD your Maker,
who stretched out the heavens
and laid the foundations of the earth,
that you live in constant terror every day
because of the wrath of the oppressor,
who is bent on destruction?

For where is the wrath of the oppressor?

¹⁴ The cowering prisoners will soon be set
free,

they will not die in their dungeon,
nor will they lack bread.

¹⁵For I am the LORD your God,
who churns up the sea so that its waves
roar—

the LORD Almighty is his name.

¹⁶I have put my words in your mouth
and covered you with the shadow of my
hand—

I who set the heavens in place,
who laid the foundations of the earth,
and who say to Zion, 'You are my people.' "

51:9 Rahab the Monster

The Rahab in Isaiah (here and in 30:7) should not be confused with the Rahab who helped Joshua's spies in Jericho (Joshua 2). Rather, the word refers to a sea-monster that appears in much Middle Eastern mythology. Because the mythological monster lived in the Nile River region, *Rahab* can stand for the nation of Egypt, as it does here.

The Cup of the Lord's Wrath

¹⁷Awake, awake!

Rise up, O Jerusalem,
you who have drunk from the hand of the
LORD

the cup of his wrath,
you who have drained to its dregs
the goblet that makes men stagger.

¹⁸Of all the sons she bore
there was none to guide her;
of all the sons she reared
there was none to take her by the hand.

¹⁹These double calamities have come upon
you—

who can comfort you?—
ruin and destruction, famine and sword—
who can console you?

²⁰Your sons have fainted,
they lie at the head of every street,
like antelope caught in a net.

They are filled with the wrath of the LORD
and the rebuke of your God.

²¹Therefore hear this, you afflicted one,
made drunk, but not with wine.

²²This is what your Sovereign LORD says,
your God, who defends his people:

"See, I have taken out of your hand
the cup that made you stagger;
from that cup, the goblet of my wrath,
you will never drink again.

²³I will put it into the hands of your tormentors,
who said to you,

'Fall prostrate that we may walk over you.'
And you made your back like the ground,
like a street to be walked over."

52 Awake, awake, O Zion,
clothe yourself with strength.

Put on your garments of splendor,
O Jerusalem, the holy city.

The uncircumcised and defiled
will not enter you again.

²Shake off your dust;
rise up, sit enthroned, O Jerusalem.

Free yourself from the chains on your neck,
O captive Daughter of Zion.

³For this is what the LORD says:

"You were sold for nothing,
and without money you will be redeemed."

⁴For this is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"At first my people went down to Egypt to
live;
lately, Assyria has oppressed them.

⁵"And now what do I have here?" declares the
LORD.

"For my people have been taken away for
nothing,
and those who rule them mock,"

declares the LORD.

"And all day long

¹⁹ Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac, Masoretic Text / how can I
will

¹⁵ Dead Sea Scrolls and Vulgate, Masoretic Text

my name is constantly blasphemed.
Therefore my people will know my name
therefore in that day they will know
that I, who have told it
Yes, it is I.

How beautiful on the mountains
are the feet of those who bring good news,
who proclaim peace,
who bring good tidings,
who proclaim salvation,
who say to Zion:

Your God reigns!
Indeed! Your watchmen lift up their voices,
together they shout for joy.
When the Lord returns to Zion,
they will see it with their own eyes.

Turned into songs of joy together,
you ruins of Jerusalem,
for the Lord has comforted his people,
he has redeemed Jerusalem.

The Lord will lay bare his holy arm
in the sight of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth will see
the salvation of our God.

Depart, depart, go out from there!
Touch no unclean thing!
Come out from it and be pure,
you who carry the vessels of the Lord.
But you will not leave in haste
or go in flight,
for the Lord will go before you,
the God of Israel will be your rear guard.

The Suffering and Glory of the Servant

See, my servant will act wisely;^a
he will be raised and lifted up and highly
exalted.
Just as there were many who were appalled at
him—
his appearance was so disfigured beyond
that of any man
and his form marred beyond human
likeness—
so will he sprinkle many nations,^c
and kings will shut their mouths because of
him.
For what they were not told, they will see,
and what they have not heard, they will
understand.

53 Who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of the Lord
been revealed?

He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to
him,
nothing in his appearance that we should
desire him.

He was despised and rejected by men,

a pattern of suffering and he was
suffering
like one from whom men hide their faces.
He was despised and we were
disparaging him.

He was despised and we
despised him,
and he carried our sorrows,
yet we considered him stricken by God,
afflicted by him, and afflicted.
But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was
upon him,

and by his wounds we are healed.
We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to his own way,
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before her shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

By oppression and judgment he was taken
away,
and who can speak of his descendants?
For he was cut off from the land of the living,
for the transgression of my people he was
stricken.^e

He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,
nor was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and
cause him to suffer,
and though the Lord makes^f his life a guilt
offering,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the Lord will prosper in his
hand.

After the suffering of his soul,
he will see the light of life and be
satisfied.^h
By his knowledge^g my righteous servant will
justify many,
and he will bear their iniquities.

Therefore I will give him a portion among the
great,ⁱ
and he will divide the spoils with the
strong.^j

because he poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.
For he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

The Future Glory of Zion

54 "Sing, O barren woman
you who never bore a child;
burst into song, shout for joy,
you who were never in labor;

^a13 Or will prosper ^b14 Hebrew you ^c15 Hebrew; Septuagint so will many nations marvel at him ^d16 Or From distress
^e18 Or away ^fYet who of his generation considered that he was cut off from the land of the living for the transgression of my people ^g19 Or by his knowledge of men
blow was due? ^h10 Hebrew though you make ⁱ12 Dead Sea Scrolls (see also Septuagint); Masoretic Text does not have the type
of life ^j11 Or (with Masoretic Text) ^kHe will see the result of the suffering of his soul and of suffering ^l11 Or by knowledge of men
^m12 Or many ⁿ12 Or numerous

and with in their desolate cities
 I will not be afraid, you will not suffer shame
 I will not have disgrace, you will not be
 humiliated
 You will forget the shame of your youth
 and remember no more the reproach of your
 widowhood
 For your Maker is your husband
 the Lord Almighty is his name
 the Lord God of Israel is your Redeemer,
 he is called the God of all the earth

and with in their desolate cities
 I will not be afraid, you will not suffer shame
 I will not have disgrace, you will not be
 humiliated
 You will forget the shame of your youth
 and remember no more the reproach of your
 widowhood
 For your Maker is your husband
 the Lord Almighty is his name
 the Lord God of Israel is your Redeemer,
 he is called the God of all the earth

INSIGHT

The Suffering Servant

A great victory looked at first like defeat

ISAIAH 52:13-53:12 is one of the most famous and familiar with suffering 53:3

Who is the suffering servant who will come from Israel to bring light to the nations? Who is the suffering servant?

For centuries puzzled over these passages for centuries. Many considered them the most important part of the entire Old Testament, and yet they could not agree on exactly what the servant was. The passages themselves are called the servant songs (42:1-9, 49:1-13, 50:4-9, 52:13-53:12).

A Nation or a Person?

At first, the servant was about the nation of Israel as a whole. "You are my servant, Israel," says Isaiah 44:28. But in other places the servant seems to refer to a specific individual, a great leader who suffers terribly.

Isaiah 53:1-12 describes the servant as the deliverer of all humankind. And yet it portrays him more as a suffering servant than a hero. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him. He was despised and abused, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter.

Some people guessed the prophet was describing himself or another prophet, such as Jeremiah. Others focused their hopes on a Messiah to come. They expected a king from very humble origins, whose power would depend not on swords, but on the spirits of people.

An Answer from the New Testament

The idea of the suffering servant did not really catch on among the Jewish nation. They longed for a triumphant Messiah, not a suffering one. The image of the suffering servant went into a kind of dormancy, lying dormant for centuries.

Then, in a very dramatic scene early in his ministry, Jesus quoted from one of the servant songs (Luke 4:18-19). "Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying, 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'" (Luke 4:20-21)

Following his example, the New Testament writers named Jesus as the servant, at least ten times. In one instance, Philip corrected an Ethiopian official who had wondered if the suffering servant referred to an ancient prophet (Acts 8:26-35).

The Final Sacrifice

Isaiah 49:1-12 includes vivid scenes of the servant's sufferings, predictions that found their fulfillment in Jesus' death on the cross. Written like an eyewitness account, they were actually composed centuries before Christ's death.

According to Isaiah, the servant died for a very specific purpose: "He was pierced for our transgressions" (53:5). Through his wounds, the suffering servant won a great victory. His death made possible a future when all that is wrong on earth will be set right. Significantly, the book of Isaiah does not end with the suffering servant image. It goes on to describe a wonderful life in a new heaven and new earth made possible by the servant's death.

Life Questions: If you had been a Jew in Jesus' day, would you have been disappointed in the Messiah? Why did Jesus choose to come as a suffering servant rather than, say, a triumphant army general?

[illegible]

54:6 Jerusalem's Future

The book of Isaiah insists that God will not permanently divorce the nation of Israel. It foretells a time when the ruined capital city will be rebuilt and achieve a greatness it has never known. Yet the description in these chapters goes far beyond what has ever been realized in Jerusalem. It merges into a vision of the future, when sin and sorrow will be no more and people will live in final peace with God.

Handwritten notes:

Handwritten notes:

Handwritten notes:

244 244444 244 24444

9 I have said what was in my mind,
I have said what was before me;
I have said what was right and true
and I will not turn back.
Why should you fear what he says or what he does?
He has no power over me; what he does is nothing to me.
I would rather trust in the Lord who saves me than put my confidence in man.
For my soul belongs to the Lord;
he has taken me from the womb and holds me;
I am his workmanship, entrusted to him;
and he will preserve me from all harm.
Therefore I have made haste to answer to the psalmist:
A witness and confessor of the psalmist
because you will remember that you know
me,
and because that do not know you will
trust in you
because of the Lord your God
the Holy One of Israel
for he has endowed you with splendor
seek the Lord while he may be found,
call on him while he is near.
Let the wicked forsake his way ...
and the evil man his thoughts;
let him turn to the Lord and he will have
mercy on him
and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

* For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways,
declares the Lord.

* As the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

10 As the rain and the snow
come down from heaven,
and do not return to it
without watering the earth
and making it bud and flourish,
so that it yields seed for the sower and bread
for the eater,

11 so is my word that goes out from my mouth:
It will not return to me empty,
but will accomplish what I desire
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

12 You will go out in joy
and be led forth in peace;
the mountains and hills
will burst into song before you,
and all the trees of the field
will clap their hands.

13 Instead of the thornbush will grow the pine tree,
and instead of briars the myrtle will grow.
This will be for the LORD's renown,
for an everlasting sign.

e11 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain. b11 Or lapis lazuli

which will not be destroyed."

Salvation for Others

56 This is what the Lord says:

Maintain justice
and do what is right
for my salvation is close at hand
and my righteousness will soon be revealed.
Blessed is the man who does this,
the man who holds it fast,
who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it,
and keeps his hand from doing any evil."

Let no foreigner who has bound himself to the
Lord say,
The Lord will surely exclude me from his
people."

And let not any eunuch complain,
"I am only a dry tree."

For this is what the Lord says

"To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths,
who choose what pleases me
and hold fast to my covenant—

to them I will give within my temple and its
walls

a memorial and a name
better than sons and daughters;
I will give them an everlasting name
that will not be cut off.

And foreigners who bind themselves to the
Lord

to serve him,
to love the name of the Lord,
and to worship him,
all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it
and who hold fast to my covenant—
these I will bring to my holy mountain
and give them joy in my house of prayer.
Their burnt offerings and sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar;
for my house will be called
a house of prayer for all nations."

The Sovereign Lord declares—
he who gathers the exiles of Israel
"I will gather still others to them
besides those already gathered."

God's Accusation Against the Wicked

Come, all you beasts of the field,
come and devour, all you beasts of the
forest!

Israel's watchmen are blind,
they all lack knowledge;
they are all mute dogs,
they cannot bark;
they lie around and dream,
they love to sleep.

They are dogs with mighty appetites,
they never have enough.
They are shepherds who lack understanding;
they all turn to their own way,
each seeks his own gain.
"Come," each one cries, "let me get wine!
Let us drink our fill of beer!
And tomorrow will be like today,
or even far better."

57 The righteous perish,
and no one ponders it in his heart,
devout men are taken away,
and no one understands
that the righteous are taken away
to be spared from evil.
Those who walk uprightly
enter into peace;
they find rest as they lie in death.

"But you—come here, you sons of a whore,
you offspring of adulterers and prostitutes!"

Whom are you mocking?
At whom do you sneer
and stick out your tongue?
Are you not a brood of rebels,
the offspring of liars?

You burn with lust among the oaks
and under every spreading tree,
you sacrifice your children in the ravines
and under the overhanging crags.

The idols, among the smooth stones of the
ravines are your portion;
they, they are your lot.

Yes, to them you have poured out drink
offerings
and offered grain offerings.

In the light of these things, should I relent?

You have made your bed on a high and lofty
hill;

there you went up to offer your sacrifices.

Behind your doors and your doorposts
you have put your pagan symbols.
Forsaking me, you uncovered your bed,
you climbed into it and opened it wide;
you made a pact with those whose beds you
love,

and you looked on their nakedness.

You went to Molech^a with olive oil
and increased your perfumes.
You sent your ambassadors^b far away;
you descended to the grave^c itself!

You were wearied by all your ways,
but you would not say, "It is hopeless."
You found renewal of your strength,
and so you did not faint.

"Whom have you so dreaded and feared
that you have been false to me,
and have neither remembered me
nor pondered this in your hearts?
Is it not because I have long been silent
that you do not fear me?"

I will expose your righteousness and your
works,

56:10 Doglike Prophets

This passage gives one of the most scathing
denunciations of Israel's corrupt spiritual leaders in
the entire Bible.

^a Or to the king

^b Or idols

^c Hebrew Sheol

and they will not benefit you.
 13When you cry out for help,
 let your collection of idols save you!
 The wind will carry all of them off,
 a mere breath will blow them away.
 But the man who makes me his refuge
 will inherit the land
 and possess my holy mountain."

Comfort for the Contrite

14And it will be said
 Build up, build up, prepare the road!
 Remove the obstacles out of the way of my people."
 15For this is what the high and lofty One says—
 he who lives forever, whose name is holy:
 I live in a high and holy place,
 but also with him who is contrite and lowly
 in spirit,
 to revive the spirit of the lowly
 and to revive the heart of the contrite.
 16I will not accuse forever,
 nor will I always be angry,
 for then the spirit of man would grow faint
 before me—
 the breath of man that I have created.
 17I was enraged by his sinful greed;
 I punished him, and hid my face in anger,
 yet he kept on in his willful ways.
 18I have seen his ways, but I will heal him;
 I will guide him and restore comfort to him,
 19 creating praise on the lips of the mourners in Israel
 Peace, peace, to those far and near,"
 says the LORD. "And I will heal them."
 20But the wicked are like the tossing sea,
 which cannot rest,
 whose waves cast up mire and mud.
 21"There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."

True Fasting

58 "Shout it aloud, do not hold back.
 Raise your voice like a trumpet.
 Declare to my people their rebellion
 and to the house of Jacob their sins.
 2For day after day they seek me out;
 they seem eager to know my ways,
 as if they were a nation that does what is right
 and has not forsaken the commands of its God
 They ask me for just decisions
 and seem eager for God to come near them.
 3'Why have we fasted,' they say,
 'and you have not seen it?
 Why have we humbled ourselves,
 and you have not noticed?'
 "Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please
 and exploit all your workers.
 4Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife,
 and in striking each other with wicked fists.
 You cannot fast as you do today

and expect your voice to be heard on high.
 5Is this the kind of fast I have chosen,
 only a day for a man to humble himself?
 Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed
 and for lying on sackcloth and ashes?
 Is that what you call a fast,
 a day acceptable to the LORD?

6"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
 to loose the chains of injustice
 and untie the cords of the yoke,
 to set the oppressed free
 and break every yoke?
 7Is it not to share your food with the hungry
 and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—
 when you see the naked, to clothe him,
 and not to turn away from your own flesh
 and blood?
 8Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
 and your healing will quickly appear;
 then your righteousness^a will go before you,
 and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.
 9Then you will call, and the LORD will answer;
 you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.
 "If you do away with the yoke of oppression,
 with the pointing finger and malicious talk,
 10and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry
 and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,
 then your light will rise in the darkness,
 and your night will become like the noonday.
 11The LORD will guide you always;
 he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land
 and will strengthen your frame.
 You will be like a well-watered garden,
 like a spring whose waters never fail.
 12Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins
 and will raise up the age-old foundations;
 you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,
 Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.
 13'If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath
 and from doing as you please on my holy day,
 if you call the Sabbath a delight
 and the LORD's holy day honorable,
 and if you honor it by not going your own way
 and not doing as you please or speaking idle words,

58:6 Religion at Its Best

The book of Isaiah begins in chapter 1 by exposing false religion that had the right form and ritual, but no true sincerity. This chapter gives the other side: the spiritual work God prefers. The New Testament book of James includes a similar perspective (James 1:27).

^a Or your righteous One

when you will find your joy in the LORD
and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land
and to feast on the inheritance of your father
LORD.
The mouth of the LORD has spoken

Sin, Confession and Redemption

59 Success after sin of the LORD is not too short
to save

For his evil has died in death
and your iniquities have separated
you from your God
and his name has hidden his face from you
because you will not hear
his voice; his hands are stained with blood
your tongues are stained with gall
Your lips have spoken lies
and your tongue mutters wicked things
No one calls for justice
no one pleads his case with integrity
They rely on empty arguments and speak lies
they conceive trouble and give birth to evil
They hatch the eggs of vipers
and spin a spider's web
Whoever catches their eggs will die,
and whoever touches them is broken; an adder is
crushed.
Their flowers are useless for clothing,
they cannot cover themselves with what
they make
Their deeds are evil deeds
and acts of violence are in their hands
They have turned into serpents
they are swift to shed innocent blood
Their thoughts are evil thoughts,
murder and destruction mark their ways;
the way of peace they do not know,
there is no justice in their paths
They have turned them into crooked roads
no one who walks in them will know peace

For justice is far from us
and righteousness does not reach us
We look for light, but all is darkness;
we seek brightness, but we walk in deep
shadows
Like the blind we grope along the wall
feeling our way like men without eyes
At midday we stumble as if it were twilight;
among the strong, we are like the dead
We all growl like bears
we moan mournfully like doves
We look for justice, but find none,
for deliverance, but it is far away
For our offenses are many in your sight,
and our sins testify against us.
Our offenses are ever with us,
and we acknowledge our iniquities;
Rebellion and treachery against the LORD,
turning our backs on our God,
fomenting oppression and revolt,
uttering lies our hearts have conceived.
So justice is driven back,

and righteousness stands at a distance;
truth has stumbled in the streets,
honesty cannot enter

Truth is nowhere to be found,
and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey

The LORD looked and was displeased
that there was no justice
He saw that there was no one,
he was appalled that there was no one to
intervene;

so his own arm worked salvation for him,
and his own righteousness sustained him.

He put on righteousness as his breastplate,
and the helmet of salvation on his head,
he put on the garments of vengeance
and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.

According to what they have done,
so will he repay
wrath to his enemies
and retribution to his foes;
he will repay the islands their due.

From the west, men will fear the name of the
LORD,

and from the rising of the sun, they will
revere his glory

For he will come like a pent-up flood
that the breath of the LORD drives along

The Redeemer will come to Zion,
to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,"
declares the LORD.

"As for me, this is my covenant with them,"
says the LORD. "My Spirit, who is on you, and my
words that I have put in your mouth will not de-
part from your mouth, or from the mouths of your
children, or from the mouths of their descendants
from this time on and forever," says the LORD.

The Glory of Zion

60 "Anse, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.

See, darkness covers the earth
and thick darkness is over the peoples,
but the LORD rises upon you
and his glory appears over you.

Nations will come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

Lift up your eyes and look about you:
All assemble and come to you;
your sons come from afar,
and your daughters are carried on the arm.

Then you will look and be radiant,
your heart will throb and swell with joy;
the wealth on the seas will be brought to you,
to you the riches of the nations will come

Herds of camels will cover your land,
young camels of Midian and Ephah.
And all from Sheba will come,
bearing gold and incense
and proclaiming the praise of the LORD.

All Kedar's flocks will be gathered to you,
the rams of Nebaioth will serve you;
they will be accepted as offerings on my altar,

59, 60. As though the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD will put him to flight

and I will adorn my glorious temple.

⁸"Who are these that fly along like clouds,
like doves to their nests?"

⁹Surely the islands look to me;
in the lead are the ships of Tarshish,^a
bringing your sons from afar,
with their silver and gold,
to the honor of the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel,
for he has endowed you with splendor.

¹⁰"Foreigners will rebuild your walls,
and their kings will serve you
Though in anger I struck you,
in favor I will show you compassion.

¹¹Your gates will always stand open,
they will never be shut, day or night,
so that men may bring you the wealth of the
nations—
their kings led in triumphal procession.

¹²For the nation or kingdom that will not serve
you will perish,
it will be utterly ruined.

^a Or the trading ships

¹³"The glory of Lebanon will come to you,
the pine, the fir and the cypress together,
to adorn the place of my sanctuary,
and I will glorify the place of my feet.

¹⁴The sons of your oppressors will come bowing
before you;
all who despise you will bow down at your
feet
and will call you the City of the Lord,
Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

¹⁵"Although you have been forsaken and hated,
with no one traveling through,
I will make you the everlasting pride
and the joy of all generations

¹⁶You will drink the milk of nations
and be nursed at royal breasts.
Then you will know that I, the Lord, am your
Savior,

your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob

¹⁷Instead of bronze I will bring you gold,
and silver in place of iron
Instead of wood I will bring you bronze,
and iron in place of stones.

INSIGHT

A Glimpse of Things to Come

When all our best dreams will come true

"Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind." 65:17

Everybody wants a glimpse into the future, and the last part of Isaiah gives just that. It tells what will happen at the end of our age on earth. The account is not easy to decipher, however, because the prophet shifts back and forth between his own time and the final events on earth.

A Missionary Book

To the original audience of Israelites, Isaiah makes one thing clear: God would not permanently divorce Israel. "For a brief moment I abandoned you," says God, "but with deep compassion I will bring you back" (54:7). There is a future for his chosen people.

Isaiah declares that Israel's future involves other nations. Foreigners will flock to Jerusalem: "My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations" (56:7). Word about God will go out to nations nearby and faraway, and to distant islands that have never heard of him (66:18-21).

Thus the last part of Isaiah, addressed to a people facing deep despair, opens the door for the Jews to become a gift to all people. This prophecy saw fulfillment in Jesus, who recruited disciples to take his message to everyone. Through his life and death, the suffering servant indeed introduced the gospel to the entire world.

What Isaiah Says to Us

The book of Isaiah goes on to describe a new beginning, a time of final triumph and peace. In that day, there will be no need for tears. Wild animals will tamely lie down together. The sun and moon will fade, overwhelmed by the brightness of God's glory.

In chapters 60 and 65, the prophet describes the future with such eloquence that New Testament books like Revelation could not improve on the language; they merely quoted Isaiah. Even today some of these phrases—"swords beaten into plowshares," for example—surface in popular language, expressing our deepest longings for peace.

We dream of a time of peace, without pain or fear or disease or death. Isaiah assures us that one day those dreams will come true.

Life Questions: What would you most like to see changed about your world? Does Isaiah speak to that change?

I will make peace your government
and righteousness your ruler.
No longer will violence be heard in your land,
nor ruin or destruction within your borders,
but you will call your walls salvation
and your gates praise.
The sun will no more be your light by day,
nor will the brightness of the moon shine on
you;
for the Lord will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory.
Your sun will never set again,
and your moon will wane no more;
the Lord will be your everlasting light,
and your days of sorrow will end.
Then will all your people be righteous,
and they will possess the land forever.
They are the shoot I have planted,
the work of my hands,
for the display of my splendor.
The least of you will become a thousand,
the smallest a mighty nation.
I am the Lord;
in my time I will do this swiftly."

The Year of the Lord's Favor

61 The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,
because the Lord has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the
prisoners,¹
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn,²
and provide for those who grieve in Zion—
to bestow on them a crown of beauty
instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness
instead of mourning,
and a garment of praise
instead of a spirit of despair.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
a planting of the Lord
for the display of his splendor.
They will rebuild the ancient ruins
and restore the places long devastated;
they will renew the ruined cities
that have been devastated for generations.
Aliens will shepherd your flocks;
foreigners will work your fields and
vineyards.

61:1 Jesus Began Here

When Jesus was ready to announce himself and his mission, he began with a dramatic quotation of this passage (Luke 4:18-19). Notably, he stopped in mid-sentence, before he reached the phrase "the day of vengeance of our God." Jesus taught that this day of vengeance would indeed take place, but at the time of his second coming, not his first.

"And you will be called priests of the Lord,
you will be named ministers of our God.
You will feed on the wealth of nations,
and in their cities you will dwell.

"Instead of their shame
my people will receive a double portion,
and instead of disgrace
they will rejoice in their inheritance;
and so they will inherit a double portion in
their land,
and everlasting joy will be theirs.

"For I, the Lord, love justice,
I hate robbery and iniquity.
In my faithfulness I will reward them
and make an everlasting covenant with
them.

"Their descendants will be known among the
nations
and their offspring among the peoples.
All who see them will acknowledge
that they are a people the Lord has
blessed."

60 I delight greatly in the Lord;
my soul rejoices in my God.
For he has clothed me with garments of
salvation
and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,
and as a bride adorns herself with her
jewels.
61 For as the soil makes the sprout come up
and a garden causes seeds to grow,
so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness
and praise
spring up before all nations.

Zion's New Name

62 For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain
quiet,
till her righteousness shines out like the dawn,
her salvation like a blazing torch.
2 The nations will see your righteousness,
and all kings your glory;
you will be called by a new name
that the mouth of the Lord will bestow.
3 You will be a crown of splendor in the Lord's
hand,
a royal diadem in the hand of your God.
4 No longer will they call you Deserted,
or name your land Desolate.
But you will be called Hephzibah,¹
and your land Beulah;²
for the Lord will take delight in you,³
and your land will be married.
5 As a young man marries a maiden,⁴
so will your sons⁵ marry you;
as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride,
so will your God rejoice over you.
6 I have posted watchmen on your walls,
O Jerusalem;
they will never be silent day or night.

¹ Hebrew, Septuagint the blind

² Hephzibah means my delight is in her

⁴ Beulah means married.

⁵ Or Builders

You who call on the LORD,
give yourselves no rest,
and give him no rest till he establishes
Jerusalem
and makes her the praise of the earth.

⁵The LORD has sworn by his right hand
and by his mighty arm.
'Never again will I give your grain
as food for your enemies,
and never again will foreigners drink the new
wine
for which you have toiled,
⁹but those who harvest it will eat it
and praise the LORD,
and those who gather the grapes will drink it
in the courts of my sanctuary."

¹⁰Pass through, pass through the gates!
Prepare the way for the people.
Build up, build up the highway!
Remove the stones.
Raise a banner for the nations.

¹¹The LORD has made proclamation
to the ends of the earth
'Say to the Daughter of Zion,
'See, your Savior comes!
See, his reward is with him,
and his recompense accompanies him.'"
¹²They will be called the Holy People,
the Redeemed of the LORD;
and you will be called Sought After,
the City No Longer Deserted.

God's Day of Vengeance and Redemption

63 Who is this coming from Edom,
from Bozrah, with his garments stained
crimson?

Who is this, robed in splendor,
striding forward in the greatness of his
strength?

"It is I, speaking in righteousness,
mighty to save."

²Why are your garments red,
like those of one treading the winepress?

³"I have trodden the winepress alone;
from the nations no one was with me.
I trampled them in my anger
and trod them down in my wrath;
their blood spattered my garments,
and I stained all my clothing.

⁴For the day of vengeance was in my heart,
and the year of my redemption has come.

⁵I looked, but there was no one to help,
I was appalled that no one gave support;
so my own arm worked salvation for me,
and my own wrath sustained me.

⁶I trampled the nations in my anger;
in my wrath I made them drunk
and poured their blood on the ground."

Praise and Prayer

⁷I will tell of the kindnesses of the LORD,
the deeds for which he is to be praised,

according to all the LORD has done for us—
yes, the many good things he has done
for the house of Israel,
according to his compassion and many
kindnesses.

⁸He said, "Surely they are my people,
sons who will not be false to me";
and so he became their Savior.

⁹In all their distress he too was distressed,
and the angel of his presence saved them.
In his love and mercy he redeemed them;
he lifted them up and carried them
all the days of old.

¹⁰Yet they rebelled
and grieved his Holy Spirit.
So he turned and became their enemy
and he himself fought against them.

¹¹Then his people recalled^a the days of old,
the days of Moses and his people—
where is he who brought them through the
sea,

with the shepherd of his flock?
Where is he who set
his Holy Spirit among them,

¹²who sent his glorious arm of power
to be at Moses' right hand,
who divided the waters before them,
to gain for himself everlasting renown,

¹³who led them through the depths?
Like a horse in open country,
they did not stumble;

¹⁴like cattle that go down to the plain,
they were given rest by the Spirit of the
LORD.

This is how you guided your people
to make for yourself a glorious name.

¹⁵Look down from heaven and see
from your lofty throne, holy and
glorious.

Where are your zeal and your might?
Your tenderness and compassion are
withheld from us.

¹⁶But you are our Father,
though Abraham does not know us
or Israel acknowledge us;
you, O LORD, are our Father,
our Redeemer from of old is your name.

63:9 A Lesson from History

The Babylonian captivity brought a grave crisis to the Israelites. To the Jews, God's own integrity was at stake. They had a treaty, or covenant, with him. Had he abandoned them? In this chapter, the prophet reviews all the good things God has done for the Israelites and says that, even in the worst times, "in all their distress he too was distressed." If God had been with them in the past, then he would be with them in the future. Then he turns to God directly and makes an impassioned appeal for help: "Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down" (64:1).

^a11 Or But may he recall

17Why, O LORD, do you make us wander from your way^a

and harden our hearts so we do not revere you?

Return for the sake of your servants,
the tribes that are your inheritance

18For a little while your people possessed your holy place,

but now our enemies have trampled down your sanctuary

19We are yours from of old,
but you have not ruled over them,
they have not been called by your name.^a

64 Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains would tremble before you!

As when fire sets twigs ablaze
and causes water to boil,
come down to make your name known to your enemies

and cause the nations to quake before you!
For when you did awesome things that we did not expect

you came down, and the mountains trembled before you

4Since ancient times no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who acts on behalf of those who wait for him

5You come to the help of those who gladly do right,

who remember your ways
But when we continued to sin against them,
you were angry.

How then can we be saved?

6All of us have become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;
we all shrivel up like a leaf,
and like the wind our sins sweep us away

7No one calls on your name
or strives to lay hold of you,
for you have hidden your face from us
and made us waste away because of our sins.

8Yet, O LORD, you are our Father.
We are the clay, you are the potter;
we are all the work of your hand.

9Do not be angry beyond measure, O LORD;
do not remember our sins forever.

Oh, look upon us, we pray,
for we are all your people.

10Your sacred cities have become a desert;
even Zion is a desert, Jerusalem a desolation.

11Our holy and glorious temple, where our fathers praised you,
has been burned with fire,
and all that we treasured lies in ruins.

12After all this, O LORD, will you hold yourself back?

Will you keep silent and punish us beyond measure?

Judgment and Salvation

65 "I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me;

I was found by those who did not seek me.

To a nation that did not call on my name,
I said, 'Here am I, here am I.'

2All day long I have held out my hands
to an obstinate people,
who walk in ways not good,

pursuing their own imaginations—

3a people who continually provoke me
to my very face,

offering sacrifices in gardens
and burning incense on altars of brick;

4who sit among the graves
and spend their nights keeping secret vigil;
who eat the flesh of pigs,

and whose pots hold broth of unclean meat,
5who say, 'Keep away; don't come near me,
for I am too sacred for you!'

Such people are smoke in my nostrils,
a fire that keeps burning all day.

6"See, it stands written before me:
I will not keep silent but will pay back in full;
I will pay it back into their laps—

7both your sins and the sins of your fathers,"
says the LORD.

"Because they burned sacrifices on the mountains

and defied me on the hills,
I will measure into their laps
the full payment for their former deeds."

8This is what the LORD says:

"As when juice is still found in a cluster of grapes

and men say, 'Don't destroy it,
there is yet some good in it,'

so will I do in behalf of my servants;
I will not destroy them all.

9I will bring forth descendants from Jacob,
and from Judah those who will possess my mountains;

my chosen people will inherit them,
and there will my servants live.

10Sharon will become a pasture for flocks,
and the Valley of Achor a resting place for herds,
for my people who seek me.

11"But as for you who forsake the LORD
and forget my holy mountain,

65:3 Provoking God

In this speech, God is directly attacking the most repulsive practices of Judah, notably its idolatry. "Gardens" refers to the gardens that usually surrounded pagan shrines. Verse 4 mentions the superstitious practice of sitting in cemeteries to seek help from the dead. And the "flesh of pigs" was eaten in a sacrificial meal for a pagan god—faithful Jews did not eat pork.

^a19 Or We are like those you have never ruled, / like those never called by your name

who spread a table for Fortune
and fill bowls of mixed wine for Destiny,
12 I will destine you for the sword,
and you will all bend down for the slaughter;
for I called but you did not answer,
I spoke but you did not listen
You did evil in my sight
and chose what displeases me."

13 Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord
says

"My servants will eat,
but you will go hungry;
my servants will drink,
but you will go thirsty;
my servants will rejoice,
but you will be put to shame.
14 My servants will sing
out of the joy of their hearts,
but you will cry out
from anguish of heart
and wail in brokenness of spirit.
15 You will leave your name
to my chosen ones as a curse;
the Sovereign Lord will put you to death,
but to his servants he will give another
name.
16 Whoever invokes a blessing in the land
will do so by the God of truth;
he who takes an oath in the land
will swear by the God of truth.
For the past troubles will be forgotten
and hidden from my eyes.

New Heavens and a New Earth

17 "Behold, I will create
new heavens and a new earth.
The former things will not be remembered,
nor will they come to mind.
18 But be glad and rejoice forever
in what I will create,
for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight
and its people a joy.
19 I will rejoice over Jerusalem
and take delight in my people;
the sound of weeping and of crying
will be heard in it no more.
20 "Never again will there be in it
an infant who lives but a few days,
or an old man who does not live out his
years;
he who dies at a hundred
will be thought a mere youth;
he who fails to reach a hundred
will be considered accursed.
21 They will build houses and dwell in them;
they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
22 No longer will they build houses and others
live in them,
or plant and others eat.
For as the days of a tree,
so will be the days of my people;
my chosen ones will long enjoy
the works of their hands.

23 They will not toil in vain
or bear children doomed to misfortune;
for they will be a people blessed by the Lord,
they and their descendants with them.
24 Before they call I will answer,
while they are still speaking I will hear.
25 The wolf and the lamb will feed together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox,
but dust will be the serpent's food.
They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,"

says the Lord.

Judgment and Hope

66 This is what the Lord says:
"Heaven is my throne,
and the earth is my footstool.
Where is the house you will build for me?
Where will my resting place be?
2 Has not my hand made all these things,
and so they came into being?"
declares the Lord.

"This is the one I esteem
he who is humble and contrite in spirit,
and trembles at my word.
3 But whoever sacrifices a bull
is like one who kills a man,
and whoever offers a lamb,
like one who breaks a dog's neck,
whoever makes a grain offering
is like one who presents pig's blood,
and whoever burns memorial incense,
like one who worships an idol.
They have chosen their own ways,
and their souls delight in their abominations;
4 so I also will choose harsh treatment for them
and will bring upon them what they dread.
For when I called, no one answered,
when I spoke, no one listened
They did evil in my sight
and chose what displeases me."

5 Hear the word of the Lord,
you who tremble at his word:
"Your brothers who hate you,
and exclude you because of my name, have
said,
"Let the Lord be glorified,
that we may see your joy!"
Yet they will be put to shame.
6 Hear that uproar from the city,
hear that noise from the temple!
It is the sound of the Lord
repaying his enemies all they deserve.
7 "Before she goes into labor,
she gives birth;
before the pains come upon her,
she delivers a son.
8 Who has ever heard of such a thing?
Who has ever seen such things?
Can a country be born in a day
or a nation be brought forth in a moment?
Yet no sooner is Zion in labor
than she gives birth to her children.

^a20 Or / the sinner who reaches

JEREMIAH

INTRODUCTION

God's Reluctant Messenger

Jeremiah felt frightened and insecure—but he burned with a message

"Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD 1:8

Jeremiah lived one of the most dramatic lives in the Bible, and that is saying something. But he never learned to like his role. Through all the excitement he remained reluctant, insecure, and often unhappy.

God chose him to be "over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant" (1:10). To accomplish that, Jeremiah had only one resource, his mouth. How did he respond to such an awesome challenge? "Ah, Sovereign LORD," he said, "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child" (1:6). He didn't stride forward; he barely hung on. He wanted out of the job.

His only encouragement was God's promise: "Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to stand against the whole land" (1:18). For 40 years Jeremiah gave top officials a warning they hated to hear and refused to heed. Several times they arrested and imprisoned him; they nearly killed him.

His message? With God's approval, the savage Babylonians would sweep down into Judah. Clever alliances with other powers like Egypt would not help, said Jeremiah. Neither would Judah's half-hearted religion. Judah's only hope lay in renewing an alliance with the living God.

A Disturbing Glimpse of Jeremiah's Mind

The book of Jeremiah stands out not for beautiful poetry or great ideas. Its power comes from its disturbing glimpse of Jeremiah's mind. Jeremiah talked like a man who has awakened from a nightmare, convinced that the nightmare is coming true. His words were sledgehammer blows designed to crack the hardest, most indifferent skull. Though he wished to keep quiet, he found that God's "word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones" (20:9).

No prophet exposed his feelings more than Jeremiah. His relationship with God was streaked with quarrels, reproaches, and outbursts. He told God he wished he were dead (20:14-18). He accused God of being unreliable (15:18). But God offered no sympathy. Rather, he promised more of the same, reminding Jeremiah of his promise to stand by him (12:5-6, 15:19-20). Their relationship, doubts and all, forms one of the best examples in the Bible of what it means to follow God in spite of everything.

Reason to Fear

Jeremiah frankly feared death. He wearied of ridicule. He hated standing alone against the crowd. He told God how he felt. Yet he obeyed God, and in the end his message proved true. He stands as a far greater man than the kings in their luxurious palaces who imprisoned him and burned his writings.

He spoke a gloomy message in a gloomy time, and as a result his words are not always pleasant to read. He reminds us that God's message is not always comforting and encouraging. People who disregard him will have reason to fear. For a world that defies him, he plans judgment. And no one, not even his chosen messengers, will escape suffering. God's presence will make them strong enough to face it.

How to Read Jeremiah

Suppose you find, in an old trunk, a thick packet of letters written by an old relative. You soon realize they are all out of order. Those letters might contain the whole of your relative's life, but to get his story straight, you'd have to read the whole packet. A reader of Jeremiah finds a very

similar situation. The book is an anthology of prophecies given at different times. They jump forward and backward in history, and if you imagine that the book is in chronological order, you will become very confused. Fortunately, it is not hard to reconstruct the order of the main events of Jeremiah's life.

Jeremiah spoke to a nation about to be destroyed by war. Three hundred years before him, the Israelites had split into two countries, Israel in the North and Judah in the South. About 100 years before Jeremiah, Assyria had conquered the Northern Kingdom. This disaster was "World War I" in Old Testament history.

Now, during Jeremiah's life, World War II threatened. Another fierce kingdom, Babylon, assembled troops against the remaining Southern Kingdom. Would God save his chosen people? Jeremiah loudly insisted for more than 20 years that God would punish Judah just as he had Israel, by letting Babylon take them into captivity. He lived to see his predictions come true.

Many passages in Jeremiah refer to the five kings he knew. When you see their names, use them as a reference point in figuring out the order of events:

- Josiah (17 years)
- Jehoahaz (3 months)
- Jehoiakim (12 years)
- Jehoiachin (3 months)
- Zedekiah (11 years)

Second Kings 23-25 or 2 Chronicles 34-36 gives an overall historical summary of their reigns. You can read a brief synopsis in "A Lineup of Rulers," page 338. The better you grasp the historical situation Jeremiah lived in, the more insight you will have into his words.

To capture the full emotion of Jeremiah, you may want to read the first few chapters out loud.

PLANS FOR READING JEREMIAH

PLAN 1: An Overview of Jeremiah in 4 Days

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to Jeremiah, and chapter 2, for God's passionate indictment of his people.
- ☐ Day 2. Read chapter 15, part of an emotional dialogue between Jeremiah and God.
- ☐ Day 3. Read chapter 31, God's promise of restoration and a new covenant.
- ☐ Day 4. Read chapter 38, for Jeremiah's dramatic skirmishes with death in the last days of Jerusalem.

PLAN 2: All of Jeremiah in 51 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16
- ☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28 ☐ 29 ☐ 30
- ☐ 31 ☐ 32 ☐ 33 ☐ 34 ☐ 35 ☐ 36 ☐ 37 ☐ 38 ☐ 39 ☐ 40 ☐ 41 ☐ 42 ☐ 43 ☐ 44-45
- ☐ 46 ☐ 47 ☐ 48 ☐ 49 ☐ 50 ☐ 51 ☐ 52

1 The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, one of the priests at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. ²The word of the LORD came to him in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah, ³and through the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, down to the fifth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah son of Josiah king of Judah, when the people of Jerusalem went into exile.

The Call of Jeremiah

⁴The word of the LORD came to me, saying,

⁵"Before I formed you in the womb I knew^a you,

before you were born I set you apart;
I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

⁶"Ah, Sovereign LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child."

⁷But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. ⁸Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD.

⁹Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "Now, I have put my words in your mouth. ¹⁰See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant."

^aOr chose

¹¹The word of the LORD came to me: "What do you see, Jeremiah?"

"I see the branch of an almond tree," I replied.

¹²The LORD said to me, "You have seen correctly, for I am watching^a to see that my word is fulfilled."

¹³The word of the LORD came to me again: "What do you see?"

"I see a boiling pot, tilting away from the north," I answered.

¹⁴The LORD said to me, "From the north disaster will be poured out on all who live in the land. ¹⁵I am about to summon all the peoples of the northern kingdoms," declares the LORD.

"Their kings will come and set up their thrones in the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem; they will come against all her surrounding walls

and against all the towns of Judah.

¹⁶I will pronounce my judgments on my people because of their wickedness in forsaking me, in burning incense to other gods and in worshipping what their hands have made

¹⁷"Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them. ¹⁸Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to stand against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and the people of the land. ¹⁹They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD.

Israel Forsakes God

2 The word of the LORD came to me: ²"Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem:

"I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the desert, through a land not sown.

³Israel was holy to the LORD, the firstfruits of his harvest; all who devoured her were held guilty, and disaster overtook them,"

declares the LORD.

⁴Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, all you clans of the house of Israel.

⁵This is what the LORD says:

"What fault did your fathers find in me, that they strayed so far from me?

They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves.

⁶They did not ask, "Where is the LORD, who brought us up out of Egypt and led us through the barren wilderness, through a land of deserts and rifts, a land of drought and darkness,"^b

a land where no one travels and no one lives?"

⁷I brought you into a fertile land to eat its fruit and rich produce.

But you came and defiled my land and made my inheritance detestable.

⁸The priests did not ask, "Where is the LORD?"

Those who deal with the law did not know me; the leaders rebelled against me.

The prophets prophesied by Baal, following worthless idols.

⁹"Therefore I bring charges against you again," declares the LORD.

"And I will bring charges against your children's children.

¹⁰Cross over to the coasts of Kittim^c and look, send to Kedar^d and observe closely; see if there has ever been anything like this:

¹¹Has a nation ever changed its gods? (Yet they are not gods at all.)

But my people have exchanged their^e Glory for worthless idols.

¹²Be appalled at this, O heavens, and shudder with great horror,"

declares the LORD.

¹³"My people have committed two sins:

They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

¹⁴Is Israel a servant, a slave by birth? Why then has he become plunder?

¹⁵Lions have roared; they have growled at him.

They have laid waste his land; his towns are burned and deserted.

¹⁶Also, the men of Memphis^f and Tahpanhes have shaved the crown of your head.^g

¹⁷Have you not brought this on yourselves by forsaking the LORD your God when he led you in the way?

¹⁸Now why go to Egypt to drink water from the Shihor^h?

And why go to Assyria to drink water from the River?

¹⁹Your wickedness will punish you; your backsliding will rebuke you.

2:13 An Astounding Trade

Jeremiah piles image on top of image, searching for a way to express the astounding fact that Israelites had traded the living God for the idols of their neighbors. Here he compares the deed to exchanging a spring of living water for a leaky cistern. In verse 20 he graphically compares idolatry to sexual promiscuity. In an interesting twist, Jesus offered "living water" to a sexually promiscuous Samaritan woman in John 4:10.

^a12 The Hebrew for watching sounds like the Hebrew for almond tree western coastlands ^b10 The home of Bedouin tribes in the Syro-Arabian desert tradition my ^c16 Hebrew Noph ^d16 Or have cracked your skull Euphrates

^e6 Or and the shadow of death

^f10 That is, Cyprus and

^g11 Masoretic Text; an ancient Hebrew scribal

^h18 That is, a branch of the Nile

ⁱ18 That is, the

Consider then and realize
how evil and bitter it is for you
when you forsake the Lord your God
and have no awe of me,
declares the Lord, the Lord Almighty.

²⁰"Long ago you broke off your yoke
and tore off your bonds;
you said, 'I will not serve you!'
Indeed, on every high hill
and under every spreading tree
you lay down as a prostitute.

²¹I had planted you like a choice vine
of sound and reliable stock.

How then did you turn against me
into a corrupt, wild vine?

Although you wash yourself with soda
and use an abundance of soap,
the stain of your guilt is still before me,"
declares the Sovereign Lord.

"How can you say, 'I am not defiled;
I have not run after the Baals'?

See how you behaved in the valley;
consider what you have done.

You are a swift she-camel
running here and there,

²⁴a wild donkey accustomed to the desert,
snuffing the wind in her craving—
in her heat who can restrain her?
Any males that pursue her need not tire
themselves,

at mating time they will find her.

²⁵Do not run until your feet are bare
and your throat is dry

But you said, 'It's no use!

I love foreign gods,
and I must go after them.'

²⁶"As a thief is disgraced when he is caught,
so the house of Israel is disgraced—

they, their king, and their officials,
their priests and their prophets

²⁷They say to wood, 'You are my father,'
and to stone, 'You gave me birth.'

They have turned their backs to me
and not their faces,

yet when they are in trouble, they say,
'Come and save us!'

²⁸Where then are the gods you made for
yourselves?

Let them come if they can save you
when you are in trouble!

For you have as many gods
as you have towns, O Judah.

"Why do you bring charges against me?
You have all rebelled against me,"

declares the Lord.

³⁰In vain I punished your people;

they did not respond to correction.

Your sword has devoured your prophets
like a ravening lion.

³¹"You of this generation, consider the word of
the Lord:

"Have I been a desert to Israel

or a land of great darkness?

Why do my people say, 'We are free to roam;
we will come to you no more'?

³²Does a maiden forget her jewelry,
a bride her wedding ornaments?

Yet my people have forgotten me,
days without number.

³³How skilled you are at pursuing love!
Even the worst of women can learn from
your ways.

³⁴On your clothes men find
the lifeblood of the innocent poor,
though you did not catch them breaking in.
Yet in spite of all this

³⁵you say, 'I am innocent;
he is not angry with me.'

But I will pass judgment on you
because you say, 'I have not sinned.'

³⁶Why do you go about so much,
changing your ways?

You will be disappointed by Egypt
as you were by Assyria.

³⁷You will also leave that place
with your hands on your head,
for the Lord has rejected those you trust;
you will not be helped by them.

3 "If a man divorces his wife
and she leaves him and marries another
man,

should he return to her again?

Would not the land be completely defiled?
But you have lived as a prostitute with many
lovers—

would you now return to me?"

declares the Lord.

²²"Look up to the barren heights and see.

Is there any place where you have not been
ravished?

By the roadside you sat waiting for lovers,
sat like a nomad^a in the desert.

You have defiled the land

with your prostitution and wickedness.

³Therefore the showers have been withheld,
and no spring rains have fallen.

Yet you have the brazen look of a prostitute;
you refuse to blush with shame.

⁴Have you not just called to me:

'My Father, my friend from my youth,

⁵will you always be angry?

Will your wrath continue forever?"

This is how you talk,

but you do all the evil you can."

Unfaithful Israel

⁶During the reign of King Josiah, the Lord said to me, "Have you seen what faithless Israel has done? She has gone up on every high hill and under every spreading tree and has committed adultery there. ⁷I thought that after she had done all this she would return to me but she did not, and her unfaithful sister Judah saw it. ⁸I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries. Yet I saw that her

^a Or an Arab

unfaithful sister Judah had no fear; she also went out and committed adultery. ⁹Because Israel's immorality mattered so little to her, she defiled the land and committed adultery with stone and wood. ¹⁰In spite of all this, her unfaithful sister Judah did not return to me with all her heart, but only in pretense," declares the LORD.

¹¹The LORD said to me, "Faithless Israel is more righteous than unfaithful Judah. ¹²Go, proclaim this message toward the north:

" 'Return, faithless Israel,' declares the LORD,
 'I will frown on you no longer,
 for I am merciful,' declares the LORD,
 'I will not be angry forever.

¹³Only acknowledge your guilt—
 you have rebelled against the LORD your
 God,

you have scattered your favors to foreign gods
 under every spreading tree,
 and have not obeyed me,"

declares the LORD.

¹⁴"Return, faithless people," declares the LORD,
 "for I am your husband. I will choose you—one
 from a town and two from a clan—and bring you
 to Zion. ¹⁵Then I will give you shepherds after my
 own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and
 understanding. ¹⁶In those days, when your num-
 bers have increased greatly in the land," declares
 the LORD, "men will no longer say, 'The ark of the
 covenant of the LORD.' It will never enter their
 minds or be remembered; it will not be missed, nor
 will another one be made. ¹⁷At that time they will
 call Jerusalem The Throne of the LORD, and all
 nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name
 of the LORD. No longer will they follow the stub-
 bornness of their evil hearts. ¹⁸In those days the
 house of Judah will join the house of Israel, and
 together they will come from a northern land to the
 land I gave your forefathers as an inheritance.

¹⁹"I myself said,

" 'How gladly would I treat you like sons
 and give you a desirable land,
 the most beautiful inheritance of any nation.'
 I thought you would call me 'Father'
 and not turn away from following me.

²⁰But like a woman unfaithful to her husband,
 so you have been unfaithful to me, O house
 of Israel,"

declares the LORD.

²¹A cry is heard on the barren heights,
 the weeping and pleading of the people of
 Israel,

because they have perverted their ways

and have forgotten the LORD their God.

²²"Return, faithless people;
 I will cure you of backsliding."

"Yes, we will come to you,
 for you are the LORD our God.

²³Surely the idolatrous, commotion on the hills
 and mountains is a deception;
 surely in the LORD our God
 is the salvation of Israel.

²⁴From our youth shameful gods have consumed
 the fruits of our fathers' labor—
 their flocks and herds,
 their sons and daughters.

²⁵Let us lie down in our shame,
 and let our disgrace cover us.
 We have sinned against the LORD our God,
 both we and our fathers;
 from our youth till this day
 we have not obeyed the LORD our God."

4 "If you will return, O Israel,
 return to me,"

declares the LORD.

"If you put your detestable idols out of my
 sight
 and no longer go astray,

²and if in a truthful, just and righteous way
 you swear, 'As surely as the LORD lives,'
 then the nations will be blessed by him
 and in him they will glory."

³This is what the LORD says to the men of Judah
 and to Jerusalem:

"Break up your unplowed ground
 and do not sow among thorns.

⁴Circumcise yourselves to the LORD,
 circumcise your hearts,
 you men of Judah and people of Jerusalem,
 or my wrath will break out and burn like fire
 because of the evil you have done—
 burn with no one to quench it.

Disaster From the North

⁵"Announce in Judah and proclaim in Jerusalem
 and say:

'Sound the trumpet throughout the land!
 Cry aloud and say:

'Gather together!
 Let us flee to the fortified cities!'

⁶Raise the signal to go to Zion!
 Flee for safety without delay!
 For I am bringing disaster from the north,
 even terrible destruction."

⁷A lion has come out of his lair;
 a destroyer of nations has set out.

He has left his place
 to lay waste your land.

Your towns will lie in ruins
 without inhabitant.

⁸So put on sackcloth,
 lament and wail,
 for the fierce anger of the LORD
 has not turned away from us.

⁹"In that day," declares the LORD,

3:10 A Superficial Change

King Josiah, one of the few good kings in Judah's history, led a massive religious reform (see 2 Kings 22 and 23). While Josiah was unquestionably sincere, Jeremiah saw that the nation's return to God wasn't. Jeremiah's accusation was borne out after King Josiah's death: Judah returned quickly to her former ways.

"the king and the officials will lose heart,
the priests will be horrified
and the prophets will be appalled."

¹⁰Then I said, "Ah, Sovereign LORD, how completely you have deceived this people and Jerusalem by saying, 'You will have peace,' when the sword is at our throats."

¹¹At that time this people and Jerusalem will be told, "A scorching wind from the barren heights in the desert blows toward my people, but not to winnow or cleanse; ¹²a wind too strong for that comes from me.^{*} Now I pronounce my judgments against them

¹³Look! He advances like the clouds,
his chariots come like a whirlwind,
his horses are swifter than eagles.

Woe to us! We are ruined!

¹⁴O Jerusalem, wash the evil from your heart
and be saved

How long will you harbor wicked thoughts?

¹⁵A voice is announcing from Dan,
proclaiming disaster from the hills of
Ephraim

¹⁶Tell this to the nations,
proclaim it to Jerusalem:

A besieging army is coming from a distant
land

raising a war cry against the cities of Judah.

¹⁷They surround her like men guarding a field,
because she has rebelled against me,"

declares the LORD.

¹⁸Your own conduct and actions
have brought this upon you.

This is your punishment

How bitter it is!

How it pierces to the heart!"

¹⁹Oh, my anguish, my anguish!
I writhe in pain.

Oh, the agony of my heart!
My heart pounds within me,
I cannot keep silent

For I have heard the sound of the trumpet;
I have heard the battle cry

²⁰Disaster follows disaster,
the whole land lies in ruins.

In an instant my tents are destroyed,
my shelter in a moment.

²¹How long must I see the battle standard
and hear the sound of the trumpet?

²²"My people are fools;
they do not know me
They are senseless children;
they have no understanding
They are skilled in doing evil;
they know not how to do good."

²³I looked at the earth,
and it was formless and empty;
and at the heavens,
and their light was gone

²⁴I looked at the mountains,
and they were quaking;
all the hills were swaying.

²⁵I looked, and there were no people;
every bird in the sky had flown away.

²⁶I looked, and the fruitful land was a desert;
all its towns lay in ruins
before the LORD, before his fierce anger.

²⁷This is what the LORD says:

"The whole land will be ruined,
though I will not destroy it completely.

²⁸Therefore the earth will mourn
and the heavens above grow dark,
because I have spoken and will not relent,
I have decided and will not turn back."

²⁹At the sound of horsemen and archers
every town takes to flight.

Some go into the thickets;
some climb up among the rocks.
All the towns are deserted;
no one lives in them.

³⁰What are you doing, O devastated one?

Why dress yourself in scarlet
and put on jewels of gold?

Why shade your eyes with paint?
You adorn yourself in vain.

Your lovers despise you;
they seek your life.

³¹I hear a cry as of a woman in labor,
a groan as of one bearing her first child—
the cry of the Daughter of Zion gasping for
breath,

stretching out her hands and saying,

"Alas! I am fainting;

my life is given over to murderers."

Not One Is Upright

5 "Go up and down the streets of Jerusalem,
look around and consider,
search through her squares.

If you can find but one person
who deals honestly and seeks the truth,
I will forgive this city.

²Although they say, 'As surely as the LORD
lives,'

4:23 Return to the Void

Jeremiah used words from Genesis 1:2 to describe the effect of the Israelites' sin. It was as though the Israelites were carrying the earth back to the chaos before creation, destroying all the beauty and order God had made.

5:1 Search for an Honest Person

In Genesis 18:22-33, Abraham tried to convince God not to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah if as many as ten righteous people could be found. God agreed, but evidently the ten did not exist. Here, God offers to forgive Jerusalem if a *single* honest person can be found. God's people had sunk to Sodom's level (23:14).

^{*}12 Or comes at my command

still they are swearing falsely."

¹⁰O LORD, do not your eyes look for truth?
You struck them, but they felt no pain,
you crushed them, but they refused
correction.

They made their faces harder than stone
and refused to repent.

⁴¹I thought, "These are only the poor;
they are foolish,
for they do not know the way of the LORD,
the requirements of their God."

⁵So I will go to the leaders
and speak to them;
surely they know the way of the LORD,
the requirements of their God."

But with one accord they too had broken off
the yoke

and torn off the bonds

⁶Therefore a lion from the forest will attack
them,

a wolf from the desert will ravage them,
a leopard will lie in wait near their towns
to tear to pieces any who venture out,

for their rebellion is great
and their backslidings many

⁷"Why should I forgive you?

Your children have forsaken me
and sworn by gods that are not gods.

I supplied all their needs,
yet they committed adultery
and thronged to the houses of prostitutes.

INSIGHT

A Lover's Quarrel

The violent emotions of a scorned lover

"You have lived as a prostitute with many lovers—would you now return to me?" declares the LORD. 3:1

The disturbance comes late in the night when most of the villagers are sleeping. They are aroused by shouting and screaming. Neighbors rush to the hut where the noise is heard, and see a man beating his wife.

They hesitate to interfere in a scuffle between husband and wife, but the woman is screaming for help. As the neighbors restrain the angry husband, they learn the reason for this lover's quarrel: the husband believes his wife has been unfaithful.

He is convinced that the most precious, desired gift anyone can offer has been abused: love has been betrayed.

Lovers often react to unfaithfulness with intense emotions—emotions that can lead to violence and even murder.

Words that Tear His Heart

It is a lovers' quarrel that Jeremiah exposes in chapters 2 and 3, and the emotions are violent and helpless. Again and again God makes his charge against Judah. Of all the nations, he had picked her; he had tenderly offered his protection and care. But she keeps sleeping with other men. He warns her again and again, but she ignores him. She saw how he divorced her sister Israel. Doesn't she know he will do the same to her?

God's words bleed pain. He accuses as though he cannot help himself, although his words tear his own heart. First, he is tender, full of memories: "I remember . . . how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the desert" (2:2). But then, you "tore off your bonds; you said, 'I will not serve you!' Indeed, on every high hill and under every spreading tree you lay down as a prostitute" (2:20). In disgust God compares Judah to a donkey in heat, "sniffing the wind in her craving. . . . Any males that pursue her need not tire themselves" (2:24). But the comparison hurts him more than her. His love, not hers, is scorned.

Married to a Whore

The prophet Hosea was the first to draw the picture of God married to a prostitute. Jeremiah amplifies it. The comparison cries out both the passionate love God feels for his people and the terrible, wounded pain he feels at their betrayal. Jeremiah's imagery is violent and dark, but underneath it, something wonderful shines out: the tender and personal love of God for his people.

The "adultery" Jeremiah wrote about focuses on the worship of idols. Most modern people find it hard to understand why Israelites felt any impulse to kneel before wooden or metal statues, or why their doing so made God furious. But when Jeremiah refers to it as adultery, God's hatred of idolatry becomes understandable. God meant his people to have only one true love in their lives—God himself. God the lover will not take second place; he refuses to "share" his bride.

Life Questions: Have you ever fought with God? What issues were you fighting about?

"They are well fed, lusty stallions,
each neighing for another man's wife;
should I not punish them for this?"

— the LORD

"Should I not avenge myself
on such a nation as this?"

— through her vineyards and ravage them;
I will not destroy them completely,
— the branches

for these people do not belong to the LORD.
The house of Israel and the house of Judah
have been utterly unfaithful to me."

— declares the LORD

They have lied about the LORD
they said, "He will do nothing."

No harm will come to us

we will never see sword or famine

the prophets are but wind

and the word is not in them

and what they say be done to them."

"Therefore this is what the LORD God Almighty

Because the people have spoken these words,
I will make my words in your mouth a fire
and these people the wood it consumes.
"House of Israel," declares the LORD,
I am bringing a distant nation against

you

an ancient and enduring nation,

a people whose language you do not know,

whose speech you do not understand

The quivers are like an open grave,

and all of them are mighty warriors

They will devour your harvests and food,

devour your sons and daughters,

they will devour your flocks and herds,

devour your vines and fig trees

With the sword they will destroy

the fortified cities in which you trust

"Yet even in those days," declares the LORD,
I will not destroy you completely. ¹⁹And when
the people ask, "Why has the LORD our God done
all this to us?" you will tell them, "As you have
forsaken me and served foreign gods in your own
land, so now you will serve foreigners in a land not
your own."

²⁰"Announce this to the house of Jacob
and proclaim it in Judah

²¹Hear this, you foolish and senseless people,
who have eyes but do not see,
who have ears but do not hear:

²²"Should you not fear me?" declares the LORD.
"Should you not tremble in my presence?"

I made the sand a boundary for the sea,
an everlasting barrier it cannot cross.

The waves may roll, but they cannot prevail;
they may roar, but they cannot cross it.

²³But these people have stubborn and rebellious
hearts,

they have turned aside and gone away.

²⁴They do not say to themselves,

"Let us fear the LORD our God,

who gives autumn and spring rains in season,

who assures us of the regular weeks of
harvest."

²⁵Your wrongdoings have kept these away;
your sins have deprived you of good.

²⁶"Among my people are wicked men
who lie in wait like men who snare birds
and like those who set traps to catch men.

²⁷Like cages full of birds,
their houses are full of deceit;
they have become rich and powerful

²⁸and have grown fat and sleek.

Their evil deeds have no limit,

they do not plead the case of the fatherless
to win it.

they do not defend the rights of the poor

²⁹"Should I not punish them for this?"
declares the LORD

"Should I not avenge myself
on such a nation as this?"

³⁰"A horrible and shocking thing
has happened in the land:

³¹The prophets prophesy lies,
the priests rule by their own authority,
and my people love it this way.
But what will you do in the end?"

Jerusalem Under Siege

6 "Flee for safety, people of Benjamin!
Flee from Jerusalem!

Sound the trumpet in Tekoa!

Raise the signal over Beth Hakkerem!

For disaster looms out of the north,
even terrible destruction.

²I will destroy the Daughter of Zion,
so beautiful and delicate.

³Shepherds with their flocks will come against
her;

they will pitch their tents around her,
each tending his own portion."

⁴"Prepare for battle against her!

Arise, let us attack at noon!

But, alas, the daylight is fading,
and the shadows of evening grow long.

⁵So arise, let us attack at night
and destroy her fortresses!"

⁶This is what the LORD Almighty says:

"Cut down the trees

and build siege ramps against Jerusalem.

This city must be punished;

it is filled with oppression.

⁷As a well pours out its water,
so she pours out her wickedness.

Violence and destruction resound in her;
her sickness and wounds are ever before me.

⁸Take warning, O Jerusalem,
or I will turn away from you^a
and make your land desolate
so no one can live in it."

⁹This is what the LORD Almighty says:

"Let them glean the remnant of Israel

as thoroughly as a vine;

pass your hand over the branches again,

like one gathering grapes."

¹⁰To whom can I speak and give warning?

Who will listen to me?

Their ears are closed^a

so they cannot hear.

The word of the LORD is offensive to them;

they find no pleasure in it.

¹¹But I am full of the wrath of the LORD,

and I cannot hold it in.

Pour it out on the children in the street
and on the young men gathered together;

both husband and wife will be caught in it,

and the old, those weighed down with

years.

¹²Their houses will be turned over to others,

together with their fields and their wives,

when I stretch out my hand

against those who live in the land,"

declares the LORD.

¹³From the least to the greatest,

all are greedy for gain;

prophets and priests alike,

all practice deceit.

¹⁴They dress the wound of my people

as though it were not serious.

'Peace, peace,' they say,

when there is no peace.

¹⁵Are they ashamed of their loathsome conduct?

No, they have no shame at all.

they do not even know how to blush.

So they will fall among the fallen;

they will be brought down when I punish

them,"

says the LORD.

¹⁶This is what the LORD says:

'Stand at the crossroads and look;

ask for the ancient paths,

ask where the good way is, and walk in it,

and you will find rest for your souls.

But you said, 'We will not walk in it.'

¹⁷I appointed watchmen over you and said,

'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!'

But you said, 'We will not listen.'

¹⁸Therefore hear, O nations;

observe, O witnesses,

what will happen to them.

¹⁹Hear, O earth:

I am bringing disaster on this people,

the fruit of their schemes,

because they have not listened to my words

and have rejected my law.

²⁰What do I care about incense from Sheba

or sweet calamus from a distant land?

Your burnt offerings are not acceptable;

your sacrifices do not please me."

²¹Therefore this is what the LORD says:

'I will put obstacles before this people.

Fathers and sons alike will stumble over

them,

neighbors and friends will perish."

²²This is what the LORD says:

"Look, an army is coming

from the land of the north;

a great nation is being stirred up

from the ends of the earth.

²³They are armed with bow and spear;

they are cruel and show no mercy.

They sound like the roaring sea

as they ride on their horses,

they come like men in battle formation

to attack you, O Daughter of Zion."

²⁴We have heard reports about them,

and our hands hang limp.

Anguish has gripped us,

pain like that of a woman in labor.

²⁵Do not go out to the fields

or walk on the roads,

for the enemy has a sword,

and there is terror on every side.

²⁶O my people, put on sackcloth

and roll in ashes,

mourn with bitter wailing

as for an only son,

for suddenly the destroyer

will come upon us.

²⁷"I have made you a tester of metals

and my people the ore,

that you may observe

and test their ways.

²⁸They are all hardened rebels,

going about to slander.

They are bronze and iron;

they all act corruptly.

²⁹The bellows blow fiercely

to burn away the lead with fire,

but the refining goes on in vain;

the wicked are not purged out.

³⁰They are called rejected silver,

because the LORD has rejected them."

False Religion Worthless

7 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ²"Stand at the gate of the LORD's house and there proclaim this message:

"Hear the word of the LORD, all you people of Judah who come through these gates to worship the LORD. ³This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Reform your ways and your actions, and I will let you live in this place. ⁴Do not trust in deceptive words and say, 'This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD!' ⁵If you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, ⁶if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm, ⁷then I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your forefathers for ever and ever. ⁸But look, you are trusting in deceptive words that are worthless.

⁹"Will you steal and murder, commit adultery and perjury,^b burn incense to Baal and follow other gods you have not known, ¹⁰and then come and stand before me in this house, which bears my

^a10 Hebrew uncircumcised

^b9 Or and swear by false gods

Name, and say, "We are safe"—safe to do all these detestable things? ¹¹Has this house, which bears my Name, become a den of robbers to you? But I have been watching! declares the LORD.

¹²"Go now to the place in Shiloh where I first made a dwelling for my Name, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of my people Israel.

¹³While you were doing all these things, declares the LORD, I spoke to you again and again, but you did not listen, I called you, but you did not answer.

¹⁴Therefore, what I did to Shiloh I will now do to the house that bears my Name, the temple you trust in, the place I gave to you and your fathers.

¹⁵I will thrust you from my presence, just as I did all your brothers, the people of Ephraim.'

¹⁶"So do not pray for this people nor offer any plea or petition for them; do not plead with me, for I will not listen to you. ¹⁷Do you not see what they are doing in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? ¹⁸The children gather wood, the fathers light the fire, and the women knead the dough and make cakes of bread for the Queen of Heaven. They pour out drink offerings to other gods to provoke me to anger. ¹⁹But am I the one they are provoking? declares the LORD. Are they not rather harming themselves, to their own shame?

²⁰"Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: My anger and my wrath will be poured out on this place, on man and beast, on the trees of the field and on the fruit of the ground, and it will burn and not be quenched

²¹"This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Go ahead, add your burnt offerings to your other sacrifices and eat the meat yourselves! ²²For when I brought your forefathers out of Egypt and spoke to them, I did not just give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices, ²³but I gave them this command: Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in all the ways I command you, that it may go well with you. ²⁴But they did not listen or pay attention; instead, they followed the stubborn inclinations of their evil hearts. They went backward and not forward. ²⁵From the time your forefathers left Egypt until now, day after day, again and again I sent you my servants the prophets. ²⁶But they did not listen to me or pay attention. They were stiff-necked and did more evil than their forefathers.'

²⁷When you tell them all this, they will not listen to you; when you call to them, they will not answer. ²⁸Therefore say to them, 'This is the na-

tion that has not obeyed the LORD its God or responded to correction. Truth has perished; it has vanished from their lips. ²⁹Cut off your hair and throw it away; take up a lament on the barren heights, for the LORD has rejected and abandoned this generation that is under his wrath.

The Valley of Slaughter

³⁰"The people of Judah have done evil in my eyes, declares the LORD. They have set up their detestable idols in the house that bears my Name and have defiled it. ³¹They have built the high places of Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to burn their sons and daughters in the fire—something I did not command, nor did it enter my mind. ³²So beware, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when people will no longer call it Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter, for they will bury the dead in Topheth until there is no more room. ³³Then the carcasses of this people will become food for the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and there will be no one to frighten them away. ³⁴I will bring an end to the sounds of joy and gladness and to the voices of bride and bridegroom in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem, for the land will become desolate

8 "At that time, declares the LORD, the bones of the kings and officials of Judah, the bones of the priests and prophets, and the bones of the people of Jerusalem will be removed from their graves. ²They will be exposed to the sun and the moon and all the stars of the heavens, which they have loved and served and which they have followed and consulted and worshiped. They will not be gathered up or buried, but will be like refuse lying on the ground. ³Wherever I banish them, all the survivors of this evil nation will prefer death to life, declares the LORD Almighty.'

Sin and Punishment

⁴"Say to them, 'This is what the LORD says:

" 'When men fall down, do they not get up?
When a man turns away, does he not
return?

⁵Why then have these people turned away?
Why does Jerusalem always turn away?

They cling to deceit;
they refuse to return.

⁶I have listened attentively,
but they do not say what is right.
No one repents of his wickedness,
saying, "What have I done?"

Each pursues his own course
like a horse charging into battle.

⁷Even the stork in the sky
knows her appointed seasons,
and the dove, the swift and the thrush—
observe the time of their migration.
But my people do not know
the requirements of the LORD.

⁸"How can you say, "We are wise,
for we have the law of the LORD,"
when actually the lying pen of the scribes
has handled it falsely?

7:11 A Den of Robbers

Israelites of Jeremiah's time felt they were safe from invasion as long as they had the temple. After all, they thought, God would not let his home be destroyed (7:4). But the Lord, through Jeremiah, said that the temple had become "a den of robbers" and would be demolished. In Jeremiah's lifetime this prediction came true. Jesus quoted the reference to a den of robbers when driving out moneychangers from the rebuilt temple (Mark 11:17).

"The wise will be put to shame,
they will be dismayed and trapped
Since they have rejected the word of the LORD,
what kind of wisdom do they have?
Therefore I will give their wives to other men
and their fields to new owners
from the least to the greatest,
all are greedy for gain,
prophets and priests alike,
all practice deceit

11 They dress the wound of my people
as though it were not serious
"Peace, peace," they say,
when there is no peace
12 Are they ashamed of their loathsome conduct?
No, they have no shame at all,
they do not even know how to blush
So they will fall among the fallen,
they will be brought down when they are
punished,

says the LORD

13 "I will take away their harvest,
declares the LORD
There will be no grapes on the vine,
there will be no figs on the tree,
and their leaves will wither
What I have given them
will be taken from them."

14 "Why are we sitting here?
Gather together!
Let us flee to the fortified cities
and perish there!
For the LORD our God has doomed us to perish
and given us poisoned water to drink,
because we have sinned against him.

15 We hoped for peace
but no good has come,
for a time of healing
but there was only terror.
16 The snorting of the enemy's horses
is heard from Dan;
at the neighing of their stallions
the whole land trembles.
They have come to devour
the land and everything in it,
the city and all who live there."

17 "See, I will send venomous snakes among you,
vipers that cannot be charmed,
and they will bite you,"
declares the LORD.

18 O my Comforter^b in sorrow,
my heart is faint within me.

19 Listen to the cry of my people
from a land far away:
"Is the LORD not in Zion?
Is her King no longer there?"

"Why have they provoked me to anger with
their images,
with their worthless foreign idols?"

20 "The harvest is past,
the summer has ended,

and we are not saved."

"Is there no fig on the tree?
I hunger, and hunger grips me
Is there no pomegranate in the land?
Is there no honey or oil?
For the wound of my people?

9 "Oh, that I had a dwelling of peace
and my eyes a constant dwelling
I would weep day and night
for the slain of my people
"Oh, that I had in the desert
a lodging place for travelers,
so that I might leave my people
and go away from them
for they are all adulterers,
a crowd of unfaithful people

7 "They make ready their tongue
like a bow, to shoot lies,
it is not by truth
that they triumph in the land
They go from one sin to another;
they do not acknowledge me,"
declares the LORD

4 "Beware of your friends;
do not trust your brothers.
For every brother is a deceiver,
and every friend a slanderer
Friend deceives friend,
and no one speaks the truth
They have taught their tongues to lie,
they weary themselves with sinning
6 "You live in the midst of deception,
in their deceit they refuse to acknowledge
me,"
declares the LORD.

7 Therefore this is what the LORD Almighty says:

"See, I will refine and test them,
for what else can I do
because of the sin of my people?
5 Their tongue is a deadly arrow;
it speaks with deceit.
With his mouth each speaks cordially to his
neighbor,

9:1 A Fountain of Tears

Jeremiah never stood aside like a stern moralist, enjoying others' well-deserved sufferings. He felt the bitterness of the judgment he announced. "Since my people are crushed, I am crushed; I mourn, and horror grips me" (8:21). In the end, Jeremiah swallowed the bitter medicine of exile like the others.

Jeremiah reminds us of another "man of sorrows." Like Jesus, Jeremiah wept over Jerusalem. Like Jesus, he was rejected by his own hometown (11:18-23). Jeremiah even compared himself to a lamb led to the slaughter (11:19), language that would later be applied to Jesus sacrifice for our sins.

^a13 The meaning of the Hebrew for this sentence is uncertain
^b3 Or lies, / they are not valiant for truth ⁴4 Or a deceiving Jacob

⁵18 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain
⁶6 That is, Jeremiah (the Hebrew is singular)

but in his heart he sets a trap for him.

⁹Should I not punish them for this?"

declares the LORD

"Should I not avenge myself
on such a nation as this?"

¹⁰I will weep and wail for the mountains
and take up a lament concerning the desert
pastures.

They are desolate and untraveled,
and the lowing of cattle is not heard.
The birds of the air have fled
and the animals are gone.

¹¹"I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins,
a haunt of jackals;
and I will lay waste the towns of Judah
so no one can live there."

¹²What man is wise enough to understand this?
Who has been instructed by the LORD and can
explain it? Why has the land been ruined and laid
waste like a desert that no one can cross?

¹³The LORD said, "It is because they have forsaken
my law, which I set before them; they have not
obeyed me or followed my law. ¹⁴Instead, they
have followed the stubbornness of their hearts;
they have followed the Baals, as their fathers
taught them." ¹⁵Therefore, this is what the LORD
Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "See, I will make
this people eat bitter food and drink poisoned
water. ¹⁶I will scatter them among nations that
neither they nor their fathers have known, and I
will pursue them with the sword until I have de-
stroyed them."

¹⁷This is what the LORD Almighty says:

"Consider now! Call for the wailing women to
come;

send for the most skillful of them.

¹⁸Let them come quickly
and wail over us

till our eyes overflow with tears
and water streams from our eyelids

¹⁹The sound of wailing is heard from Zion:

'How ruined we are!

How great is our shame!

We must leave our land

because our houses are in ruins.' "

²⁰Now, O women, hear the word of the LORD;

open your ears to the words of his mouth.

Teach your daughters how to wail;
teach one another a lament.

²¹Death has climbed in through our windows
and has entered our fortresses;

it has cut off the children from the streets
and the young men from the public squares.

²²Say, "This is what the LORD declares:

"The dead bodies of men will lie
like refuse on the open field,
like cut grain behind the reaper,
with no one to gather them.' "

²³This is what the LORD says:

"Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom

or the strong man boast of his strength

or the rich man boast of his riches,

²⁴but let him who boasts boast about this:

that he understands and knows me,

that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness,

justice and righteousness on earth,

for in these I delight,"

declares the LORD.

²⁵"The days are coming," declares the LORD,
"when I will punish all who are circumcised only
in the flesh— ²⁶Egypt, Judah, Edom, Ammon,
Moab and all who live in the desert in distant
places." For all these nations are really uncircum-
cised, and even the whole house of Israel is uncir-
cumcised in heart."

God and Idols

10 Hear what the LORD says to you, O house of
Israel. ²This is what the LORD says:

"Do not learn the ways of the nations
or be terrified by signs in the sky,
though the nations are terrified by them.

³For the customs of the peoples are worthless;
they cut a tree out of the forest,
and a craftsman shapes it with his chisel.

⁴They adorn it with silver and gold;
they fasten it with hammer and nails
so it will not totter.

⁵Like a scarecrow in a melon patch,
their idols cannot speak;

they must be carried
because they cannot walk.

Do not fear them;
they can do no harm
nor can they do any good."

⁶No one is like you, O LORD;
you are great,
and your name is mighty in power.

⁷Who should not revere you,
O King of the nations?
This is your due.

Among all the wise men of the nations
and in all their kingdoms,
there is no one like you.

⁸They are all senseless and foolish;
they are taught by worthless wooden idols.

⁹Hammered silver is brought from Tarshish
and gold from Uphaz.

What the craftsman and goldsmith have made
is then dressed in blue and purple—
all made by skilled workers.

¹⁰But the LORD is the true God;
he is the living God, the eternal King.
When he is angry, the earth trembles;
the nations cannot endure his wrath.

¹¹"Tell them this: 'These gods, who did not
make the heavens and the earth, will perish from
the earth and from under the heavens.' "

¹²But God made the earth by his power;
he founded the world by his wisdom
and stretched out the heavens by his
understanding.

²⁶ Or desert and who clip the hair by their foreheads

¹¹ The text of this verse is in Aramaic

JEREMIAH 10:13

13When he thunders, the waters in the heavens
roar,
he makes clouds rise from the ends of the
earth
He sends lightning with the rain
and brings out the wind from his
storehouses

14Everyone is senseless and without knowledge;
every goldsmith is shamed by his idols.
His images are a fraud,
they have no breath in them.

15They are worthless, the objects of mockery;
when their judgment comes, they will
perish

16He who is the Portion of Jacob is not like these,
for he is the Maker of all things,
including Israel, the tribe of his inheritance—
the LORD Almighty is his name

Coming Destruction

17Gather up your belongings to leave the land,
you who live under siege

18For this is what the LORD says:
At this time I will hurl out
those who live in this land;
I will bring distress on them
so that they may be captured."

19Woe to me because of my injury!
My wound is incurable!
Yet I said to myself,
"This is my sickness, and I must endure it."

20My tent is destroyed,
all its ropes are snapped.
My sons are gone from me and are no more;
no one is left now to pitch my tent
or to set up my shelter

21The shepherds are senseless
and do not inquire of the LORD;
so they do not prosper
and all their flock is scattered.

22Listen! The report is coming—
a great commotion from the land of the
north!

It will make the towns of Judah desolate,
a haunt of jackals

Jeremiah's Prayer

23I know, O LORD, that a man's life is not his
own;

it is not for man to direct his steps.

24Correct me, LORD, but only with justice—
not in your anger,
lest you reduce me to nothing

25Pour out your wrath on the nations
that do not acknowledge you,
on the peoples who do not call on your
name

For they have devoured Jacob;
they have devoured him completely
and destroyed his homeland.

The Covenant Is Broken

11 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from
the LORD: 2"Listen to the terms of this cov-

enant and tell them to the people of Judah and to
those who live in Jerusalem. 3Tell them that this is
what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Cursed is
the man who does not obey the terms of this cov-
enant—the terms I commanded your forefathers
when I brought them out of Egypt, out of the iron-
smelting furnace.' I said, 'Obey me and do every-
thing I command you, and you will be my people,
and I will be your God. 5Then I will fulfill the oath
I swore to your forefathers, to give them a land
flowing with milk and honey'—the land you pos-
sess today."

I answered, "Amen, LORD."

6The LORD said to me, "Proclaim all these words
in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusa-
lem: 'Listen to the terms of this covenant and fol-
low them. 7From the time I brought your fore-
fathers up from Egypt until today, I warned them
again and again, saying, "Obey me." 8But they did
not listen or pay attention, instead, they followed
the stubbornness of their evil hearts. So I brought
on them all the curses of the covenant I had com-
manded them to follow but that they did not
keep.'"

9Then the LORD said to me, "There is a conspira-
cy among the people of Judah and those who live
in Jerusalem. 10They have returned to the sins of
their forefathers, who refused to listen to my
words. They have followed other gods to serve
them. Both the house of Israel and the house of
Judah have broken the covenant I made with their
forefathers. 11Therefore this is what the LORD says:
'I will bring on them a disaster they cannot escape.
Although they cry out to me, I will not listen to
them. 12The towns of Judah and the people of
Jerusalem will go and cry out to the gods to whom
they burn incense, but they will not help them at
all when disaster strikes. 13You have as many gods
as you have towns, O Judah; and the altars you
have set up to burn incense to that shameful god
Baal are as many as the streets of Jerusalem.'

14"Do not pray for this people nor offer any plea
or petition for them, because I will not listen when
they call to me in the time of their distress.

15"What is my beloved doing in my temple
as she works out her evil schemes with
many?

Can consecrated meat avert your
punishment?

When you engage in your wickedness,
then you rejoice."

16The LORD called you a thriving olive tree
with fruit beautiful in form.

But with the roar of a mighty storm
he will set it on fire,
and its branches will be broken.

17The LORD Almighty, who planted you, has de-
creed disaster for you, because the house of Israel
and the house of Judah have done evil and pro-
voked me to anger by burning incense to Baal.

Plot Against Jeremiah

18Because the LORD revealed their plot to me, I

^a15 Or Could consecrated meat avert your punishment? / Then you would rejoice

knew it, for at that time he showed me what they were doing. ¹⁴I had been like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter; I did not realize that they had plotted against me, saying,

Let us destroy the tree and its fruit;
let us cut him off from the land of the living,
that his name be remembered no more."

²⁰But, O LORD Almighty, you who judge righteously
and test the heart and mind,
let me see your vengeance upon them,
for to you I have committed my cause.

"Therefore this is what the LORD says about the men of Anathoth who are seeking your life and saying, 'Do not prophesy in the name of the LORD or you will die by our hands'—²²therefore this is what the LORD Almighty says: 'I will punish them. Their young men will die by the sword, their sons and daughters by famine. ²³Not even a remnant will be left to them, because I will bring disaster on the men of Anathoth in the year of their punish-

Jeremiah's Complaint

12 I am always righteous, O LORD,
when I bring a case before you.
Yet I would speak with you about your justice:
Why does the way of the wicked prosper?
Why do all the faithless live at ease?
You have planted them, and they have taken root,
they grow and bear fruit.
You are always on their lips
but far from their hearts.
Yet you know me, O LORD,
you see me and test my thoughts about you.
Drag them off like sheep to be butchered!
Set them apart for the day of slaughter!
How long will the land lie parched
and the grass in every field be withered?
Because those who live in it are wicked,
the animals and birds have perished.
Moreover, the people are saying,
"He will not see what happens to us."

God's Answer

"If you have raced with men on foot
and they have worn you out,
how can you compete with horses?
If you stumble in safe country,^a
how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?
⁶Your brothers, your own family—

even they have betrayed you;
they have raised a loud cry against you.
Do not trust them,
though they speak well of you.

⁷"I will forsake my house,
abandon my inheritance;
I will give the one I love
into the hands of her enemies.
⁸My inheritance has become to me
like a lion in the forest.
She roars at me;
therefore I hate her.
⁹Has not my inheritance become to me
like a speckled bird of prey
that other birds of prey surround and attack?
Go and gather all the wild beasts;
bring them to devour.
¹⁰Many shepherds will ruin my vineyard
and trample down my field;
they will turn my pleasant field
into a desolate wasteland.
¹¹It will be made a wasteland,
parched and desolate before me;
the whole land will be laid waste
because there is no one who cares.
¹²Over all the barren heights in the desert
destroyers will swarm,
for the sword of the LORD will devour
from one end of the land to the other;
no one will be safe.
¹³They will sow wheat but reap thorns;
they will wear themselves out but gain nothing.
So bear the shame of your harvest
because of the LORD's fierce anger."

¹⁴This is what the LORD says: "As for all my wicked neighbors who seize the inheritance I gave my people Israel, I will uproot them from their lands and I will uproot the house of Judah from among them. ¹⁵But after I uproot them, I will again have compassion and will bring each of them back to his own inheritance and his own country. ¹⁶And if they learn well the ways of my people and swear by my name, saying, 'As surely as the LORD lives'—even as they once taught my people to swear by Baal—then they will be established among my people. ¹⁷But if any nation does not listen, I will completely uproot and destroy it," declares the LORD.

A Linen Belt

13 This is what the LORD said to me: "Go and buy a linen belt and put it around your waist, but do not let it touch water." ²So I bought a

11:23 Hometown Enemies

Jeremiah's life was endangered several times because of his message. On this occasion, men from his hometown were plotting against him. Though Jeremiah was completely unprepared for their attack, God protected him. Other prophets, however, had been killed (2:30).

12:16 Hope for the Gentiles

Through most of the Old Testament, Israel's Gentile neighbors seem to have no part in God's plan. Here, though, God clearly promises them his salvation.

^a Or land mourn

^b Or If you put your trust in a land of safety

^c Or the flooding of

belt, as the LORD directed, and put it around my waist.

⁴Then the word of the LORD came to me a second time: ⁴"Take the belt you bought and are wearing around your waist, and go now to Perath^a and hide it there in a crevice in the rocks." ⁵So I went and hid it at Perath, as the LORD told me.

⁶Many days later the LORD said to me, "Go now to Perath and get the belt I told you to hide there." ⁷So I went to Perath and dug up the belt and took it from the place where I had hidden it, but now it was ruined and completely useless.

⁸Then the word of the LORD came to me: ⁹"This is what the LORD says: 'In the same way I will ruin the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem. ¹⁰These wicked people, who refuse to listen to my words, who follow the stubbornness of their hearts and go after other gods to serve and worship them, will be like this belt—completely useless! ¹¹For as a belt is bound around a man's waist, so I bound the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah to me,' declares the LORD, 'to be my people for my renown and praise and honor. But they have not listened.'

Wineskins

¹²"Say to them: 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Every wineskin should be filled with wine.' And if they say to you, 'Don't we know that every wineskin should be filled with wine?' ¹³then tell them, 'This is what the LORD says: I am going to fill with drunkenness all who live in this land, including the kings who sit on David's throne, the priests, the prophets and all those living in Jerusalem. ¹⁴I will smash them one against the other, fathers and sons alike, declares the LORD. I will allow no pity or mercy or compassion to keep me from destroying them.'

Threat of Captivity

¹⁵Hear and pay attention,
do not be arrogant,
for the LORD has spoken.

¹⁶Give glory to the LORD your God
before he brings the darkness,
before your feet stumble
on the darkening hills.

You hope for light,
but he will turn it to thick darkness
and change it to deep gloom.

¹⁷But if you do not listen,
I will weep in secret
because of your pride;
my eyes will weep bitterly,
overflowing with tears,
because the LORD's flock will be taken
captive.

¹⁸Say to the king and to the queen mother,
"Come down from your thrones,
for your glorious crowns
will fall from your heads."

¹⁹The cities in the Negev will be shut up,
and there will be no one to open them.
All Judah will be carried into exile,

carried completely away.

²⁰I'll fill up your eyes and see
those who are coming from the north
Where is the flock that was entrusted to you,
the sheep of your pasture?

²¹What will you say when the LORD asks you
you

those you cultivated as your special flock?
Will not pain grip you
like that of a woman in labor?

²²And if you ask yourself,
"Why has this happened to me?"—

It is because of your many sins
that your skirts have been torn off
and your body mistreated.

²³Can the Ethiopian change his skin
or the leopard its spots?

Neither can you do good
who are accustomed to doing evil.

²⁴"I will scatter you like chaff
driven by the desert wind.

²⁵This is your lot,
the portion I have decreed for you,"
declares the LORD,

"because you have forgotten me
and trusted in false gods.

²⁶I will pull up your skirts over your face
that your shame may be seen—

²⁷your adulteries and lustful runnings,
your shameless prostitution!

I have seen your detestable acts
on the hills and in the fields.

Woe to you, O Jerusalem!
How long will you be unclean?"

Drought, Famine, Sword

14 This is the word of the LORD to Jeremiah concerning the drought.

²"Judah mourns,
her cities languish;
they wail for the land,
and a cry goes up from Jerusalem.

³The nobles send their servants for water;
they go to the cisterns
but find no water.

They return with their jars unfilled;
dismayed and despairing,
they cover their heads.

⁴The ground is cracked
because there is no rain in the land,
the farmers are dismayed
and cover their heads.

⁵Even the doe in the field
deserts her newborn fawn
because there is no grass.

⁶Wild donkeys stand on the barren heights
and pant like jackals;
their eyesight fails
for lack of pasture."

⁷Although our sins testify against us,
O LORD, do something for the sake of your
name.

For our backsliding is great;

^a4 Or possibly the Euphrates; also in verses 5-7

^b23 Hebrew Cushite (probably a person from the upper Nile region)

we have sinned against you.

⁹O Hope of Israel,
its Savior in times of distress,
why are you like a stranger in the land,
like a traveler who stays only a night?
⁹Why are you like a man taken by surprise,
like a warrior powerless to save?
You are among us, O LORD,
and we bear your name;
do not forsake us!

¹⁰This is what the LORD says about this people:

"They greatly love to wander;
they do not restrain their feet.
So the LORD does not accept them;
he will now remember their wickedness
and punish them for their sins."

¹¹Then the LORD said to me, "Do not pray for the well-being of this people. ¹²Although they fast, I will not listen to their cry; though they offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Instead, I will destroy them with the sword, famine and plague."

¹³But I said, "Ah, Sovereign LORD, the prophets keep telling them, 'You will not see the sword or suffer famine. Indeed, I will give you lasting peace in this place.'"

¹⁴Then the LORD said to me, "The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I have not sent them or appointed them or spoken to them. They are prophesying to you false visions, divinations, idolatries^a and the delusions of their own minds. ¹⁵Therefore, this is what the LORD says about the prophets who are prophesying in my name: I did not send them, yet they are saying, 'No sword or famine will touch this land.' Those same prophets will perish by sword and famine. ¹⁶And the people they are prophesying to will be thrown out into the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and sword. There will be no one to bury them or their wives, their sons or their daughters. I will pour out on them the calamity they deserve.

¹⁷"Speak this word to them:

"Let my eyes overflow with tears
night and day without ceasing;
for my virgin daughter—my people—
has suffered a grievous wound,
a crushing blow.

¹⁸If I go into the country,
I see those slain by the sword;
if I go into the city,

I see the ravages of famine.
Both prophet and priest
have gone to a land they know not."

¹⁹Have you rejected Judah completely?
Do you despise Zion?
Why have you afflicted us
so that we cannot be healed?
We hoped for peace
but no good has come,
for a time of healing
but there is only terror.

²⁰O LORD, we acknowledge our wickedness
and the guilt of our fathers;
we have indeed sinned against you.

²¹For the sake of your name do not despise us;
do not dishonor your glorious throne.
Remember your covenant with us
and do not break it.

²²Do any of the worthless idols of the nations
bring rain?
Do the skies themselves send down
showers?

No, it is you, O LORD our God.
Therefore our hope is in you,
for you are the one who does all this.

15 Then the LORD said to me: "Even if Moses and Samuel were to stand before me, my heart would not go out to this people. Send them away from my presence! Let them go! ²And if they ask you, 'Where shall we go?' tell them, 'This is what the LORD says:

"Those destined for death, to death;
those for the sword, to the sword;
those for starvation, to starvation;
those for captivity, to captivity.'

³"I will send four kinds of destroyers against them," declares the LORD, "the sword to kill and the dogs to drag away and the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. ⁴I will make them abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth because of what Manasseh son of Hezekiah king of Judah did in Jerusalem.

⁵"Who will have pity on you, O Jerusalem?
Who will mourn for you?
Who will stop to ask how you are?

⁶You have rejected me," declares the LORD.
"You keep on backsliding.

So I will lay hands on you and destroy you;
I can no longer show compassion.

⁷I will winnow them with a winnowing fork
at the city gates of the land.

I will bring bereavement and destruction on my
people,

for they have not changed their ways.

⁸I will make their widows more numerous
than the sand of the sea.

At midday I will bring a destroyer
against the mothers of their young men;
suddenly I will bring down on them
anguish and terror.

⁹The mother of seven will grow faint
and breathe her last.

14:11 God's Patience Exhausted

God gave Jeremiah these dreaded instructions, repeated nowhere else in the Bible: "Do not pray for this people . . . because I will not listen" (11:14). He repeated that message twice (7:16; 14:11). He told Jeremiah, "Even if Moses and Samuel were to stand before me, my heart would not go out to this people. Send them away from my presence!" (15:1).

^a14 Or visions, worthless divinations

Her sun will set while it is still day,
she will be disgraced and humiliated.
I will put the survivors to the sword
before their enemies."

declare the limits

"Alan, my mother, that you gave me birth,
a man with whom the whole land strives
and contends!"

I have neither lent nor borrowed
yet everyone accuses me

Other compounds:

Surely I will deliver you for a good purpose,
surely I will make your enemies plead with
you.

in times of disaster and times of distress

127 Can a man break iron -
iron from the north—or bronze?

11 Your wealth and your treasures
I will give as plunder, without charge,
because of all your sins
throughout your country.

14] will enslave you to your enemies
in a land you do not know,
for my anger will kindle a fire
that will burn against you "

15 You understand, O Lord,
remember me and care for me
Avenge me on my persecutors.
You are long-suffering—do not take me away;
think of how I suffer reproach for your sake.

16 When your words came, I ate them,
they were my joy and my heart's delight,
for I bear your name,
O LORD God Almighty.

17] never sat in the company of revelers,
never made merry with them;
I sat alone because your hand was on me
and you had filled me with indignation.

¹⁸Why is my pain unending
and my wound grievous and incurable?
Will you be to me like a deceptive brook,
like a spring that fails?

¹⁹Therefore this is what the LORD says:

**"If you repent, I will restore you
that you may serve me;
if you utter worthy, not worthless, words,
you will be my spokesman.**

Let this people turn to you,
but you must not turn to them.

201 will make you a wall to this people,
a fortified wall of bronze;
they will fight against you
but will not overcome you,
for I am with you
to rescue and save you."

declares the LORD.

21 "I will save you from the hands of the wicked
and redeem you from the grasp of the
cruel."

Day of Donator

[illegible][illegible]

And do not enter there who are there, but go out at the door that I will open for you. For the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Turn away from your eyes, and in your days I will bring at an end to the multitude of joy and gladness and to the bride and bridegroom in this place.

When you tell these people all this and they ask you, 'Why has the Lord done such a great disaster against us?' What wrong have we done? What sin have we committed against the Lord our God?' Then say to them, 'It is because your fathers forsook me,' declares the Lord, 'and followed other gods and served and worshiped them. They forsook me and did not keep my law.' But you have behaved more wickedly than your fathers. See how each of you is following the stubbornness of his evil heart instead of obeying me. So I will throw you out of this land and into a land neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you will serve other gods day and night, for I will show you no favor.

14 However, the days are coming declares the LORD, "when men will no longer say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,'¹⁵ but they will say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of

16:8 No Social Life

Jeremiah was a man swallowed up in his work. He had no family and little social life, because God told him never to marry and not to attend weddings, funerals, or any other ceremonial feasts (16:1-9). God's message through him was so negative that a tale of woe or complaint came to be known as a "jeremiad." Other prophets kept predicting peace (14:13), but Jeremiah wouldn't say what people wanted to hear. He told the truth, and the truth was bleak.

*14 Some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint and Syriac (see also Jer 17:4); most Hebrew manuscripts I will cause your enemies to bring you into it.

land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them." For I will restore them to the land I gave their forefathers.

But now I will send for many fishermen," declares the Lord, "and they will catch them. At the same time I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt them down on every mountain and hill and from the crevices of the rocks. My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from me, nor is their sin concealed from my eyes. I will repay them double for their wickedness and their sin, because they have defiled my land with the lifeless horns of their vile images and have filled my inheritance with their detestable idols."

"O Lord, my strength and my fortress,
my refuge in time of distress,
to you the nations will come
from the ends of the earth and say,
Our fathers possessed nothing but false gods,
worthless idols that did them no good."

"Do men make their own gods?
Yes, but they are not gods!"

Therefore I will teach them—
this time I will teach them
my power and might.
Then they will know
that my name is the Lord.

17 Judah's sin is engraved with an iron tool,
inscribed with a flint point,
on the tablets of their hearts
and on the horns of their altars.
Even their children remember
their altars and Asherah poles²
beside the spreading trees
and on the high hills.
My mountain in the land
and your³ wealth and all your treasures
will give away as plunder,
together with your high places,
because of sin throughout your country.
Through your own fault you will lose
the inheritance I gave you.
I will enslave you to your enemies
in a land you do not know,
for you have kindled my anger,
and it will burn forever."

This is what the Lord says:

"Cursed is the one who trusts in man,
who depends on flesh for his strength
and whose heart turns away from the Lord.
He will be like a bush in the wastelands;
he will not see prosperity when it comes.
He will dwell in the parched places of the
desert,
in a salt land where no one lives.

"But blessed is the man who trusts in the
Lord,
whose confidence is in him.

He will be like a tree planted by the water
that sends out its roots by the stream.
It does not fear when heat comes;

its leaves are always green.
It has no worries in a year of drought
and never fails to bear fruit."

"The heart is deceitful above all things
and beyond cure.
Who can understand it?"

"I the Lord search the heart
and examine the mind,
to reward a man according to his conduct,
according to what his deeds deserve."

"Like a partridge that hatches eggs it did not lay,
is the man who gains riches by unjust
means.

When his life is half gone, they will desert him,
and in the end he will prove to be a fool.

A glorious throne, exalted from the beginning,
is the place of our sanctuary.

O Lord, the hope of Israel,
all who forsake you will be put to shame.
Those who turn away from you will be written
in the dust
because they have forsaken the Lord,
the spring of living water.

Heal me, O Lord, and I will be healed;
save me and I will be saved,
for you are the one I praise.

They keep saying to me,
"Where is the word of the Lord?
Let it now be fulfilled!"

I have not run away from being your
shepherd;
you know I have not desired the day of
despair.

What passes my lips is open before you.

Do not be a terror to me;
you are my refuge in the day of disaster.

Let my persecutors be put to shame,
but keep me from shame;
let them be terrified,
but keep me from terror.
Bring on them the day of disaster;
destroy them with double destruction.

Keeping the Sabbath Holy

This is what the Lord said to me: "Go and stand at the gate of the people, through which the kings of Judah go in and out; stand also at all the other gates of Jerusalem. Say to them, 'Hear the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah and all people of Judah and everyone living in Jerusalem who come through these gates. This is what the Lord says: Be careful not to carry a load on the Sabbath day or bring it through the gates of Jerusalem. Do not bring a load out of your houses or do any work on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day holy, as I commanded your forefathers. Yet they did not listen or pay attention; they were stiff-necked and would not listen or respond to discipline. But if you are careful to obey me, declares the Lord, and bring no load through the gates of this city on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day holy by not doing any work on it, then kings who sit on

² That is, symbols of the goddess Asherah

^{2,3} Or hills / ³and the mountains of the land. / Your

David's throne will come through the gates of this city with their officials. They and their officials will come riding in chariots and on horses, accompanied by the men of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, and this city will be inhabited forever. ²⁶People will come from the towns of Judah and the villages around Jerusalem, from the territory of Benjamin and the western foothills, from the hill country and the Negev, bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, grain offerings, incense and thank offerings to the house of the LORD. ²⁷But if you do not obey me to keep the Sabbath day holy by not carrying any load as you come through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle an unquenchable fire in the gates of Jerusalem that will consume her fortresses.' "

At the Potter's House

18 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ²"Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message." ³So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. ⁴But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.

⁵Then the word of the LORD came to me: ⁶"O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?" declares the LORD. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. ⁷If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, ⁸and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. ⁹And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, ¹⁰and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.

¹¹"Now therefore say to the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, 'This is what the LORD says: Look! I am preparing a disaster for you and devising a plan against you. So turn from your evil ways, each one of you, and reform your ways and your actions.' ¹²But they will reply, 'It's no use. We will continue with our own plans; each of us will follow the stubbornness of his evil heart.' "

¹³Therefore this is what the LORD says:

"Inquire among the nations:

18:6 The Potter and the Clay

God is in control—a message vividly portrayed to Jeremiah as he watched a potter start over on a pot that did not take the shape he wanted it to take. Israelites had gradually come to think that God, because he had chosen them as his people, was obliged to protect them. But their unnatural behavior toward him had brought God to the point of "starting over." In Romans 9:21, Paul returned to this metaphor to answer people who were claiming God was unjust.

Who has ever heard anything like this?
A most horrible thing has been done
by Virgin Israel

¹⁴Does the snow of Lebanon
ever vanish from its rocky slopes?
Do its cool waters from distant sources
ever cease to flow?"

¹⁵Yet my people have forgotten me;
they burn incense to worthless idols,
which made them stumble in their ways
and in the ancient paths.
They made them walk in bypaths
and on roads not built up.

¹⁶Their land will be laid waste,
an object of lasting scorn;
all who pass by will be appalled
and will shake their heads

¹⁷Like a wind from the east,
I will scatter them before their enemies;
I will show them my back and not my face
in the day of their disaster."

¹⁸They said, "Come, let's make plans against Jeremiah; for the teaching of the law by the priest will not be lost, nor will counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophets. So come, let's attack him with our tongues and pay no attention to anything he says."

¹⁹Listen to me, O LORD;
hear what my accusers are saying!

²⁰Should good be repaid with evil?
Yet they have dug a pit for me.
Remember that I stood before you
and spoke in their behalf
to turn your wrath away from them.

²¹So give their children over to famine;
hand them over to the power of the sword.
Let their wives be made childless and widows;
let their men be put to death,
their young men slain by the sword in battle.

²²Let a cry be heard from their houses
when you suddenly bring invaders against
them,

for they have dug a pit to capture me
and have hidden snares for my feet.

²³But you know, O LORD,
all their plots to kill me.

Do not forgive their crimes
or blot out their sins from your sight.

Let them be overthrown before you;
deal with them in the time of your anger.

19 This is what the LORD says: "Go and buy a clay jar from a potter. Take along some of the elders of the people and of the priests ²and go out to the Valley of Ben Hinnom, near the entrance of the Potsherd Gate. There proclaim the words I tell you, ³and say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah and people of Jerusalem. This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Listen! I am going to bring a disaster on this place that will make the ears of everyone who hears of it tingle. ⁴For they have forsaken me and made this a place of foreign gods, they have burned sacrifices

*14 The meaning of the Hebrew for this sentence is uncertain.

The first of these is the fact that the
government has been unable to
bring about a general
reduction in the price of
the main staples of the
diet, such as rice, wheat,
and oil.

The second is the fact that the
government has been unable to
bring about a general
reduction in the price of
the main staples of the
diet, such as rice, wheat,
and oil.

INSIGHT

FOOD

THE NEW YORK TIMES

The first of these is the fact that the
government has been unable to
bring about a general
reduction in the price of
the main staples of the
diet, such as rice, wheat,
and oil.

The second is the fact that the
government has been unable to
bring about a general
reduction in the price of
the main staples of the
diet, such as rice, wheat,
and oil.

The third is the fact that the
government has been unable to
bring about a general
reduction in the price of
the main staples of the
diet, such as rice, wheat,
and oil.

The fourth is the fact that the
government has been unable to
bring about a general
reduction in the price of
the main staples of the
diet, such as rice, wheat,
and oil.

before their enemies, at the hands of those who seek their lives, and I will give their carcasses as food to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth. ⁹I will devastate this city and make it an object of scorn, all who pass by will be appalled and will scoff because of all its wounds. ¹⁰I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and daughters, and they will eat one another's flesh during the stress of the siege imposed on them by the enemies who seek their lives.

¹¹Then break the jar while those who go with you are watching. ¹²And say to them, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I will smash this nation and this city just as this potter's jar is smashed and cannot be repaired. They will bury the dead in Topheth until there is no more room. ¹³This is what I will do to this place and to those who live here, declares the LORD. I will make this city like Topheth. ¹⁴The houses in Jerusalem and those of the kings of Judah will be defiled like this place, Topheth—all the houses where they burned incense on the roofs to all the starry hosts and poured out drink offerings to other gods.' "

¹⁵Jeremiah then returned from Topheth, where the LORD had sent him to prophesy, and stood in the court of the LORD's temple and said to all the people, ¹⁶'This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'Listen! I am going to bring on this city and the villages around it every disaster I pronounced against them, because they were stiff-necked and would not listen to my words.' "

Jeremiah and Pashhur

20 When the priest Pashhur son of Immer, the chief officer in the temple of the LORD, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things, ²he had Jeremiah the prophet beaten and put in the stocks at the Upper Gate of Benjamin at the LORD's temple. ³The next day, when Pashhur released him from the stocks, Jeremiah said to him, "The LORD's name for you is not Pashhur, but Magor-Missabib." ⁴For this is what the LORD says: 'I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends; with your own eyes you will see them fall by the sword of their enemies. I will hand all Judah over to the king of Babylon, who will carry them away to Babylon or put them to the sword. ⁵I will hand over to their enemies all the wealth of this city—all its products, all its valuables and all the treasures of the kings of Judah. They will take it away as plunder and carry it off to Babylon. ⁶And you, Pashhur, and all who live in your house will go into exile to Babylon. There you will die and be buried, you and all your friends to whom you have prophesied lies.' "

Jeremiah's Complaint

⁷O LORD, you deceived^b me, and I was deceived^b;

you overpowered me and prevailed.
I am ridiculed all day long;
everyone mocks me.

⁸Whenever I speak, I cry out
proclaiming violence and destruction.

So the word of the LORD has brought me
insult and reproach all day long
"But if I say, "I will not mention him
or speak any more in his name,"
his word is in my heart like a fire,
a fire shut up in my bones
I am weary of holding it in,
indeed, I cannot

¹⁰I hear many whispering,
"Terror on every side!
Report him! Let's report him!"

All my friends
are waiting for me to slip, saying,
"Perhaps he will be deceived;
then we will prevail over him
and take our revenge on him."

¹¹But the LORD is with me like a mighty warrior;
so my persecutors will stumble and not
prevail.

They will fail and be thoroughly disgraced;
their dishonor will never be forgotten

¹²O LORD Almighty, you who examine the
righteous
and probe the heart and mind,
let me see your vengeance upon them,
for to you I have committed my cause.

¹³Sing to the LORD!
Give praise to the LORD!
He rescues the life of the needy
from the hands of the wicked.

¹⁴Cursed be the day I was born!
May the day my mother bore me not be
blessed!

¹⁵Cursed be the man who brought my father the
news,
who made him very glad, saying,
"A child is born to you—a son!"

¹⁶May that man be like the towns
the LORD overthrew without pity.
May he hear wailing in the morning,
a battle cry at noon.

¹⁷For he did not kill me in the womb,
with my mother as my grave,
her womb enlarged forever.

¹⁸Why did I ever come out of the womb
to see trouble and sorrow
and to end my days in shame?

20:9 Fire in His Bones

When Jeremiah spoke to God, he often complained angrily about the role God had given him. Here he claimed that God "overpowered" him into carrying a message that people ridiculed (20:7). Jeremiah cursed his own birth, wishing he had been stillborn (verses 14-18). Just how did God "overpower" Jeremiah? God's message was like fire in his bones, so powerful that he could not resist telling it. The "force" God used on Jeremiah was the power of truth.

^{a3} Magor-Missabib means terror on every side

^{b7} Or persuaded

God Rejects Zedekiah's Request

21 The word came to Jeremiah from the LORD when King Zedekiah sent to him Pashhur son of Malkijah and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah. They said, "Inquire now of the LORD for us because Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is attacking us. Perhaps the LORD will perform wonders for us as in times past so that he will withdraw from us."

But Jeremiah answered them, "Tell Zedekiah, 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I am about to turn against you the weapons of war that are in your hands, which you are using to fight the king of Babylon and the Babylonians^b who are outside the wall besieging you. And I will gather them inside this city. "I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and a mighty arm in anger and fury and great wrath. "I will strike down those who live in this city—both men and animals—and they will die of a terrible plague. "After that declares the LORD, I will hand over Zedekiah king of Judah, his officials and the people in this city who survive the plague, sword and famine, to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and to their enemies who seek their lives. He will put them to the sword; he will show them no mercy or pity or compassion."

"Furthermore, tell the people, 'This is what the LORD says: See, I am setting before you the way of life and the way of death. "Whoever stays in this city will die by the sword, famine or plague. But whoever goes out and surrenders to the Babylonians who are besieging you will live; he will escape with his life. "I have determined to do this city harm and not good, declares the LORD. It will be given into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will destroy it with fire."

"Moreover, say to the royal house of Judah, 'Hear the word of the LORD. "O house of David, this is what the LORD says:

"Administer justice every morning,
rescue from the hand of his oppressor
the one who has been robbed,
or my wrath will break out and burn like fire
because of the evil you have done—
burn with no one to quench it."

13 I am against you, Jerusalem,
you who live above this valley
on the rocky plateau,

declares the LORD—

you who say, "Who can come against us?
Who can enter our refuge?"

14 I will punish you as your deeds deserve,
declares the LORD.

I will kindle a fire in your forests
that will consume everything around you."

Judgment Against Evil Kings

22 This is what the LORD says: "Go down to the palace of the king of Judah and proclaim this message there: "Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, you who sit on David's throne—you, your officials and your people who come

through these gates. "This is what the LORD says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of his oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place. "For if you are careful to carry out these commands, then kings who sit on David's throne will come through the gates of this palace, riding in chariots and on horses, accompanied by their officials and their people. "But if you do not obey these commands, declares the LORD, I swear by myself that this palace will become a ruin."

"For this is what the LORD says about the palace of the king of Judah:

"Though you are like Gilead to me,
like the summit of Lebanon,
I will surely make you like a desert,
like towns not inhabited.

7 I will send destroyers against you,
each man with his weapons,
and they will cut up your fine cedar beams
and throw them into the fire."

"People from many nations will pass by this city and will ask one another, 'Why has the LORD done such a thing to this great city?' "And the answer will be: 'Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God and have worshiped and served other gods.'"

10 Do not weep for the dead king, or mourn his loss;

rather, weep bitterly for him who is exiled,
because he will never return
nor see his native land again.

11 For this is what the LORD says about Shallum son of Josiah, who succeeded his father as king of Judah but has gone from this place: "He will never return. **12** He will die in the place where they have led him captive; he will not see this land again."

13 "Woe to him who builds his palace by
unrighteousness,

his upper rooms by injustice,
making his countrymen work for nothing,
not paying them for their labor.

14 He says, 'I will build myself a great palace
with spacious upper rooms.'

So he makes large windows in it,
panels it with cedar
and decorates it in red.

15 "Does it make you a king
to have more and more cedar?

Did not your father have food and drink?

He did what was right and just,
so all went well with him.

16 He defended the cause of the poor and needy,
and so all went well.

Is that not what it means to know me?"
declares the LORD.

17 "But your eyes and your heart
are set only on dishonest gain,
on shedding innocent blood
and on oppression and extortion."

^a Hebrew Nebuchadnezzar, of which Nebuchadnezzar is a variant, here and often in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. ^b Or Chaldeans; also in verse 9. ^c 11 Also called Jehoiachaz.

¹⁸Therefore this is what the LORD says about Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah:

"They will not mourn for him.

'Alas, my brother! Alas, my sister!'

They will not mourn for him:

'Alas, my master! Alas, his splendor!'

¹⁹He will have the burial of a donkey—
dragged away and thrown
outside the gates of Jerusalem."

²⁰"Go up to Lebanon and cry out,
let your voice be heard in Bashan,
cry out from Abanin,
for all your allies are crushed

²¹I warned you when you felt secure,
but you said, 'I will not listen!'

This has been your way from your youth;
you have not obeyed me.

²²The wind will drive all your shepherds away,
and your allies will go into exile.
Then you will be ashamed and disgraced
because of all your wickedness.

²³You who live in 'Lebanon,'^a
who are nestled in cedar buildings,
how you will groan when pangs come upon
you,
pain like that of a woman in labor!

²⁴"As surely as I live," declares the LORD, "even
if you, Jehoiachin^b son of Jehoiakim king of Judah,
were a signet ring on my right hand, I would still
pull you off. ²⁵I will hand you over to those who
seek your life, those you fear—to Nebuchadnezzar
king of Babylon and to the Babylonians.^c ²⁶I will
hurl you and the mother who gave you birth into
another country, where neither of you was born,
and there you both will die. ²⁷You will never come
back to the land you long to return to."

²⁸Is this man Jehoiachin a despised, broken pot,
an object no one wants?

Why will he and his children be hurled out,
cast into a land they do not know?

²⁹O land, land, land,
hear the word of the LORD!

³⁰This is what the LORD says:
"Record this man as if childless,
a man who will not prosper in his lifetime,
for none of his offspring will prosper,
none will sit on the throne of David
or rule anymore in Judah."

The Righteous Branch

23 "Woe to the shepherds who are destroying
and scattering the sheep of my pasture!"
declares the LORD. ²Therefore this is what the
LORD, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who
tend my people: "Because you have scattered my
flock and driven them away and have not be-
stowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on
you for the evil you have done," declares the
LORD. ³"I myself will gather the remnant of my
flock out of all the countries where I have driven
them and will bring them back to their pasture,
where they will be fruitful and increase in number.

⁴I will place shepherds over them who will tend
them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified,
nor will any be missing," declares the LORD.

⁵"The days are coming," declares the LORD,
"when I will raise up to David^d a righteous
Branch,

a King who will reign wisely
and do what is just and right in the land.

⁶In his days Judah will be saved
and Israel will live in safety.

This is the name by which he will be called:
The LORD Our Righteousness.

⁷"So then, the days are coming," declares the
LORD, "when people will no longer say, 'As surely
as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up
out of Egypt,' ⁸but they will say, 'As surely as the
LORD lives, who brought the descendants of Israel
up out of the land of the north and out of all the
countries where he had banished them.' Then
they will live in their own land."

Lying Prophets

⁹Concerning the prophets:

My heart is broken within me;
all my bones tremble.
I am like a drunken man,
like a man overcome by wine,
because of the LORD
and his holy words.

¹⁰The land is full of adulterers;
because of the curse^e the land lies parched/
and the pastures in the desert are withered.
The prophets follow an evil course
and use their power unjustly.

¹¹"Both prophet and priest are godless;
even in my temple I find their wickedness,"
declares the LORD.

¹²"Therefore their path will become slippery;
they will be banished to darkness
and there they will fall.
I will bring disaster on them
in the year they are punished,"
declares the LORD.

¹³"Among the prophets of Samaria
I saw this repulsive thing:
They prophesied by Baal
and led my people Israel astray.

¹⁴And among the prophets of Jerusalem
I have seen something horrible:
They commit adultery and live a lie.

23:6 The Messianic Promise

Long before, God had promised David that his
descendants would always rule Israel. But the kings
who followed David had been more like wolves
than shepherds of God's people. Jeremiah
predicted that the kings of his day would either be
killed or carried into captivity—which in fact
occurred. He also predicted that a good king
would replace them—the Messiah.

^a23 That is, the palace in Jerusalem (see 1 Kings 7:2)
Chaldeans

^b25 Or up from David's line

^c10 Or because of these things

^d24 Hebrew *Couah*, a variant of *jehoiachin*; also in verse 26

^e10 Or land mourns

^f25 Or

They strengthen the hands of evildoers,
so that no one turns from his wickedness.
They are all like Sodom to me;
the people of Jerusalem are like Gomorrah."

¹⁵Therefore, this is what the LORD Almighty
says concerning the prophets:

I will make them eat bitter food
and drink poisoned water,
because from the prophets of Jerusalem
ungodliness has spread throughout the
land

This is what the LORD Almighty says:

Do not listen to what the prophets are
prophesying to you;
they tell you with false hopes
They speak visions from their own minds,
not from the mouth of the LORD
They keep saying to those who despise me,
The LORD says: You will have peace.
And to all who follow the stubbornness of their
hearts

²⁰They say, 'No harm will come to you.'

¹⁸But which of them has stood in the council of
the LORD

to see or to hear his word?

Who has listened and heard his word?

²⁴See, the storm of the LORD

will burst out in wrath,

a whirlwind swirling down

on the heads of the wicked

²⁷The anger of the LORD will not turn back
until he fully accomplishes
the purposes of his heart.

In days to come

you will understand it clearly

²¹I did not send these prophets,

yet they have run with their message;

I did not speak to them,

yet they have prophesied.

²²But if they had stood in my council,

they would have proclaimed my words to
my people

and would have turned them from their evil
ways

and from their evil deeds.

Am I only a God nearby,"

declares the LORD,

and not a God far away?

⁴Can anyone hide in secret places
so that I cannot see him?"

declares the LORD

"Do not I fill heaven and earth?"

declares the LORD.

I have heard what the prophets say who
prophesy lies in my name. They say, 'I had a
dream! I had a dream!' ²⁶How long will this con-
tinue in the hearts of these lying prophets, who
prophesy the delusions of their own minds?

They think the dreams they tell one another will
make my people forget my name, just as their
fathers forgot my name through Baal worship.

²⁸Let the prophet who has a dream tell his dream,
but let the one who has my word speak it faithful-
ly. For what has straw to do with grain?" declares
the LORD. ²⁹"Is not my word like fire," declares the
LORD, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in
pieces?"

³⁰"Therefore," declares the LORD, "I am against
the prophets who steal from one another words
supposedly from me. ³¹Yes," declares the LORD, "I
am against the prophets who wag their own
tongues and yet declare, 'The LORD declares.' ³²In-
deed, I am against those who prophesy false
dreams," declares the LORD. "They tell them and
lead my people astray with their reckless lies, yet I
did not send or appoint them. They do not benefit
these people in the least," declares the LORD.

False Oracles and False Prophets

³³"When these people, or a prophet or a priest,
ask you, 'What is the oracle of the LORD?' say to
them, 'What oracle?' ³⁴I will forsake you, declares
the LORD. ³⁵If a prophet or a priest or anyone else
claims, 'This is the oracle of the LORD,' I will pun-
ish that man and his household. ³⁶This is what
each of you keeps on saying to his friend or rela-
tive, 'What is the LORD's answer?' or 'What has the
LORD spoken?' ³⁷But you must not mention 'the
oracle of the LORD' again, because every man's
own word becomes his oracle and so you distort
the words of the living God, the LORD Almighty,
our God. ³⁸This is what you keep saying to a
prophet: 'What is the LORD's answer to you?' or
'What has the LORD spoken?' ³⁹Although you
claim, 'This is the oracle of the LORD,' this is what
the LORD says: You used the words, 'This is the
oracle of the LORD,' even though I told you that
you must not claim, 'This is the oracle of the LORD.'
⁴⁰Therefore, I will surely forget you and cast you
out of my presence along with the city I gave to
you and your fathers. ⁴¹I will bring upon you ever-
lasting disgrace—everlasting shame that will not
be forgotten."

Two Baskets of Figs

24 After Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim king of
Judah and the officials, the craftsmen and
the artisans of Judah were carried into exile from
Jerusalem to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar king of
Babylon, the LORD showed me two baskets of figs
placed in front of the temple of the LORD. ²One

23:25 Questionable Dreams

For the casual observer, it must have been difficult
to tell real prophets from false prophets in
Jeremiah's day. Jeremiah was outnumbered by
optimists who claimed God gave them dreams and
messages. In reality, their dreams had nothing to
do with God's Word, and anyone who compared
their message with Scripture could have seen the
difference. They predicted peace when God had
promised severe punishment for the sins of his
people.

Or burden (see Septuagint and Vulgate)
(word is the same)

³¹ Hebrew Septuagint and Vulgate You are the burden. (The Hebrew for oracle and
burden is the same.) ³⁷ Hebrew Jeconiah, a variant of Jehoiachin

basket had very good figs like those that ripen early; the other basket had very poor figs, so bad they could not be eaten.

Then the Lord asked me, "What do you see, Jeremiah?"

"Figs," I answered. "The good ones are very good, but the poor ones are so bad they cannot be eaten."

"Then the word of the Lord came to me: ¹"This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'Like these good figs, I regard as good the exiles from Judah, whom I sent away from this place to the land of the Babylonians.² My eyes will watch over them for their good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up and not tear them down. I will plant them and not uproot them. I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.'

³"But like the poor figs, which are so bad they cannot be eaten, says the Lord, so will I deal with Zedekiah king of Judah, his officials and the survivors from Jerusalem, whether they remain in this land or live in Egypt. ⁴I will make them an object of reproach and an offense to all the kingdoms of the earth, a reproach and a byword, an object of ridicule and cursing, whenever I banish them. ⁵I will send the sword, famine and plague against them until they are destroyed from the land I gave to them and their fathers.

Seventy Years of Captivity

25 The word came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. So Jeremiah the prophet said to all the people of Judah and to all those living in Jerusalem: ¹"For twenty-three years—from the thirteenth year of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah until this very day—the word of the Lord has come to me and I have spoken to you again and again, but you have not listened.

²"And though the Lord has sent all his servants the prophets to you again and again, you have not listened or paid any attention. They said, 'Turn now, each of you, from your evil ways and your evil practices, and you can stay in the land the Lord gave to you and your fathers for ever and ever. ³'Do not follow other gods to serve and worship them; do not provoke me to anger with what your hands have made. Then I will not harm you.'

⁴"But you did not listen to me," declares the Lord, "and you have provoked me with what your hands have made, and you have brought harm to yourselves."

⁵"Therefore the Lord Almighty says this: 'Because you have not listened to my words, ⁶I will summon all the peoples of the north and my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon,' declares the Lord, "and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an ever-

lasting ruin. ⁷I will banish from them the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, the sound of millstones and the light of the lamp. ⁸This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

⁹"But when the seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians, for their guilt," declares the Lord, "and will make it desolate forever. ¹⁰I will bring upon that land all the things I have spoken against it, all that are written in this book and prophesied by Jeremiah against all the nations. ¹¹They themselves will be enslaved by many nations and great kings. I will repay them according to their deeds and the work of their hands."

The Cup of God's Wrath

¹²"This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, said to me: 'Take from my hand this cup filled with the wine of my wrath and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. ¹³When they drink it, they will stagger and so mad because of the sword I will send among them.'

¹⁴"So I took the cup from the Lord's hand and made all the nations to whom he sent me drink it: Jerusalem and the towns of Judah, its kings and officials, so make them a ruin and an object of horror and scorn and cursing, as they are today; ¹⁵Pharaoh king of Egypt, his attendants, his officials and all his people; ¹⁶and all the foreign people there, all the kings of Ux, all the kings of the Philistines (those of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the people left at Ashdod); ¹⁷Edom, Moab and Ammon; ¹⁸all the kings of Tyre and Sidon, the kings of the coastlands across the sea; ¹⁹Dedan, Tema, Buz and all who are in distant places; ²⁰all the kings of Arabia and all the kings of the foreign people who live in the desert; ²¹all the kings of Zimri, Elam and Media; ²²and all the kings of the north, near and far, one after the other—all the kingdoms on the face of the earth. And after all of them, the king of Shechem will drink it too.

²³"Then tell them: 'This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Drink, get drunk and vomit, and fall to rise no more because of the sword I will send among you. ²⁴But if they refuse to take the cup from your hand and drink, tell them: 'This is what the Lord Almighty says: You must drink it! ²⁵See, I am beginning to bring disaster on the city that bears my Name, and will you indeed go unpunished? You will not go unpunished, for I am calling down a sword upon all who live on the earth,' declares the Lord Almighty."

²⁶"Now prophesy all these words against them and say to them:

The Lord will roar from on high,
he will thunder from his holy dwelling
and roar mightily against his land.

He will shout like those who tread the grapes,
shout against all who live on the earth.

²⁷The tumult will resound to the ends of the earth.

¹⁴⁻¹⁵ Or: Children destroying them.

¹⁶ The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the Lord, often by treaty.

²¹ Or: and, up to her by their sword.

²² Shechem is a city in Israel.

... the LORD will bring charges against the
 ... on all mankind
 ... to the sword."¹⁷
 ... declares the LORD
 ... the LORD Almighty says
 ... disaster is spreading
 ... nation to nation
 ... storm is rising
 ... he ends of the earth.¹⁸

And those slain by the LORD will be
 ... from one end of the earth to the
 ... they will not be mourned or gathered up or
 ... will be like refuse lying on the ground.
 Weep and wail, you shepherds
 ... the dust, you leaders of the flock
 ... me to be slaughtered has come;
 ... will fall and be shattered like fine
 ...
 ... herds will have nowhere to flee.
 ... the flock no place to escape.
 ... shepherds
 ... the leaders of the flock
 ... destroying their pasture
 ... windows will be laid waste
 ... of the fierce anger of the LORD
 ... then he will leave his land
 ... and will become desolate
 ... the sword¹⁹ of the oppressor
 ... because of the LORD's fierce anger.

Jeremiah Threatened With Death

26 Early in the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, this word came from the LORD. This is what the LORD says: Stand in the courtyard of the LORD's house and speak to all the people of the towns of Judah who come to worship in the house of the LORD. Tell them everything I command you, do not omit a word. ²Perhaps they will relent and not bring on them the disaster I am planning because of the evil they have done. ³Tell them, "This is what the LORD says: If you do not listen to me and follow my law, which I have set before you, ⁴and if you do not listen to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I have sent to you again and again (though you have ignored them), ⁵then I will make this house like a desolate city and this city an object of cursing among all the nations of the earth."⁶

The priests, the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speak these words in the house of the LORD. ⁸But as soon as Jeremiah finished telling the people everything the LORD had commanded him to say, the priests, the prophets and the people seized him and said, "You must die! Why do you prophesy in the LORD's name that this house will be like Shiloh and this city will be desolate and deserted?" And all the people crowded around Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.

When the officials of Judah heard about these things, they went up from the royal palace to the

house of the LORD and took their places at the entrance of the New Gate of the LORD's house. ¹⁰Then the priests and the prophets said to the officials and all the people, "This man should be sentenced to death because he has prophesied against this city. You have heard it with your own ears!"

¹²Then Jeremiah said to all the officials and all the people: "The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and this city all the things you have heard. ¹³Now reform your ways and your actions and obey the LORD your God. Then the LORD will relent and not bring the disaster he has pronounced against you. ¹⁴As for me, I am in your hands, do with me whatever you think is good and right. ¹⁵Be assured, however, that if you put me to death, you will bring the guilt of innocent blood on yourselves and on this city and on those who live in it, for in truth the LORD has sent me to you to speak all these words in your hearing."

¹⁶Then the officials and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, "This man should not be sentenced to death! He has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God."

¹⁷Some of the elders of the land stepped forward and said to the entire assembly of people, ¹⁸"Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah. He told all the people of Judah, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says:

" 'Zion will be plowed like a field,
 Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble,
 the temple hill a mound overgrown with
 thickets.'"¹⁹

¹⁹"Did Hezekiah king of Judah or anyone else in Judah put him to death? Did not Hezekiah fear the LORD and seek his favor? And did not the LORD relent, so that he did not bring the disaster he pronounced against them? We are about to bring a terrible disaster on ourselves!"

²⁰(Now Uriah son of Shemaiah from Kiriath Jearim was another man who prophesied in the name of the LORD; he prophesied the same things against this city and this land as Jeremiah did. ²¹When King Jehoiakim and all his officers and officials heard his words, the king sought to put him to death. But Uriah heard of it and fled in fear to Egypt. ²²King Jehoiakim, however, sent Elnathan son of Acbor to Egypt, along with some other men. ²³They brought Uriah out of Egypt and took him to King Jehoiakim, who had him struck down

26:19 Scripture Saves a Life

Jeremiah's scorn for the temple was considered sacrilege and might have cost him his life. (Another prophet, Uriah, was assassinated for the same message—see verses 20-23.) But some of the elders remembered the treatment given Micah years before. Hezekiah—a good king—had listened to Micah. Based on this precedent, Jeremiah was allowed to live.

¹⁷ Some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint (see also Jer. 46:16 and 50:16), most Hebrew manuscripts *anger*

¹⁸ Micah 3:12

with a sword and his body thrown into the burial place of the common people.)

²Furthermore, Ahikam son of Shaphan supported Jeremiah, and so he was not handed over to the people to be put to death

Judah to Serve Nebuchadnezzar

27 Early in the reign of Zedekiah^a son of Josiah king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ²This is what the LORD said to me.

Make a yoke out of straps and crossbars and put it on your neck. ³Then send word to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon through the envoys who have come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah king of Judah. ⁴Give them a message for their masters and say, 'This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "Tell this to your masters: ⁵With my great power and outstretched arm I made the earth and its people and the animals that are on it, and I give it to anyone I please. ⁶Now I will hand all your countries over to my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; I will make even the wild animals subject to him. ⁷All nations will serve him and his son and his grandson until the time for his land comes; then many nations and great kings will subjugate him

⁸" "If, however, any nation or kingdom will not serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon or bow its neck under his yoke, I will punish that nation with the sword, famine and plague, declares the LORD, until I destroy it by his hand. ⁹So do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your interpreters of dreams, your mediums or your sorcerers who tell you, 'You will not serve the king of Babylon.' ¹⁰They prophesy lies to you that will only serve to remove you far from your lands; I will banish you and you will perish. ¹¹But if any nation will bow its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I will let that nation remain in its own land to till it and to live there, declares the LORD." " "

¹²I gave the same message to Zedekiah king of Judah. I said, "Bow your neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon; serve him and his people, and you will live. ¹³Why will you and your people die by the sword, famine and plague with which the LORD has threatened any nation that will not serve the king of Babylon? ¹⁴Do not listen to the words of the prophets who say to you, 'You will not serve the king of Babylon,' for they are prophesying lies

to you. ¹⁵'I have not sent them,' declares the LORD. 'They are prophesying lies in my name. Therefore, I will banish you and you will perish, both you and the prophets who prophesy to you.' "

¹⁶Then I said to the priests and all these people, 'This is what the LORD says: Do not listen to the prophets who say, 'Very soon now the articles from the LORD's house will be brought back from Babylon.' They are prophesying lies to you. ¹⁷Do not listen to them. Serve the king of Babylon, and you will live. Why should this city become a ruin? ¹⁸If they are prophets and have the word of the LORD, let them plead with the LORD Almighty that the furnishings remaining in the house of the LORD and in the palace of the king of Judah and in Jerusalem not be taken to Babylon. ¹⁹For this is what the LORD Almighty says about the pillars, the Sea, the movable stands and the other furnishings that are left in this city, ²⁰which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon did not take away when he carried Jehoiachin^b son of Jehoiakim king of Judah into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon, along with all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem— ²¹yes, this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says about the things that are left in the house of the LORD and in the palace of the king of Judah and in Jerusalem: ²²'They will be taken to Babylon and there they will remain until the day I come for them,' declares the LORD. 'Then I will bring them back and restore them to this place.' "

The False Prophet Hananiah

28 In the fifth month of that same year, the fourth year, early in the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, the prophet Hananiah son of Azzur, who was from Gibeon, said to me in the house of the LORD in the presence of the priests and all the people: ²"This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon. ³Within two years I will bring back to this place all the articles of the LORD's house that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon removed from here and took to Babylon. ⁴I will also bring back to this place Jehoiachin^b son of Jehoiakim king of Judah and all the other exiles from Judah who went to Babylon,' declares the LORD, 'for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.' "

⁵Then the prophet Jeremiah replied to the prophet Hananiah before the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD. ⁶He said, "Amen! May the LORD do so! May the LORD fulfill the words you have prophesied by bringing the articles of the LORD's house and all the exiles back to this place from Babylon. ⁷Nevertheless, listen to what I have to say in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people: ⁸From early times the prophets who preceded you and me have prophesied war, disaster and plague against many countries and great kingdoms. ⁹But the prophet who prophesies peace will be recognized as one truly sent by the LORD only if his prediction comes true."

¹⁰Then the prophet Hananiah took the yoke off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah and broke it,

27:12 Counseling Surrender

By the time Zedekiah took office, Israel had twice surrendered to Babylon. Two groups of Israelites had already been exiled, including in their number King Jehoiachin. The desire for independence did not die easily, however. Zedekiah, who had been put into office as a puppet king, soon began scheming for revolution. Jeremiah persistently counseled submission to Babylon—unpopular advice that nearly cost him his life when he was accused of treason.

¹ A few Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac (see also Jer. 27:3, 12 and 28:1), most Hebrew manuscripts *Jehoiakim* (Most Septuagint manuscripts do not have this verse) ²⁰ 4 Hebrew *Jechoniah*, a variant of *Jehoiachin*

and he said before all the people, "This is what the LORD says: 'In the same way will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon off the neck of all the nations within two years.'" At this, the prophet Jeremiah went on his way.

Shortly after the prophet Hananiah had broken the yoke off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ¹³"Go and tell Hananiah. 'This is what the LORD says: You have broken a wooden yoke, but in its place you will get a yoke of iron.' ¹⁴This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: I will put an iron yoke on the necks of all these nations to make them serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and they will serve him. I will even give him control over the wild animals.'"

Then the prophet Jeremiah said to Hananiah the prophet, "Listen, Hananiah! The LORD has not sent you, yet you have persuaded this nation to trust in lies. ¹⁶Therefore, this is what the LORD says: I am about to remove you from the face of the earth. This very year you are going to die, because you have preached rebellion against the LORD."

In the seventh month of that same year, Hananiah the prophet died.

A Letter to the Exiles

29 This is the text of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders among the exiles and to the priests, the prophets and all the other people Nebuchadnezzar had carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. ²(This was after King Jehoiachin^a and the queen mother, the court officials and the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen and the artisans had gone into exile from Jerusalem.) ³He entrusted the letter to Elasah son of Shaphan and to Gemariah son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to King Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon. It said:

"This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵'Build houses and settle down, plant gardens and eat what they produce. ⁶Marry and have sons and daughters, find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. ⁷Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD

for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.'" ⁸Yes, this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. ⁹They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them," declares the LORD.

¹⁰This is what the LORD says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. ¹¹For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹²Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back from captivity. ¹⁵I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile."

¹⁵You may say, "The LORD has raised up prophets for us in Babylon," ¹⁶but this is what the LORD says about the king who sits on David's throne and all the people who remain in this city, your countrymen who did not go with you into exile— ¹⁷yes, this is what the LORD Almighty says: "I will send the sword, famine and plague against them and I will make them like poor figs that are so bad they cannot be eaten. ¹⁸I will pursue them with the sword, famine and plague and will make them abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth and an object of cursing and horror, of scorn and reproach, among all the nations where I drive them. ¹⁹For they have not listened to my words," declares the LORD, "words that I sent to them again and again by my servants the prophets. And you exiles have not listened either," declares the LORD.

²⁰Therefore, hear the word of the LORD, all you exiles whom I have sent away from Jerusalem to Babylon. ²¹This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says about Ahab son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah son of Maaseiah, who are prophesying lies to you in my name: "I will hand them over to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he will put them to death before your very eyes. ²²Because of them, all the exiles from Judah who are in Babylon will use this curse: 'The LORD treat you like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon burned in the fire.' ²³For they have done outrageous things in Israel; they have committed adultery with their neighbors' wives and in my name have spoken lies, which I did not tell them to do. I know it and am a witness to it," declares the LORD.

Message to Shemaiah

²⁴Tell Shemaiah the Nehelamite, ²⁵"This is what

29:1 Writing to Ezekiel

During the last years of Jeremiah's work, a sizeable community of exiles were already living in Babylon. Among them were Daniel, a young man who would rise to tremendous power in court, and the prophet Ezekiel. Ezekiel was preaching at the same time as Jeremiah, and their messages are similar in many ways. Since neither one mentions the other, however, we can't be sure whether they were acquainted.

^aHebrew Jehoniah, a variant of Jehoiachin

²⁴Or will restore your fortunes

the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: You sent letters in your own name to all the people in Jerusalem, to Zephaniah son of Maaseiah the priest, and to all the other priests. You said to Zephaniah, ²⁶'The LORD has appointed you priest in place of Jehoiada to be in charge of the house of the LORD; you should put any madman who acts like a prophet into the stocks and neck-irons.' ²⁷So why have you not reprimanded Jeremiah from Anathoth, who poses as a prophet among you? ²⁸He has sent this message to us in Babylon: It will be a long time. Therefore build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce.' "

²⁹Zephaniah the priest, however, read the letter to Jeremiah the prophet. ³⁰Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ³¹"Send this message to all the exiles: 'This is what the LORD says about Shemaiah the Nehelamite: Because Shemaiah has prophesied to you, even though I did not send him, and has led you to believe a lie, ³²this is what the LORD says: I will surely punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite and his descendants. He will have no one left among this people, nor will he see the good things I will do for my people, declares the LORD, because he has preached rebellion against me.' "

Restoration of Israel

30 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ²"This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Write in a book all the words I have spoken to you. ³The days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will bring my people Israel and Judah back from captivity^a and restore them to the land I gave their forefathers to possess,' says the LORD."

⁴These are the words the LORD spoke concerning Israel and Judah: ⁵"This is what the LORD says:

" 'Cries of fear are heard—
terror, not peace.

⁶Ask and see:

Can a man bear children?

Then why do I see every strong man
with his hands on his stomach like a woman
in labor,

every face turned deathly pale?

⁷How awful that day will be!

None will be like it.

It will be a time of trouble for Jacob,
but he will be saved out of it.

⁸" 'In that day,' declares the LORD Almighty,

'I will break the yoke off their necks
and will tear off their bonds;
no longer will foreigners enslave them.

⁹Instead, they will serve the LORD their God
and David their king,
whom I will raise up for them.

¹⁰" 'So do not fear, O Jacob my servant;
do not be dismayed, O Israel,'

declares the LORD.

'I will surely save you out of a distant place,

your descendants from the land of their
exile.

Jacob will again have peace and security,
and no one will make him afraid.

¹¹'I am with you and will save you,'
declares the LORD.

'Though I completely destroy all the nations
among which I scatter you,

I will not completely destroy you.

I will discipline you but only with justice;

I will not let you go entirely unpunished.'

¹²"This is what the LORD says:

" 'Your wound is incurable,
your injury beyond healing.

¹³There is no one to plead your cause,
no remedy for your sore,
no healing for you

¹⁴All your allies have forgotten you;
they care nothing for you.

I have struck you as an enemy would
and punished you as would the cruel,
because your guilt is so great
and your sins so many.

¹⁵Why do you cry out over your wound,
your pain that has no cure?

Because of your great guilt and many sins
I have done these things to you.

¹⁶" 'But all who devour you will be devoured;
all your enemies will go into exile.

Those who plunder you will be plundered;
all who make spoil of you I will despoil.

¹⁷But I will restore you to health
and heal your wounds,'

declares the LORD,

'because you are called an outcast,
Zion for whom no one cares.'

¹⁸"This is what the LORD says:

" 'I will restore the fortunes of Jacob's tents
and have compassion on his dwellings;
the city will be rebuilt on her ruins,
and the palace will stand in its proper place.

¹⁹From them will come songs of thanksgiving
and the sound of rejoicing.

I will add to their numbers,
and they will not be decreased;

I will bring them honor,
and they will not be disdained.

²⁰Their children will be as in days of old,
and their community will be established
before me;

I will punish all who oppress them.

²¹Their leader will be one of their own;
their ruler will arise from among them.

I will bring him near and he will come close to
me,

for who is he who will devote himself
to be close to me?' "

declares the LORD.

²²" 'So you will be my people,
and I will be your God.' "

²³See, the storm of the LORD

^a3 Or will restore the fortunes of my people Israel and Judah

The People Who Refuse to Die

Their powerful neighbors have disappeared—but the Jews live on

"I will surely save you out of a distant place, your descendants from the land of their exile. Jacob will no longer have peace and security, and no one will make him afraid." 30:10

If you get lost in Brooklyn, New York, and wander into the section called Williamsburg, prepare to be surprised. Boys playing baseball look odd: long, uncut curls of hair trail from above their eyes down to their chests. Men in black, with long, untrimmed beards, coach from the sidelines. All the women you see wear wigs because they've shaved their heads completely. Is this a new cult?

You've stumbled into a community of Hasidic Jews. They live, not by the latest fad, but by ancient roles based on Old Testament laws. They follow complicated dietary regulations. They keep one set of bowls for meat, and another for dairy products. Young men devote long hours of study to the Hebrew Old Testament. Though they are Americans living in New York, their cultural compass points to Mount Sinai, where God gave Moses the Law.

Jews Outlived Their Enemies

The Jewish people have survived astonishingly. Who in Jeremiah's time could have predicted their persistence when they were hemmed in and threatened with total destruction? The Babylonians conquered and carried them into exile. But where are the Babylonians, today? They have vanished. Desert sand covers their capital.

The story of the Jews is a long chronicle of discrimination, exile, punishment, and slaughter. Against no other people have such destructive measures been taken. Yet they have survived, and thrived. Their language endures. Their book, the Old Testament, is part of the great bestseller of all time. They have rebuilt their nation.

Even more remarkably, this durability was predicted in writing 2,500 years ago. God promised in the clearest terms that he would never reject his people.

The New Covenant

Jeremiah, known for his stinging denunciations and repeated predictions of savage destruction, also brought word of God's eternal faithfulness and of a new covenant replacing the old, broken one. The new covenant would improve generously on the old one, Jeremiah said. God would no longer simply list rules for his people to obey. He would plant those rules in their hearts, so they would want to obey (31:33). Each individual would know the Lord personally. God would offer forgiveness for sins.

Jeremiah promised more than that. He said a new king from David's line would come to rule. He would be called "The Lord Our Righteousness" (23:5-8). Israel would return from exile to their land. They would farm there again. They would rebuild Jerusalem and again worship God there. Jeremiah wrote these rosy words in the face of Israel's worst catastrophe.

Jeremiah didn't just deliver these messages. He acted them out. He made what was either one of the stupidest financial investments of all time, or a remarkable act of faith. He bought property from a relative at the height of the Babylonian siege (chapter 32). God had promised Jeremiah that someday the property would be worth money again, to his children or grandchildren. He believed and invested in that distant prospect. He believed in the survival of Israel.

The Fulfillment of Prophecy

Christians agree that the new king Jeremiah predicted was Jesus. They agree that Jesus brought the new covenant, which puts the law into people's hearts and enables them to know God. But on the restoration of Israel Christians hold different opinions. Some feel that the modern nation of Israel is, at least partly, the reincarnated nation Jeremiah wrote about. Others feel that the New Testament teaches that Christians of all races form Jeremiah's "new nation" of God's people, and that the promises apply allegorically to them.

All agree, though, that what Jesus set out to do is not yet finished. Someday he will destroy the forces of evil and fully establish his new kingdom.

Life Questions Jeremiah bought a field as a sign of his faith in the future of Israel. By what "investments" can you demonstrate practical faith in God's kingdom?

will burst out in wrath,
 a driving wind swirling down
 on the heads of the wicked
²⁴The fierce anger of the LORD will not turn back
 until he fully accomplishes
 the purposes of his heart
 in days to come
 you will understand this

31 "At that time," declares the LORD, "I will be
 the God of all the clans of Israel, and they
 will be my people."

²This is what the LORD says

"The people who survive the sword
 will find favor in the desert.
 I will come to give rest to Israel."

³The LORD appeared to us in the past,^a saying

"I have loved you with an everlasting love;
 I have drawn you with loving-kindness."

⁴I will build you up again
 and you will be rebuilt, O Virgin Israel
 Again you will take up your tambourines
 and go out to dance with the joyful.

⁵Again you will plant vineyards
 on the hills of Samaria,
 the farmers will plant them
 and enjoy their fruit

⁶There will be a day when watchmen cry out
 on the hills of Ephraim,

'Come, let us go up to Zion,
 to the LORD our God.'

⁷This is what the LORD says:

"Sing with joy for Jacob;
 shout for the foremost of the nations.
 Make your praises heard, and say,
 'O LORD, save your people,
 the remnant of Israel.'

⁸See, I will bring them from the land of the
 north

and gather them from the ends of the earth
 Among them will be the blind and the lame,
 expectant mothers and women in labor;
 a great throng will return

⁹They will come with weeping,
 they will pray as I bring them back
 I will lead them beside streams of water
 on a level path where they will not stumble,
 because I am Israel's father,
 and Ephraim is my firstborn son.

¹⁰"Hear the word of the LORD, O nations;
 proclaim it in distant coastlands:

'He who scattered Israel will gather them
 and will watch over his flock like a
 shepherd.'

¹¹For the LORD will ransom Jacob
 and redeem them from the hand of those
 stronger than they.

¹²They will come and shout for joy on the
 heights of Zion;
 they will rejoice in the bounty of the LORD—
 the grain, the new wine and the oil,

the young of the flocks and herds
 They will be like a well-watered garden,
 and they will sorrow no more.

¹³Then maidens will dance and be glad,
 young men and old as well.

I will turn their mourning into gladness,
 I will give them comfort and joy instead of
 sorrow

¹⁴I will satisfy the priests with abundance,
 and my people will be filled with my
 bounty,"

declares the LORD.

¹⁵This is what the LORD says:

"A voice is heard in Ramah,
 mourning and great weeping,
 Rachel weeping for her children
 and refusing to be comforted,
 because her children are no more."

¹⁶This is what the LORD says:

"Restrain your voice from weeping
 and your eyes from tears,
 for your work will be rewarded,"
 declares the LORD.

"They will return from the land of the
 enemy.

¹⁷So there is hope for your future,"
 declares the LORD.

"Your children will return to their own land.

¹⁸"I have surely heard Ephraim's moaning:
 'You disciplined me like an unruly calf,
 and I have been disciplined.

Restore me, and I will return,
 because you are the LORD my God.

¹⁹After I strayed,
 I repented;
 after I came to understand,
 I beat my breast.
 I was ashamed and humiliated
 because I bore the disgrace of my youth.'

²⁰Is not Ephraim my dear son,
 the child in whom I delight?
 Though I often speak against him,
 I still remember him.
 Therefore my heart yearns for him;
 I have great compassion for him,"

declares the LORD.

²¹"Set up road signs;
 put up guideposts.

31:15 Pain in Redemption

The Babylonians used Ramah, a town north of Jerusalem, as a collection point for the captives they were about to exile. Rachel, the "mother of Israel," was buried near there, and she is portrayed as weeping over the exiles. But the Lord's voice answers hers, offering hope for their return. Matthew quoted this verse referring to King Herod's slaughter of all baby boys in the vicinity of Bethlehem (Matthew 2:18). In deepest grief, God is not absent: he is planning redemption.

^a3 Or LORD has appeared to us from afar

Take note of the highway
the road that you take
Return, O Virgin Israel
return to your towns
How long will you wander,
O unfaithful daughter?

The LORD will create a new thing on earth—
a woman will surround a man."

This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel says: "When I bring them back from captivity to the people in the land of Judah and in its towns will once again use these words: 'The LORD bless you, O righteous dwelling, O sacred mountain.' 24 People will live together in Judah and all its towns—farmers and those who move about with their flocks. 25 I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint."

At this I awoke and looked around. My sleep had been pleasant to me.

"The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will plant the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the offspring of men and of animals. Just as I watched over them to uproot and tear down, and to overthrow, destroy and bring disaster, so I will watch over them to build and to plant," declares the LORD. 28 "In those days people will no longer say:

"The fathers have eaten sour grapes,
and the children's teeth are set on edge."

"Instead, everyone will die for his own sin, who ever eats sour grapes—his own teeth will be set on edge."

"The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel

and with the house of Judah.
It will not be like the covenant

I made with their forefathers
when I took them by the hand
to lead them out of Egypt
because they broke my covenant,
though I was a husband to them,"

declares the LORD.

This is the covenant I will make with the
house of Israel

after that time," declares the LORD.

I will put my law in their minds
and write it on their hearts

I will be their God,

and they will be my people

No longer will a man teach his neighbor,
or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the
LORD,'

because they will all know me,

from the least of them to the greatest,"

declares the LORD.

For I will forgive their wickedness

and will remember their sins no more."

This is what the LORD says,

he who appoints the sun
to shine by day,

who decrees the moon and stars
to shine by night,
who stirs up the sea
so that its waves roar—
the LORD Almighty is his name.

"Only if these decrees vanish from my sight,
declares the LORD,
'will the descendants of Israel ever cease
to be a nation before me.'"

"This is what the LORD says:

"Only if the heavens above can be measured
and the foundations of the earth below be
searched out

will I reject all the descendants of Israel
because of all they have done,"

declares the LORD.

"The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when this city will be rebuilt for me from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. 37 The measuring line will stretch from there straight to the hill of Gareb and then turn to Goah. 38 The whole valley where dead bodies and ashes are thrown, and all the terraces out to the Kidron Valley on the east as far as the corner of the Horse Gate, will be holy to the LORD. The city will never again be uprooted or demolished."

Jeremiah Buys a Field

32 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. 2 The army of the king of Babylon was then besieging Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was confined in the courtyard of the guard in the royal palace of Judah.

3 Now Zedekiah king of Judah had imprisoned him there, saying, "Why do you prophesy as you do? You say, 'This is what the LORD says: I am about to hand this city over to the king of Babylon, and he will capture it.' 4 Zedekiah king of Judah will not escape out of the hands of the Babylonians, but will certainly be handed over to the king of Babylon, and will speak with him face to face and see him with his own eyes. 5 He will take Zedekiah to Babylon, where he will remain until I deal with him," declares the LORD. "If you fight against the Babylonians, you will not succeed."

6 Jeremiah said, "The word of the LORD came to me: 7 Hanamel son of Shallum your uncle is going to come to you and say, 'Buy my field at Anathoth, because as nearest relative it is your right and duty to buy it.'"

8 Then, just as the LORD had said, my cousin Hanamel came to me in the courtyard of the guard and said, "Buy my field at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. Since it is your right to redeem it and possess it, buy it for yourself."

"I knew that this was the word of the LORD; 9 so I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel and weighed out for him seventeen

19 Or "I will be their God."

23 Or "I restore their fortunes."

32 Hebrew: Septuagint and Syriac, and I turned away

33 Or "I will be their master."

34 Or "Judah's also in verses 24-25, 28, 29 and 33."

shekel of silver. ¹⁰I signed and sealed the deed, had it witnessed, and weighed out the silver on the scales. ¹¹I took the deed of purchase—the sealed copy containing the terms and conditions, as well as the unsealed copy—¹²and I gave this deed to Baruch son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, in the presence of my cousin Hanamel and of the witnesses who had signed the deed and of all the Jews sitting in the courtyard of the guard.

¹³In their presence I gave Baruch these instructions: ¹⁴This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Take these documents, both the sealed and unsealed copies of the deed of purchase, and put them in a clay jar so they will last a long time. ¹⁵For this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Houses, fields and vineyards will again be bought in this land.

¹⁶After I had given the deed of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah, I prayed to the Lord:

¹⁷"Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you. ¹⁸You show love to thousands but bring the punishment for the fathers' sins into the laps of their children after them. O great and powerful God, whose name is the Lord Almighty, ¹⁹great are your purposes and mighty are your deeds. Your eyes are open to all the ways of men; you reward everyone according to his conduct and as his deeds deserve. ²⁰You performed miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt and have continued them to this day, both in Israel and among all mankind, and have gained the renown that is still yours. ²¹You brought your people Israel out of Egypt with signs and wonders, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with great terror. ²²You gave them this land you had sworn to give their forefathers, a land flowing with milk and honey. ²³They came in and took possession of it, but they did not obey you or follow your law; they did not do what you commanded them to do. So you brought all this disaster upon them.

²⁴"See how the siege ramps are built up to take the city. Because of the sword, famine and plague, the city will be handed over to the Babylonians who are attacking it. What you said has happened, as you now see. ²⁵And though the city will be handed over to the Babylonians, you, O Sovereign Lord, say to me, 'Buy the field with silver and have the transaction witnessed.'"

²⁶Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: ²⁷"I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?" ²⁸Therefore, this is what the Lord says: I am about to hand this city over to the Babylonians and to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, who will capture it. ²⁹The Babylonians who are attacking this city will come in and set it on fire; they will burn it down, along with the houses where the people provoked me to anger by burn-

ing incense on the roofs to Baal and by pouring out drink offerings to other gods.

³⁰The people of Israel and Judah have done nothing but evil in my sight from their youth; indeed, the people of Israel have done nothing but provoke me with what their hands have made, declares the Lord. ³¹From the day it was built until now, this city has so aroused my anger and wrath that I must remove it from my sight. ³²The people of Israel and Judah have provoked me by all the evil they have done—they, their kings and officials, their priests and prophets, the men of Judah and the people of Jerusalem. ³³They turned their backs to me and not their faces, though I taught them again and again; they would not listen or respond to discipline. ³⁴They set up their abominable idols in the house that bears my Name and defiled it. ³⁵They built high places for Baal in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to sacrifice their sons and daughters^a to Molech, though I never commanded, nor did it enter my mind, that they should do such a detestable thing and so make Judah sin.

³⁶"You are saying about this city, 'By the sword, famine and plague it will be handed over to the king of Babylon'; but this is what the Lord—the God of Israel, says. ³⁷I will surely gather them from all the lands where I banish them in my furious anger and great wrath; I will bring them back to this place and let them live in safety. ³⁸They will be my people, and I will be their God. ³⁹I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me for their own good and the good of their children after them. ⁴⁰I will make an everlasting covenant with them. I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me. ⁴¹I will rejoice in doing them good and will assuredly plant them in this land with all my heart and soul.

⁴²"This is what the Lord says: As I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will give them all the prosperity I have promised them. ⁴³Once more fields will be bought in this land of which you say, 'It is a desolate waste, without men or animals, for it has been handed over to the Babylonians.' ⁴⁴Fields will be bought for silver, and deeds will be signed, sealed and witnessed in the territory of Benjamin, in the villages around Jerusalem, in the towns of Judah and in the towns of the hill country, of the western foothills and of

32:40 A New Covenant

The foundation of Israel was its covenant with God. It bound both sides together on the basis of clear-cut expectations (see "The Covenant," page 68). Israel had never really lived up to the covenant, however. Here (and in 31:31-34) God promised a new covenant, far better than the old one. It would change the people's thinking. Paul amplified the contrast in 2 Corinthians 3:12-3:18. The new covenant came in Christ.

^a This is stated variously about 28 grams.

^b 35:18 to make their sons and daughters pass through the fire.

the Negev because I will restore their fortunes," declares the LORD.

Promise of Restoration

33 While Jeremiah was still confined in the courtyard of the guard, the word of the LORD came to him a second time: ²"This is what the LORD says: he who made the earth, the LORD formed it and established it—the LORD is his name. Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know. ³For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says about the houses in this city and the royal palaces of Judah that have been torn down to be used against the siege ramps and the sword ⁴in the fight with the Babylonians: 'They will be built with the dead bodies of the men I will slay in my anger and in my wrath. I will hide my face from this city because of all its wickedness.

Nevertheless, I will bring health and healing ⁵and I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security. ⁶I will bring Judah back from captivity and will rebuild them as they were before. ⁷I will cleanse them from all the sin they have committed against me and will forgive all their sins of rebellion against me. ⁸Then this city will bring me renown, joy, praise and honor before all nations on earth that hear of all the good things I do for it, and they will be in awe and will tremble at the abundant prosperity and peace I provide for it.

This is what the LORD says: 'You say about this place: It is a desolate waste, without men or animals. Yet in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are deserted, inhabited by neither men nor animals, there will be heard once again the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, and the voices of those who bring thank offerings to the house of the LORD, saying

'Give thanks to the LORD Almighty,
for the LORD is good;
his love endures forever.'

For I will restore the fortunes of the land as they were before,' says the LORD.

¹²"This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'In this place, desolate and without men or animals—in all its towns there will again be pastures for shepherds to rest their flocks. ¹³In the towns of the hill country, of the western foothills and of the Negev, in the territory of Benjamin, in the villages around Jerusalem and in the towns of Judah, flocks will again pass under the hand of the one who counts them,' says the LORD.

¹⁴"The days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will fulfill the gracious promise I made to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.

¹⁵"In those days and at that time

I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line;

he will do what is just and right in the land.

¹⁶In those days Judah will be saved

and Jerusalem will live in safety.

This is the name by which it¹⁶ will be called:
The LORD Our Righteousness.'

¹⁷For this is what the LORD says: 'David will never fail to have a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, ¹⁸nor will the priests, who are Levites, ever fail to have a man to stand before me continually to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings and to present sacrifices.'

¹⁹The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah. ²⁰"This is what the LORD says: 'If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night no longer come at their appointed time, ²¹then my covenant with David my servant—and my covenant with the Levites who are priests ministering before me—can be broken and David will no longer have a descendant to reign on his throne. ²²I will make the descendants of David my servant and the Levites who minister before me as countless as the stars of the sky and as measureless as the sand on the seashore.'

²³The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ²⁴"Have you not noticed that these people are saying, 'The LORD has rejected the two kingdoms' he chose'? So they despise my people and no longer regard them as a nation. ²⁵This is what the LORD says: 'If I have not established my covenant with day and night and the fixed laws of heaven and earth, ²⁶then I will reject the descendants of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his sons to rule over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes and have compassion on them.'

Warning to Zedekiah

34 While Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army and all the kingdoms and peoples in the empire he ruled were fighting against Jerusalem and all its surrounding towns, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ²"This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Go to Zedekiah king of Judah and tell him, 'This is what the LORD says: I am about to hand this city over to the king of Babylon, and he will burn it down. ³You will not escape from his grasp but will surely be captured and handed over to him. You will see the king of Babylon with your own eyes, and he will speak with you face to face. And you will go to Babylon.

⁴"Yet hear the promise of the LORD, O Zedekiah king of Judah. This is what the LORD says concerning you: You will not die by the sword; ⁵you will die peacefully. As people made a funeral fire in honor of your fathers, the former kings who preceded you, so they will make a fire in your honor and lament, 'Alas, O master!' I myself make this promise, declares the LORD.'

⁶Then Jeremiah the prophet told all this to Zedekiah king of Judah, in Jerusalem, ⁷while the army of the king of Babylon was fighting against Jerusalem and the other cities of Judah that were still holding out—Lachish and Azekah. These were the only fortified cities left in Judah.

^{44,26} Or will bring them back from captivity
²⁴ Or families

⁴⁵ Or Chaldeans

⁴⁷ Or will restore the fortunes of Judah and Israel

⁴¹⁶ Or he

Freedom for Slaves

⁸The word came to Jeremiah from the LORD after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people in Jerusalem to proclaim freedom for the slaves. ⁹Everyone was to free his Hebrew slaves, both male and female, no one was to hold a fellow Jew in bondage. ¹⁰So all the officials and people who entered into this covenant agreed that they would free their male and female slaves and no longer hold them in bondage. They agreed, and set them free. ¹¹But afterward they changed their minds and took back the slaves they had freed and enslaved them again.

¹²Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah. ¹³"This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I made a covenant with your forefathers when I brought them out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. I said, ¹⁴'Every seventh year each of you must free any fellow Hebrew who has sold himself to you. After he has served you six years, you must let him go free.'^a Your fathers, however, did not listen to me or pay attention to me. ¹⁵Recently you repented and did what is right in my sight: Each of you proclaimed freedom to his countrymen. You even made a covenant before me in the house that bears my Name. ¹⁶But now you have turned around and profaned my name; each of you has taken back the male and female slaves you had set free to go where they wished. You have forced them to become your slaves again.

¹⁷"Therefore, this is what the LORD says: You have not obeyed me; you have not proclaimed freedom for your fellow countrymen. So I now proclaim 'freedom' for you, declares the LORD—'freedom' to fall by the sword, plague and famine. I will make you abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth. ¹⁸The men who have violated my covenant and have not fulfilled the terms of the covenant they made before me, I will treat like the calf they cut in two and then walked between its pieces. ¹⁹The leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the court officials, the priests and all the people of the land who walked between the pieces of the calf, ²⁰I will hand over to their enemies who seek their lives. Their dead bodies will become food for the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth.

²¹"I will hand Zedekiah king of Judah and his officials over to their enemies who seek their lives, to the army of the king of Babylon, which has withdrawn from you. ²²I am going to give the order, declares the LORD, and I will bring them back to this city. They will fight against it, take it and burn it down. And I will lay waste the towns of Judah so no one can live there."

The Recabites

35 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD during the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah: ²"Go to the Recabite family and invite them to come to one of the side rooms of the house of the LORD and give them wine to drink."

³So I went to get Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah, the son of Habazziniah, and his brothers and all his

sons—the whole family of the Recabites ⁴I brought them into the house of the LORD, into the room of the sons of Hanan son of Igdalah the man of God. It was next to the room of the officials, which was over that of Maaseiah son of Balthai the doorkeeper. ⁵Then I set bowls full of wine and some cups before the men of the Recabite family and said to them, "Drink some wine."

⁶But they replied, "We do not drink wine, because our forefather Jonadab son of Recab gave us this command: 'Neither you nor your descendants must ever drink wine. ⁷Also you must never build houses, sow seed or plant vineyards; you must never have any of these things, but must always live in tents. Then you will live a long time in the land where you are nomads.' ⁸We have obeyed everything our forefather Jonadab son of Recab commanded us. Neither we nor our wives nor our sons and daughters have ever drunk wine ⁹or built houses to live in or had vineyards, fields or crops. ¹⁰We have lived in tents and have fully obeyed everything our forefather Jonadab commanded us. ¹¹But when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded this land, we said, 'Come, we must go to Jerusalem to escape the Babylonian^b and Aramean armies.' So we have remained in Jerusalem."

¹²Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying: ¹³"This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Go and tell the men of Judah and the people of Jerusalem, 'Will you not learn a lesson and obey my words?' declares the LORD. ¹⁴Jonadab son of Recab ordered his sons not to drink wine and this command has been kept. To this day they do not drink wine, because they obey their forefather's command. But I have spoken to you again and again, yet you have not obeyed me. ¹⁵Again and again I sent all my servants the prophets to you. They said, 'Each of you must turn from your wicked ways and reform your actions; do not follow other gods to serve them. Then you will live in the land I have given to you and your fathers.' But you have not paid attention or listened to me. ¹⁶The descendants of Jonadab son of Recab have carried out the command their forefather gave them, but these people have not obeyed me."

¹⁷"Therefore, this is what the LORD God Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'Listen! I am going to bring on Judah and on everyone living in Jerusalem every disaster I pronounced against them. I spoke to them, but they did not listen; I called to them, but they did not answer.'"

¹⁸Then Jeremiah said to the family of the Recabites, "This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'You have obeyed the command of your forefather Jonadab and have followed all his instructions and have done everything he ordered.' ¹⁹Therefore, this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'Jonadab son of Recab will never fail to have a man to serve me.'"

Jehoiakim Burns Jeremiah's Scroll

36 In the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ²"Take a scroll and write on it all

^a14 Deut 15:12^b11 Or Chaldean

the words I have spoken to you concerning Israel, Judah and all the other nations from the time I began speaking to you in the reign of Josiah till now. Perhaps when the people of Judah hear about every disaster I plan to inflict on them, each of them will turn from his wicked way, then I will spare them wickedness and their sin."

Jeremiah called Baruch son of Neriah, and Baruch dictated all the words the Lord had spoken to him. Baruch wrote them on the scroll. Then Jeremiah told Baruch, "I am restricted, I cannot go to the Lord's temple. So you go to the house of the Lord on a day of fasting and read to the people from the scroll the words of the Lord that you wrote as I dictated. Read them to all the people of Judah who come in from their towns. Perhaps they will bring their petition before the Lord, and each will turn from his wicked ways, for the anger and wrath pronounced against this people by the Lord are great."

Baruch son of Neriah did everything Jeremiah the prophet told him to do, at the Lord's temple he read the words of the Lord from the scroll. In the ninth month of the fifth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, a time of fasting before the

Lord was proclaimed for all the people in Jerusalem and those who had come from the towns of Judah. From the room of Elnathan son of Shaphan the secretary, which was in the upper courtyard at the entrance of the New Gate of the temple, Baruch read to all the people at the Lord's temple the words of Jeremiah from the scroll.

When Micaiah son of Elnathan, the son of Shaphan, heard all the words of the Lord from the scroll, he went down to the secretary's room in the royal palace, where all the officials were sitting. Elnathan the secretary, Delaiah son of Shemaiah, Elnathan son of Achub, Gemariah son of Shaphan, Zedekiah son of Hananiah, and all the other officials. After Micaiah told them everything he had heard Baruch read to the people from the scroll, all the officials sent Jehudi son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi, to say to Baruch, "Bring the scroll from which you have read to the people and come." So Baruch son of Neriah went to them with the scroll in his hand. They said to him, "Sit down, please, and read it to us."

So Baruch read it to them. When they heard all these words, they looked at each other in fear and said to Baruch, "We must report all these words to

INSIGHT

Living Parables

Jeremiah's bizarre protests

You have not paid attention or listened to me." 35:15

Occasionally the newspaper brings us word of someone's bizarre protest. Anti-war demonstrators pour pigs' blood on a sidewalk. A young evangelist carries a heavy wooden cross from coast to coast. Monks set themselves on fire. Marchers paint their faces black. Such protests leave many people feeling uneasy. We can't imagine a serious political figure, or a respectable pastor, acting that way.

But Jeremiah's life was full of such protests, at the express command of God. He made an ox yoke and wore it everywhere until the false prophet Hananiah took it off and broke it in the temple one day. (Jeremiah prophesied Hananiah's death, and within two months he was gone.) Jeremiah's point? He wanted to emphasize the yoke of captivity the king of Babylon would put on Judah's shoulders. The story is in chapters 27-28.

On another occasion (chapter 35) Jeremiah invited a group of well-known people who abstained from drinking alcoholic beverages into a room in the temple and offered them wine. They refused, and that made another sermon. If they could remember their vows not to drink, then why couldn't the people of Judah and Jerusalem remember the words of the living God?

Nothing Was Too Undignified

Jeremiah bought a beautiful linen sash and buried it in a hole until it was ruined (chapter 13). He invited the rulers of Jerusalem on a trip outside the city, and in the midst of a sermon about God's anger smashed a pot to smithereens (chapter 19). And in his most famous "enacted parable," Jeremiah bought a farm while the Babylonian army was knocking at Jerusalem's door (chapter 32). He might as well have been a Jew buying property at Auschwitz during World War II, for all the hope he had of using it. But his action practically demonstrated hope. Someday his family would farm there again.

Why such unusual activity? It says less about Jeremiah than it does about the God who gave the orders. God would not let go of his people until he had done all in his power to turn them around. Nothing was too undignified. So long as he had the slightest hope of breaking through to them, he would keep shouting.

Life Questions. How does God get through to you? Does he use dramatic means like Jeremiah's or quieter methods?

the king." ¹⁷Then they asked Baruch, "Tell us, how did you come to write all this? Did Jeremiah dictate it?"

¹⁸Yes, Baruch replied, "he dictated all these words to me" and I wrote them in ink on the scroll.

¹⁹Then the officials said to Baruch, "You and Jeremiah, go and hide. Don't let anyone know where you are."

²⁰After they put the scroll in the room of Elishama the secretary, they went to the king in the courtyard and reported everything to him. ²¹The king sent Jehudi to get the scroll, and Jehudi brought it from the room of Elishama the secretary and read it to the king and all the officials standing beside him. ²²It was the ninth month and the king was sitting in the winter apartment, with a fire burning in the firepot in front of him. ²³Whenever Jehudi had read three or four columns of the scroll, the king cut them off with a scribe's knife and threw them into the firepot, until the entire scroll was burned in the fire. ²⁴The king and all his attendants who heard all these words showed no fear, nor did they tear their clothes. ²⁵Even though Elnathan, Delaiah and Gemariah urged the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen to them. ²⁶Instead, the king commanded Jerahmeel, a son of the king, Seraiah son of Azriel and Shelemiah son of Abdeel to arrest Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet. But the Lord had hidden them.

²⁷After the king burned the scroll containing the words that Baruch had written at Jeremiah's dictation, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah. ²⁸"Take another scroll and write on it all the words that were on the first scroll, which Jehoiakim king of Judah burned up. ²⁹Also tell Jehoiakim king of Judah, 'This is what the Lord says: You burned that scroll and said, "Why did you write on it that the king of Babylon would certainly come and destroy this land and cut off both men and animals from it?"' ³⁰Therefore, this is what the Lord says about Jehoiakim king of Judah: He will have no one to sit on the throne of David; his body will be thrown out and exposed to the heat by day and the frost by night. ³¹I will punish him and his children and his attendants for their wickedness; I will bring on them and those living in Jerusalem and the people of Judah every disaster I pronounced against them, because they have not listened."

³²So Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to the scribe Baruch son of Neriah, and as Jeremiah dictated, Baruch wrote on it all the words of the scroll that Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire. And many similar words were added to them.

Jeremiah in Prison

37 Zedekiah son of Josiah was made king of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; he reigned in place of Jehoiachin^a son of Jehoiakim. ²Neither he nor his attendants nor the people of the land paid any attention to the words the Lord had spoken through Jeremiah the prophet.

³King Zedekiah, however, sent Jehucal son of

Shelemiah with the priest /aphaniah son of Azzan to Jeremiah the prophet with this message: "Please pray to the Lord our God for us."

⁴Now Jeremiah was free to come and go among the people, for he had not yet been put in prison. Pharaoh's army had marched out of Egypt, and when the Babylonians^b who were besieging Jerusalem heard the report about them, they withdrew from Jerusalem.

⁵Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet. ⁷"This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Tell the king of Judah who sends you to inquire of me, 'Pharaoh's army, which has marched out to support you, will go back to its own land, to Egypt. ⁸Then the Babylonians will return and attack this city; they will capture it and burn it down.'

⁹"This is what the Lord says: Do not deceive yourselves, thinking, 'The Babylonians will surely leave us.' They will not! ¹⁰Even if you were to defeat the entire Babylonian army that is attacking you and only wounded men were left in their tents, they would come out and burn this city down."

¹¹After the Babylonian army had withdrawn from Jerusalem because of Pharaoh's army, Jeremiah started to leave the city to go to the territory of Benjamin to get his share of the property among the people there. ¹²But when he reached the Benjamin Gate, the captain of the guard, whose name was Irijah son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah, arrested him and said, "You are deserting to the Babylonians!"

¹⁴"That's not true!" Jeremiah said. "I am not deserting to the Babylonians." But Irijah would not listen to him; instead, he arrested Jeremiah and brought him to the officials. ¹⁵They were angry with Jeremiah and had him beaten and imprisoned in the house of Jonathan the secretary, which they had made into a prison.

¹⁶Jeremiah was put into a vaulted cell in a dungeon, where he remained a long time. ¹⁷Then King Zedekiah sent for him and had him brought to the palace, where he asked him privately, "Is there any word from the Lord?"

"Yes," Jeremiah replied, "you will be handed over to the king of Babylon."

¹⁸Then Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, "What crime have I committed against you or your offi-

37:8 The Siege Lifted

Israel was a small nation, hemmed in by bigger powers such as Egypt and Babylon. Israelite kings often attempted to keep their independence by playing off the big powers against each other. King Zedekiah tried to get Egypt to intervene against Babylon, and during this brief period it seemed he had succeeded. Because the Egyptian army marched out, Nebuchadnezzar lifted his siege of Jerusalem. Jeremiah, who had warned that this foreign policy must ultimately fail, was arrested for treason.

^a Hebrew Coniah, a variant of Jehoiachin.

^b Or Chaldeans, also in verses 8, 9, 13 and 14.

^c Or Chaldeans, also in verse 11.

that you have put me in prison. You will not attack you or the king, please, on before you. Do not Jonathan the seer

Jeremiah was taken to the guard and the street of the bakers each day. The city was gone. So Jeremiah remained in the courtyard of the guard.

Jeremiah Thrown Into a Cistern

38 Shephaniah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Ashub, Jehuciah son of Shelemiah, and Johanan son of Malkiah heard what Jeremiah was saying. ¹He said, ²"This is what the LORD says in this city will die by sword and plague, but whoever goes out will live. He will escape to the king of Babylon, who will capture him."

Jeremiah said to the king, "This man is discouraging the people left in this city, as well as all the officers of the army. He is saying to them, 'This city will be handed over to the king of Babylon, who will capture them.'"

King Zedekiah answered Jeremiah, "Do nothing to oppose you." So he took Jeremiah and put him into the cistern of Malkiah, the king's son, which was in the courtyard of the guard. They lowered Jeremiah into the cistern; it had no water in it, only mud. Jeremiah sank down into the mud.

Ebed-Melech, a Cushite, an official in the palace, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the cistern. While the king was sitting in the palace, ³Ebed-Melech went out of the palace, ⁴"My lord the king, these men have done this to the prophet. They have thrown him into a cistern, where he will starve to death when there is no water in the cistern."

The king commanded Ebed-Melech the Cushite, "Take thirty men from here with you and get Jeremiah the prophet out of the cistern before they die."

38:9 Close to Death

Jeremiah was arrested during the long, final siege of Jerusalem—a time when food became so short some Israelites resorted to cannibalism. Imprisoned at the bottom of an empty cistern, the prophet could easily have starved to death. Interestingly, only a foreigner cared enough to go to the king and convince him to let Jeremiah out. For this, Ebed-Melech received a special message from God (39:15-18).

Ebed-Melech took the men with him and went to a room under the treasury in the palace. He took some old rags and worn-out clothes from there and let them down with ropes to Jeremiah in the cistern. Ebed-Melech the Cushite said to Jeremiah, "Put these old rags and worn-out clothes under your arms to pad the ropes." Jeremiah did so. Then they pulled him up with the ropes and lifted him out of the cistern. And Jeremiah remained in the courtyard of the guard.

Zedekiah Questions Jeremiah Again

Then King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah the prophet and had him brought to the third entrance to the temple of the LORD. I am going to ask you something," the king said to Jeremiah. "Do not hide anything from me."

Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "If I give you an answer, will you not kill me? Even if I did give you counsel, you would not listen to me."

But King Zedekiah swore this oath secretly to Jeremiah: "As surely as the LORD lives, who has given us breath, I will neither kill you nor hand you over to those who are seeking your life."

Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "This is what the LORD God Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'If you surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, your life will be spared and this city will not be burned down; you and your family will live.'

But if you will not surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, this city will be handed over to the Babylonians and they will burn it down; you yourself will not escape from their hands.'

King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, "I am afraid of the Jews who have gone over to the Babylonians, for the Babylonians may hand me over to them and they will mistreat me."

"They will not hand you over," Jeremiah replied. "Obey the LORD by doing what I tell you. Then it will go well with you, and your life will be spared. But if you refuse to surrender, this is what the LORD has revealed to me: All the women left in the palace of the king of Judah will be brought out to the officials of the king of Babylon. Those women will say to you:

"They misled you and overcame you—those trusted friends of yours. Your feet are sunk in the mud; your friends have deserted you."

All your wives and children will be brought out to the Babylonians. You yourself will not escape from their hands but will be captured by the king of Babylon; and this city will be burned down."

Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, "Do not let anyone know about this conversation, or you may die. If the officials hear that I talked with you, and they come to you and say, 'Tell us what you said to the king and what the king said to you; do not hide it from us or we will kill you,' then tell them, 'I was pleading with the king not to send me back to Jonathan's house to die there.'"

All the officials did come to Jeremiah and ques-

Hebrew: *lucal*, a variant of *lenuhal*

Or a runnuch

² Or Chaldeans, also in verses 18, 19 and 23

³ Probably from the upper Nile region

⁴ Or and you will cause this city to

mon him and he told them everything the king had ordered him to say. So they said no more to him, for no one had heard his conversation with the king.

¹⁸And Jeremiah remained in the courtyard of the guard until the day Jerusalem was captured.

The Fall of Jerusalem

39 This is how Jerusalem was taken. In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his whole army and laid siege to it. ²And on the ninth day of the fourth month of Zedekiah's eleventh year, the city wall was broken through. ³Then all the officials of the king of Babylon came and took seats in the Middle Gate. Nergal-Sharezer of Samgar, Nebonarsekim a chief officer, Nergal-Sharezer a high official and all the other officials of the king of Babylon. ⁴When Zedekiah king of Judah and all the soldiers saw them, they fled; they left the city at night by way of the king's garden, through the gate between the two walls, and headed toward the Arabah.⁵

⁶But the Babylonian army pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. They captured him and took him to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he pronounced sentence on him. ⁷There at Riblah the king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes and also killed all the nobles of Judah. ⁸Then he put out Zedekiah's eyes and bound him with bronze shackles to take him to Babylon.

⁹The Babylonians¹³ set fire to the royal palace and the houses of the people and broke down the walls of Jerusalem. ¹⁰Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard carried into exile to Babylon the people who remained in the city, along with those who had gone over to him, and the rest of the people. ¹¹But Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard left behind in the land of Judah some of the poor people, who owned nothing; and at that time he gave them vineyards and fields.

¹²Now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had given these orders about Jeremiah through Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard: ¹³"Take him and look after him; don't harm him but do for him whatever he asks." ¹⁴So Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard, Nebushazban a chief officer, Nergal-Sharezer a high official and all the other officers of the king of Babylon ¹⁵sent and had Jeremiah taken out of the courtyard of the guard. They turned him over to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, to take him back to his home. So he remained among his own people.

¹⁶While Jeremiah had been confined in the courtyard of the guard, the word of the LORD came to him: ¹⁷"Go and tell Ebed-Melech the Cushite,

This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: I am about to fulfill my words against this city through disaster, not prosperity. At that time they will be fulfilled before your eyes. ¹⁸But I will rescue you on that day, declares the LORD; you will not be

handed over to those you fear. ¹⁹I will save you; you will not fall by the sword but will escape with your life, because you trust in me, declares the LORD."

Jeremiah Freed

40 The word came to Jeremiah from the LORD after Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard had released him at Ramah. He had found Jeremiah bound in chains among all the captives from Jerusalem and Judah who were being carried into exile to Babylon. ²When the commander of the guard found Jeremiah, he said to him: The LORD your God decreed this disaster for this place. ³And now the LORD has brought it about; he has done just as he said he would. All this happened because you people sinned against the LORD and did not obey him. ⁴But today I am freeing you from the chains on your wrists. Come with me to Babylon, if you like, and I will look after you; but if you do not want to, then don't come. Look, the whole country lies before you; go wherever you please.⁵ ⁶However, before Jeremiah turned to go,⁷ Nebuzaradan added, "Go back to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon has appointed over the towns of Judah, and live with him among the people, or go anywhere else you please."

Then the commander gave him provisions and a present and let him go. ⁸So Jeremiah went to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah and stayed with him among the people who were left behind in the land.

Gedaliah Assassinated

¹When all the army officers and their men who were still in the open country heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam as governor over the land and had put him in charge of the men, women and children who were the poorest in the land and who had not been carried into exile to Babylon, ²they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah—Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah³ the son of the Maacathite, and their men. ³Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, took an oath to reassure them and their men. "Do not be afraid to serve the Babylonians,"⁴ he said. "Settle down in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it will go well with you. ⁵I myself will stay at Mizpah to represent you before the Babylonians who come to us, but you are to harvest the wine, summer fruit and oil, and put them in your storage jars, and live in the towns you have taken over."

⁶When all the Jews in Moab, Ammon, Edom and all the other countries heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant in Judah and had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, as governor over them, ⁷they all came back to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah, from all the countries where they had been scattered.

¹³ Or Nergal Sharezer, Samgar Netho, Sarabim overruled

¹⁸ Hebrew Jeramiah, a variant of Jezezeiah

¹⁹ Or the Jordan Valley

⁵ Or Children

⁶ Or Children

⁷ Or Jeremiah

¹⁹ Or Children, also in verse 10

And they harvested an abundance of wine and summer fruit.

11Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers in the open country came to Gedaliah at Mizpah. He said to him, "Don't you know that Baalis king of the Ammonites has sent Ishmael son of Nethaniah to take your life?" But Gedaliah son of Ahikam did not believe them.

12Then Johanan son of Kareah said privately to Gedaliah in Mizpah, "Let me go and kill Ishmael son of Nethaniah, and no one will know it. Why should he take your life and cause all the Jews who are gathered around you to be scattered and the remnant of Judah to perish?"

13But Gedaliah son of Ahikam said to Johanan son of Kareah, "Don't do such a thing! What you are saying about Ishmael is not true."

41 In the seventh month Ishmael son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, who was of royal blood and had been one of the king's officers, came with ten men to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah. While they were eating together there, 2Ishmael son of Nethaniah and the ten men who were with him got up and struck down Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, with the sword, killing the one whom the king of Babylon had appointed as governor over the land. 3Ishmael also killed all the Jews who were with Gedaliah at Mizpah, as well as the Babylonian^a soldiers who were there.

4The day after Gedaliah's assassination, before anyone knew about it, 5eighty men who had shaved off their beards, torn their clothes and cut themselves came from Shechem, Shiloh and Samaria bringing grain offerings and incense with them to the house of the LORD. 6Ishmael son of Nethaniah went out from Mizpah to meet them, weeping as he went. When he met them, he said, "Come to Gedaliah son of Ahikam." 7When they went into the city, Ishmael son of Nethaniah and the men who were with him slaughtered them and threw them into a cistern. 8But ten of them said to Ishmael, "Don't kill us! We have wheat and barley, oil and honey, hidden in a field." So he let them alone and did not kill them with the others. 9Now the cistern where he threw all the bodies of the men he had killed along with Gedaliah was the one King Asa had made as part of his defense against Baasha king of Israel. Ishmael son of Nethaniah killed it with the dead.

10Ishmael made captives of all the rest of the people who were in Mizpah—the king's daughters

along with all the others who were left there, over whom Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam. Ishmael son of Nethaniah took them captive and set out to cross over to the Ammonites.

11When Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him heard about all the crimes Ishmael son of Nethaniah had committed, 12they took all their men and went to fight Ishmael son of Nethaniah. They caught up with him near the great pool in Gibeon. 13When all the people Ishmael had with him saw Johanan son of Kareah and the army officers who were with him, they were glad. 14All the people Ishmael had taken captive at Mizpah turned and went over to Johanan son of Kareah. 15But Ishmael son of Nethaniah and eight of his men escaped from Johanan and fled to the Ammonites.

Flight to Egypt

16Then Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him led away all the survivors from Mizpah whom he had recovered from Ishmael son of Nethaniah after he had assassinated Gedaliah son of Ahikam—the soldiers, women, children and court officials he had brought from Gibeon. 17And they went on, stopping at Geruth Kimham near Bethlehem on their way to Egypt 18to escape the Babylonians.^b They were afraid of them because Ishmael son of Nethaniah had killed Gedaliah son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon had appointed as governor over the land.

42 Then all the army officers, including Johanan son of Kareah and Jezaniah^c son of Hoshai, and all the people from the least to the greatest approached 2Jeremiah the prophet and said to him, "Please hear our petition and pray to the LORD your God for this entire remnant. For as you now see, though we were once many, now only a few are left. 3Pray that the LORD your God will tell us where we should go and what we should do."

4"I have heard you," replied Jeremiah the prophet. "I will certainly pray to the LORD your God as you have requested; I will tell you everything the LORD says and will keep nothing back from you."

5Then they said to Jeremiah, "May the LORD be a true and faithful witness against us if we do not act in accordance with everything the LORD your God sends you to tell us. 6Whether it is favorable or unfavorable, we will obey the LORD our God, to whom we are sending you, so that it will go well with us, for we will obey the LORD our God."

Ten days later the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah. 8So he called together Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him and all the people from the least to the greatest. 9He said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your petition, says. 10If you stay in this land, I will build you up and not tear you down. I will plant you and not uproot you, for I am grieved over the disaster I have inflicted on you. 11Do not be afraid

40:12 False Hopes

The Babylonians, once they had captured rebel Jerusalem, left some of the common people behind under a governor. When other Jews scattered in the region heard news of this, they came home and gathered an excellent harvest—undoubtedly from fields the exiles had left behind. But even this small nucleus of Jews was to be scattered—this time due to local political in-fighting.

^a Or Chaldean

^b Or Children

^c Hebrew, Septuagint (see also 43:2) Azariah

of the king of Babylon whom you now fear. Do not be afraid of him, declares the LORD, for I am with you and will save you and deliver you from his hands. ¹¹ I will show you compassion so that he will have compassion on you and restore you to your land.

¹² However if you say, "We will not stay in this land, and we declare the LORD your God, ¹³ and if we do so, we will go and live in Egypt, where we will not see war or hear the trumpet or be taken as booty." ¹⁴ Then hear the word of the LORD, the God of Israel, says: "If you are determined to go to Egypt and you do go to settle there,

¹⁵ the sword you fear will overtake you there, and the famine you dread will follow you into Egypt, and there you will die. ¹⁶ Indeed, all who decide to go to Egypt to settle there will die by the sword, famine and plague, not one of them will survive or escape the disaster I will bring on them." ¹⁷ This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "As my anger and wrath have been poured out on those who lived in Jerusalem, so my wrath will be poured out on you when you go to Egypt. You will be an object of cursing and scorn, contempt and reproach; you will say, 'I have sinned.'"

¹⁸ ¹⁹ Then the LORD said to Jeremiah, the LORD has told you, do not go to Egypt. Be sure of this: I warn you, says the LORD, "You made a fatal mistake when you said, 'We will not obey the LORD our God and said, "Pray to the LORD for us, tell us everything he says and we will do it." I have told you today, but you did not obey the LORD your God in all he said to tell you. ²² So now, be sure of this: You will die by the sword, famine and plague in the place where you want to go to settle."

43 When Jeremiah finished telling the people the words of the LORD their God—everything the LORD had sent him to tell them—² Azaniah son of Hoshaiah and Johanan son of Kareah and all the arrogant men said to Jeremiah, "You are lying. The LORD our God has not sent you to say, 'You must not go to Egypt to settle there.' ³ But Baruch son of Neriah is inciting you against us to hand us over to the Babylonians,⁴ so they may kill us or carry us into exile to Babylon."

⁵ So Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers and all the people disobeyed the LORD's

command to stay in the land of Judah. ⁶ Instead, Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers led away all the remnant of Judah who had come back to live in the land of Judah from all the nations where they had been scattered. ⁷ They also led away all the men, women and children and the king's daughters whom Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard had left with Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch son of Neriah. ⁸ So they entered Egypt in disobedience to the LORD and went as far as Tahpanhes.

⁹ In Tahpanhes the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah. ¹⁰ While the Jews are watching, take some large stones with you and bury them in clay in the brick pavement at the entrance to Pharaoh's palace in Tahpanhes. ¹¹ Then say to them, "This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: I will send for my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and I will set his throne over these stones I have buried here; he will spread his royal canopy above them. ¹² He will come and attack Egypt, bringing death to those destined for death, captivity to those destined for captivity, and the sword to those destined for the sword. ¹³ He will set fire to the temples of the gods of Egypt; he will burn their temples and take their gods captive. As a shepherd wraps his garment around him, so will he wrap Egypt around himself and depart from there unscathed. ¹⁴ There in the temple of the sun^d in Egypt he will demolish the sacred pillars and will burn down the temples of the gods of Egypt."

Disaster Because of Idolatry

44 This word came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews living in Lower Egypt—in Migdol, Tahpanhes and Memphis—and in Upper Egypt: ² "This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: You saw the great disaster I brought on Jerusalem and on all the towns of Judah. Today they lie deserted and in ruins ³ because of the evil they have done. They provoked me to anger by burning incense and by worshiping other gods that neither they nor you nor your fathers ever knew. ⁴ Again and again I sent my servants the prophets, who said, 'Do not do this detestable thing that I hate!' ⁵ But they did not listen or pay attention; they did not turn from their wickedness or stop burning incense to other gods. ⁶ Therefore, my fierce anger was poured out; it raged against the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem and made them the desolate ruins they are today.

⁷ "Now this is what the LORD God Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Why bring such great disaster on yourselves by cutting off from Judah the men and women, the children and infants, and so leave yourselves without a remnant? ⁸ Why provoke me to anger with what your hands have made, burning incense to other gods in Egypt, where you have come to live? You will destroy yourselves and make yourselves an object of cursing and reproach among all the nations on earth. ⁹ Have you forgotten the wickedness committed by your fathers and

43:3 Closed Minds

Jeremiah was kidnapped by the few Israelites remaining in Jerusalem. Fearful that the Babylonians would blame them for the governor's murder, they took Jeremiah with them as they headed for Egypt. They stopped near Bethlehem to ask Jeremiah if they were doing the right thing. When he told them God wanted them to go back, they called him a liar. Jeremiah was disbelieved from the beginning to the end of his ministry—even by those who had seen some of his predictions come true.

^a20 Or you erred in your hearts

^b3 Or Chaldeans

^c12 Or I

^d13 Or in Heliopolis

^e1 Hebrew Noph

^f1 Hebrew in

they are retreating,
their warriors are defeated.

They flee in haste
without looking back,
and there is terror on every side,"
declares the LORD.

6^a"The swift cannot flee
nor the strong escape.
In the north by the River Euphrates
they stumble and fall.

7^a"Who is this that rises like the Nile,
like rivers of surging waters?

8^aEgypt rises like the Nile,
like rivers of surging waters
She says, 'I will rise and cover the earth;
I will destroy cities and their people.'

9^aCharge, O horses!
Drive furiously, O charioteers!
March on, O warriors—
men of Cush^b and Put who carry shields,
men of Lydia who draw the bow.

10^aBut that day belongs to the Lord, the LORD
Almighty—
a day of vengeance, for vengeance on his
foes.

The sword will devour till it is satisfied,
till it has quenched its thirst with blood

^a9 That is, the upper Nile region

^b14 Hebrew *Naph*, also in verse 19

For the Lord, the LORD Almighty, will offer
sacrifice
in the land of the north by the River
Euphrates.

11^a"Go up to Gilead and get balm,
O Virgin Daughter of Egypt.
But you multiply remedies in vain;
there is no healing for you
12^aThe nations will hear of your shame;
your cries will fill the earth.
One warrior will stumble over another;
both will fall down together "

13^aThis is the message the LORD spoke to Jeremiah the prophet about the coming of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to attack Egypt:

14^a"Announce this in Egypt, and proclaim it in
Migdol;
proclaim it also in Memphis^b and
Tahpanhes:

'Take your positions and get ready,
for the sword devours those around you.'

15^aWhy will your warriors be laid low?
They cannot stand, for the LORD will push
them down.

16^aThey will stumble repeatedly;
they will fall over each other.

INSIGHT

World at War

While nations battle, God is in control

"The sword will devour till it is satisfied, till it has quenched its thirst with blood." 46:10

Pick up the newspaper. Scenes from around the world are displayed on the front page. In the Middle East, a bomb explodes and a building collapses. Bodies lie in the gutter. Women howl with anguish over their dead.

Then you are in Africa. Revolutionaries, rifles brandished over their heads, march through captured streets. In a European capital, rescuers rush to a burning restaurant and carry out on stretchers the moaning victims of a terrorist attack. Next, in Asia, starving children grimace at you, too far gone to beg for food. The world is whirling out of control. Your mind cannot take it in; one disaster muddles with another.

God Is in Control

In chapters 46 to 50, Jeremiah gives a similar portrait of the world. We flash by imagination from one country to the next. We smell the rotting bodies; we hear the exultant cries of conquerors. Jeremiah shows, in vivid color, a world as frightening as ours.

But there is a difference. The news leaves us with a dizzy feeling that chaos reigns. But Jeremiah's vision shows, paradoxically, that God is in control. Through these disasters God punishes those who have opposed his will. As Israel's neighbors are destroyed, exiled Jews are freed to return to their land. History is not just "one thing after another." God gives it a sense of direction.

Jeremiah delivered his longest and most biting message to Babylon, Judah's conqueror. Their sheer arrogance, their assumption that they could do whatever they liked, drew God's fury. To a lesser degree, other countries followed the same pattern. God did not judge them by his law, because they never knew it. He judged them for their pride. They ought to have shown humility before God.

Life Questions: Can you discern any pattern or purpose to the violence in the world today?

Get up, let us go back
 we will escape our native lands
 we will be sword of the oppressor
 we will exclaim
 The king of Egypt is only a loud
 voice
 who missed his opportunity

"As I live," declares the Lord,
 some is the Lord Almighty
 some who is like Laban among the
 mountains
 As I live, by the sea
 As your belongings for exile
 you who live in Egypt
 Memphis will be laid waste
 and be in ruins without inhabitant

"Egypt is a beautiful heifer,
 but a gadfly is coming
 against her from the north.
 The mercenaries in her ranks
 are like fattened calves.
 They too will turn and flee together,
 they will not stand their ground
 for the day of disaster is coming upon
 them.
 The time for them to be punished
 Egypt will hiss like a fleeing serpent
 as the enemy advances in force,
 they will come against her with axes,
 like men who cut down trees.
 They will chop down her forest,"
 declares the Lord,
 dense though it be.
 They are more numerous than locusts,
 they cannot be counted
 The Daughter of Egypt will be put to
 shame
 handed over to the people of the north."

"The Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'I
 am about to bring punishment on Amon god of
 Thebes or Pharaoh, on Egypt and her gods and
 her kings, and on those who rely on Pharaoh. 26 I
 will hand them over to those who seek their lives,
 Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and his offi-
 cers. Later, however, Egypt will be inhabited as in
 times past' declares the Lord.

"Do not fear, O Jacob my servant;
 do not be dismayed, O Israel.
 I will surely save you out of a distant place,
 your descendants from the land of their
 exile
 Jacob will again have peace and security,
 and no one will make him afraid.
 "Do not fear, O Jacob my servant,
 for I am with you," declares the Lord.
 Though I completely destroy all the nations
 among which I scatter you,
 I will not completely destroy you.
 I will discipline you but only with justice;
 I will not let you go entirely unpunished."

A Message About the Philistines

47 This is the word of the Lord that came to
 Jeremiah the prophet concerning the Philis-
 tines before Pharaoh attacked Gaza

2 This is what the Lord says

See how the waters are rising to the north
 they will become an overflowing torrent
 They will overflow the land and everything in
 it

the towns and those who live in them
 The people will cry out
 all who dwell in the land will wail
 At the sound of the hoofs of galloping steeds,
 at the noise of enemy chariots
 and the rumble of their wheels
 Fathers will not turn to help their children,
 their hands will hang limp

4 For the day has come
 to destroy all the Philistines
 and to cut off all survivors
 who could help Tyre and Sidon
 The Lord is about to destroy the Philistines,
 the remnant from the coasts of Caphtor.^b

5 Gaza will shave her head in mourning,
 Ashkelon will be silenced.
 O remnant on the plain,
 how long will you cut yourselves?

6 "Ah, sword of the Lord," you cry,
 'how long till you rest?
 Return to your scabbard;
 cease and be still.'

7 But how can it rest
 when the Lord has commanded it,
 when he has ordered it
 to attack Ashkelon and the coast?"

A Message About Moab

48 Concerning Moab:

This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of
 Israel, says:

"Woe to Nebo, for it will be ruined.
 Kinathaim will be disgraced and captured;
 the stronghold will be disgraced and
 shattered.

2 Moab will be praised no more;
 in Heshbon^d men will plot her downfall:
 'Come, let us put an end to that nation.'
 You too, O Madmen,^e will be silenced;
 the sword will pursue you.

3 Listen to the cries from Horonaim,
 cries of great havoc and destruction.

4 Moab will be broken;
 her little ones will cry out.^f

5 They go up the way to Luhith,
 weeping bitterly as they go;
 on the road down to Horonaim
 anguished cries over the destruction are
 heard.

6 Flee! Run for your lives;
 become like a bush^g in the desert.

^a25 Hebrew No

^b4 That is, Crete

^c1 Or / Misgab

^d2 The Hebrew for Heshbon sounds like the Hebrew for plot.

^e2 The name of the Moabite town Madmen sounds like the Hebrew for be silenced

^f4 Hebrew; Septuagint / proclaim it to Zoar

^g6 Or like Aror

Since you trust in your deeds and riches
you too will be taken captive
and Chemosh will go into exile
together with his priests and officials.
The destroyer will come against every town,
and not a town will escape.
The valley will be ruined
and the plateau destroyed
because the LORD has spoken.
Not salt on Moab
for she will be laid waste;
her towns will become desolate
with no one to live in them.

* A curse on him who is lax in doing the LORD's work!
A curse on him who keeps his sword from bloodshed!

Moab has been at rest from youth,
like wine left on its dregs,
not moved from one jar to another—
she has not gone into exile
so she tastes as she did
and her aroma is unchanged.
But times are coming
declares the LORD
when I will send men who pour from jars,
and they will pour her out,
they will empty her jars
and smash her jugs.
Then Moab will be ashamed of Chemosh,
as the house of Israel was ashamed
when they trusted in Bethel.

* How can you say, 'We are warriors,
men valiant in battle'?
Moab will be destroyed and her towns
invaded;
her finest young men will go down in the
slaughter,'
declares the King, whose name is the LORD
Almighty.
* The tail of Moab is at hand,
her calamity will come quickly.
Mourn for her, all who live around her,
all who know her fame,
say, 'How broken is the mighty scepter,
how broken the glorious staff!'

18 "Come down from your glory
and sit on the parched ground,
O inhabitants of the Daughter of Dibon,
for he who destroys Moab
will come up against you

and ruin your fortified cities.
19 Stand by the road and watch,
you who live in Arner.
Ask the man fleeing and the woman escaping,
ask them, 'What has happened?'
20 Moab is disgraced, for she is shattered.
Wail and cry out!
Announce by the Arnon
that Moab is destroyed.
21 Judgment has come to the plateau—
to Holon, Jahzah and Mephaath,
22 to Dibon, Nebo and Beth Diblathaim,
23 to Kiriathaim, Beth Gamul and Beth Meon,
24 to Kerioth and Bozrah—
to all the towns of Moab, far and near.
25 Moab's horn^b is cut off,
her arm is broken,"

declares the LORD.

26 "Make her drunk,
for she has defied the LORD.
Let Moab wallow in her vomit;
let her be an object of ridicule.
27 Was not Israel the object of your ridicule?
Was she caught among thieves,
that you shake your head in scorn
whenever you speak of her?
28 Abandon your towns and dwell among the
rocks,
you who live in Moab.
Be like a dove that makes its nest
at the mouth of a cave.

29 "We have heard of Moab's pride—
her overweening pride and conceit,
her pride and arrogance
and the haughtiness of her heart.
30 I know her insolence but it is futile,"
declares the LORD,
"and her boasts accomplish nothing.

31 Therefore I wail over Moab,
for all Moab I cry out,
I moan for the men of Kir Hareseth.
32 I weep for you, as Jazer weeps,
O vines of Sibmah.
Your branches spread as far as the sea;
they reached as far as the sea of Jazer.
The destroyer has fallen
on your ripened fruit and grapes.
33 Joy and gladness are gone
from the orchards and fields of Moab.
I have stopped the flow of wine from the
presses;
no one treads them with shouts of joy.
Although there are shouts,
they are not shouts of joy.

34 "The sound of their cry rises
from Heshbon to Elealeh and Jahaz,
from Zoar as far as Horonaim and Eglath
Shelishiyah,
for even the waters of Nimrim are dried up.
35 In Moab I will put an end
to those who make offerings on the high
places

48:7 An Exiled God

The gods of the Middle East tended to occupy a certain territory—thus each city had its own god. Chemosh, the chief god of Moab, was worshiped through child sacrifice (2 Kings 3:27). Here Jeremiah predicts that not only would the Moabites go into exile—their god would too. These gods were powerless before the God of Israel.

^a Or Give songs to Moab for she will fly away

^b 25 Horn here symbolizes strength

"A burnt offering to their gods,"
declares the LORD

"My heart laments for Moab like a flute,
laments like a flute for the men of Kir
Hareseth

For the wealth they acquired is gone
every head is shaved
and every beard cut off,
every hand is slashed
and every waist is covered with sackcloth.

Like the roots in Moab
and in the public squares
there is nothing but mourning
for I have broken Moab
like a jar that no one wants

declares the LORD

"How shattered she is! How they wail!
How Moab turns her back in shame!
Moab has become an object of ridicule,
an object of horror to all those around her."

This is what the LORD says

Look! An eagle is swooping down,
spreading its wings over Moab.
Kemoths will be captured
and the strongholds taken
that day the hearts of Moab's warriors
will be like the heart of a woman in labor.
Moab will be destroyed as a nation
because she defied the LORD
and put and snare await you,
O people of Moab

declares the LORD.

"Whoever flees from the terror
will fall into a pit
whoever climbs out of the pit
will be caught in a snare,
I will bring upon Moab
the year of her punishment,"

declares the LORD

In the shadow of Heshbon
the fugitives stand helpless
as they have been cut from Heshbon
as they have been cut from the midst of Sihon
burns the torchheads of Moab
the skulls of the noisy boasters
I will bring to you, O Moab!
The people of Chemosh are destroyed;
sons are taken into exile
and your daughters into captivity.

"Yet I will restore the fortunes of Moab
in days to come,"
declares the LORD.

Here ends the judgment on Moab

A Message About Ammon

49 Concerning the Ammonites:

This is what the LORD says:

Has Israel no sons?

Has she no heirs?

Why then has Molech^b taken possession of
Gad?

Why do his people live in its towns?
But the days are coming,"

declares the LORD.

"When I will sound the battle cry
against Rabbah of the Ammonites;
it will become a mound of ruins,
and its surrounding villages will be set on
fire

Then Israel will drive out
those who drove her out,"

says the LORD.

"Wail, O Heshbon, for Ai is destroyed!
Cry out, O inhabitants of Rabbah!
Put on sackcloth and mourn;
rush here and there inside the walls,
for Molech will go into exile,
together with his priests and officials.

"Why do you boast of your valleys,
boast of your valleys so fruitful?
O unfaithful daughter,
you trust in your riches and say,
'Who will attack me?'

"I will bring terror on you
from all those around you,"
declares the LORD, the LORD Almighty.

"Every one of you will be driven away,
and no one will gather the fugitives.

"Yet afterward, I will restore the fortunes of
the Ammonites,"
declares the LORD.

A Message About Edom

7Concerning Edom:

This is what the LORD Almighty says:

"Is there no longer wisdom in Teman?
Has counsel perished from the prudent?
Has their wisdom decayed?

8Turn and flee, hide in deep caves,
you who live in Dedan,
for I will bring disaster on Esau
at the time I punish him.

9If grape pickers came to you,
would they not leave a few grapes?

If thieves came during the night,
would they not steal only as much as they
wanted?

10But I will strip Esau bare;
I will uncover his hiding places,
so that he cannot conceal himself.

His children, relatives and neighbors will
perish,
and he will be no more.

11Leave your orphans; I will protect their lives.
Your widows too can trust in me."

12This is what the LORD says: "If those who do
not deserve to drink the cup must drink it, why
should you go unpunished? You will not go un-
punished, but must drink it. 13I swear by myself,"
declares the LORD, "that Bozrah will become a ruin
and an object of horror, of reproach and of cursing;
and all its towns will be in ruins forever."

14I have heard a message from the LORD:

^a41 Or The cities

^b42 Or their king. Hebrew malcam, also in verse 3

An envoy was sent to the nations to say,
"Assemble yourselves to attack it!
Rise up for battle!"

15 "Now I will make you small among the
nations,
despised among men.

16 The terror you inspire
and the pride of your heart have deceived
you,

you who live in the clefts of the rocks,
who occupy the heights of the hill.
Though you build your nest as high as the
eagle's,
from there I will bring you down,"

declares the LORD.

17 "Edom will become an object of horror;
all who pass by will be appalled and will
scoff
because of all its wounds.

18 As Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown,
along with their neighboring towns,"

says the LORD,

"so no one will live there;
no man will dwell in it.

19 "Like a lion coming up from Jordan's thickets
to a rich pastureland,
I will chase Edom from its land in an instant.
Who is the chosen one I will appoint for
this?

Who is like me and who can challenge me?

And what shepherd can stand against me?"

20 Therefore, hear what the LORD has planned
against Edom,

what he has purposed against those who live
in Teman:

The young of the flock will be dragged away;
he will completely destroy their pasture
because of them

21 At the sound of their fall the earth will tremble,
their cry will resound to the Red Sea.¹

22 Look! An eagle will soar and swoop down,
spreading its wings over Bozrah

In that day the hearts of Edom's warriors
will be like the heart of a woman in labor

A Message About Damascus

23 Concerning Damascus:

Hamath and Arpad are dismayed,
for they have heard bad news.

They are disheartened
troubled like² the restless sea

24 Damascus has become feeble
she has turned to flee
and panic has gripped her
anguish and pain have seized her,
pain like that of a woman in labor.

25 Why has the city of renown not been
abandoned.

the town in which I delight³

26 Surely, her young men will fall in the streets,
all her soldiers will be silenced in that day,"

declares the LORD Almighty.

27 "I will set fire to the walls of Damascus,

it will consume the fortresses of Ben-
Hadad."

A Message About Kedar and Hazor

28 Concerning Kedar and the kingdoms of Ha-
zor, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon at-
tacked:

This is what the LORD says:

"Arise, and attack Kedar
and destroy the people of the East.

29 Their tents and their flocks will be taken,
their shelters will be carried off
with all their goods and camels.

Men will shout to them,
"Terror on every side!"

30 Flee quickly away!

Stay in deep caves, you who live in Hazor,"
declares the LORD

"Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has plotted
against you.

he has devised a plan against you.

31 "Anse and attack a nation at ease,
which lives in confidence,"

declares the LORD,

"a nation that has neither gates nor bars;
its people live alone.

32 Their camels will become plunder,
and their large herds will be booty.

I will scatter to the winds those who are in
distant places

and will bring disaster on them from every
side."

declares the LORD.

33 Hazor will become a haunt of jackals,
a desolate place forever.

No one will live there;
no man will dwell in it."

A Message About Elam

34 This is the word of the LORD that came to
Jeremiah the prophet concerning Elam, early in
the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah.

35 This is what the LORD Almighty says:

"See, I will break the bow of Elam,
the mainstay of their might

36 I will bring against Elam the four winds
from the four quarters of the heavens;

I will scatter them to the four winds,
and there will not be a nation
where Elam's exiles do not go.

37 I will shatter Elam before their foes,
before those who seek their lives;

I will bring disaster upon them,
even my fierce anger."

declares the LORD.

38 "I will pursue them with the sword
until I have made an end of them.

39 I will set my throne in Elam
and destroy her king and officials."

declares the LORD

40 Yet I will restore the fortunes of Elam

¹21 Hebrew: I am Saph, that is, Sea of Reeds

²23 Hebrew: on or by

³22 Or who clip the hair by their sheath

in days to come

declares the LORD

A Message About Babylon

50 This is the word the LORD spoke through
Jeremiah the prophet concerning Babylon
and the land of the Babylonians^a

Announce and proclaim among the nations,
lift up a banner and proclaim it,
keep nothing back, but say
Babylon will be captured,
Babylon will be put to shame,
Marduk filled with terror
Her images will be put to shame
and her idols filled with terror.¹
A nation from the north will attack her
and lay waste her land
No one will live in it,
both men and animals will flee away

² In those days, at that time,²
declares the LORD,
the people of Israel and the people of Judah
together
will go in tears to seek the LORD their God
They will ask the way to Zion
and turn their faces toward it
They will come and bind themselves to the
LORD
in an everlasting covenant
that will not be forgotten

³ My people have been lost sheep,
their shepherds have led them astray
and caused them to roam on the mountains.
They wandered over mountain and hill
and forgot their own resting place.
Whoever found them devoured them;
their enemies said, 'We are not guilty,
for they sinned against the LORD, their true
pasture
the LORD, the hope of their fathers.'

⁴ Flee out of Babylon
leave the land of the Babylonians,
and be like the goats that lead the flock.
⁵ For I will stir up and bring against Babylon
an alliance of great nations from the land of
the north

They will take up their positions against her,
and from the north she will be captured.
Their arrows will be like skilled warriors
who do not return empty-handed.

¹⁰ So Babylonia^b will be plundered;
all who plunder her will have their fill,¹⁰
declares the LORD.

¹¹ Because you rejoice and are glad,
you who pillage my inheritance,
because you frolic like a heifer threshing grain
and neigh like stallions,
¹² your mother will be greatly ashamed;
she who gave you birth will be disgraced.
She will be the least of the nations—
a wilderness, a dry land, a desert.

¹³ Because of the LORD's anger she will not be
inhabited
but will be completely desolate
All who pass Babylon will be horrified and
scoff
because of all her wounds.

¹⁴ Take up your positions around Babylon,
all you who draw the bow.

Shoot at her! Spare no arrows,
for she has sinned against the LORD.

¹⁵ Shout against her on every side!
She surrenders, her towers fall,
her walls are torn down.
Since this is the vengeance of the LORD,
take vengeance on her,
do to her as she has done to others

¹⁶ Cut off from Babylon the sower,
and the reaper with his sickle at harvest.
Because of the sword of the oppressor
let everyone return to his own people,
let everyone flee to his own land.

¹⁷ Israel is a scattered flock
that lions have chased away.
The first to devour him
was the king of Assyria;
the last to crush his bones
was Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.¹⁷

¹⁸ Therefore this is what the LORD Almighty, the
God of Israel, says:

"I will punish the king of Babylon and his land
as I punished the king of Assyria.

¹⁹ But I will bring Israel back to his own pasture
and he will graze on Carmel and Bashan;
his appetite will be satisfied
on the hills of Ephraim and Gilead.

²⁰ In those days, at that time,²⁰
declares the LORD,
"search will be made for Israel's guilt,
but there will be none,
and for the sins of Judah,
but none will be found,
for I will forgive the remnant I spare.

²¹ Attack the land of Merathaim
and those who live in Pekod.
Pursue, kill and completely destroy^c them,"
declares the LORD.

"Do everything I have commanded you.

²² The noise of battle is in the land,
the noise of great destruction!

²³ How broken and shattered
is the hammer of the whole earth!
How desolate is Babylon

50:20 An End to Guilt

For 50 chapters the book of Jeremiah exposes
Israel's guilt. Because of it, punishment was bound
to come. Yet the forgiveness to come from God
will be as absolute as the guilt: a search for Israel's
sins will not uncover a single one.

^a Or Chaldeans, also in verses 8, 25, 35 and 45 ^b Or Chaldea

^c The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of
things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them; also in verse 26

among the nations!
 24 I set a trap for you, O Babylon,
 and you were caught before you knew it,
 you were found and captured
 because you opposed the LORD.
 25 The LORD has opened his arsenal
 and brought out the weapons of his wrath,
 for the Sovereign LORD Almighty has work to do

in the land of the Babylonians.
 26 Come against her from afar
 Break open her granaries;
 pile her up like heaps of grain.
 Completely destroy her
 and leave her no remnant.

27 Kill all her young bulls,
 let them go down to the slaughter!
 Woe to them! For their day has come,
 the time for them to be punished.

28 Listen to the fugitives and refugees from
 Babylon
 declaring in Zion
 how the LORD our God has taken vengeance,
 vengeance for his temple.

29 "Summon archers against Babylon,
 all those who draw the bow.
 Encamp all around her;
 let no one escape.
 Repay her for her deeds;
 do to her as she has done
 For she has defied the LORD,
 the Holy One of Israel.

30 Therefore, her young men will fall in the
 streets;
 all her soldiers will be silenced in that day,"
 declares the LORD.

31 "See, I am against you, O arrogant one,"
 declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty,
 "for your day has come,
 the time for you to be punished

32 The arrogant one will stumble and fall
 and no one will help her up,
 I will kindle a fire in her towns
 that will consume all who are around her "

33 This is what the LORD Almighty says:

"The people of Israel are oppressed,
 and the people of Judah as well
 All their captors hold them fast,
 refusing to let them go

34 Yet their Redeemer is strong;
 the LORD Almighty is his name.
 He will vigorously defend their cause
 so that he may bring rest to their land,
 but unrest to those who live in Babylon.

35 "A sword against the Babylonians!"
 declares the LORD—
 "against those who live in Babylon
 and against her officials and wise men!
 36 A sword against her false prophets!
 They will become fools
 A sword against her warriors!
 They will be filled with terror

37 A sword against her horses and chariots
 and all the foreigners in her ranks!
 They will become women.
 A sword against her treasures!
 They will be plundered.

38 A drought on her waters!
 They will dry up.
 For it is a land of idols,
 idols that will go mad with terror

39 "So desert creatures and hyenas will live there,
 and there the owl will dwell
 It will never again be inhabited
 or lived in from generation to generation

40 As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah
 along with their neighboring towns,"
 declares the LORD.

"So no one will live there,
 no man will dwell in it.

41 "Look! An army is coming from the north;
 a great nation and many kings
 are being stirred up from the ends of the
 earth.

42 They are armed with bows and spears;
 they are cruel and without mercy
 They sound like the roaring sea
 as they ride on their horses;
 they come like men in battle formation
 to attack you, O Daughter of Babylon.

43 The king of Babylon has heard reports about
 them,
 and his hands hang limp.

Anguish has gripped him,
 pain like that of a woman in labor.

44 Like a lion coming up from Jordan's thickets
 to a rich pastureland,
 I will chase Babylon from its land in an instant.
 Who is the chosen one I will appoint for
 this?

Who is like me and who can challenge me?
 And what shepherd can stand against me?"

45 Therefore, hear what the LORD has planned
 against Babylon,
 what he has purposed against the land of the
 Babylonians

The young of the flock will be dragged away;
 he will completely destroy their pasture
 because of them.

46 At the sound of Babylon's capture the earth
 will tremble;
 its cry will resound among the nations.

51 This is what the LORD says.

"See, I will stir up the spirit of a destroyer
 against Babylon and the people of Leb
 Kamai.^b

2 I will send foreigners to Babylon
 to winnow her and to devastate her land,
 they will oppose her on every side
 in the day of her disaster

3 Let not the archer string his bow,
 nor let him put on his armor
 Do not spare her young men,

^a 38 Or A sword against

^b 1 Leb kamai is a cryptogram for Chaldea, that is, Babylonia

completely destroy^a her army.
 They will fall down slain in Babylon,^b
 fatally wounded in her streets.
 For Israel and Judah have not been forsaken
 by their God, the LORD Almighty,
 though their land is full of guilt
 before the Holy One of Israel

Flee from Babylon!
 Run for your lives!
 Do not be destroyed because of her sins.
 It is time for the LORD's vengeance;
 he will pay her what she deserves.
 Babylon was a gold cup in the LORD's hand,
 she made the whole earth drunk
 The nations drank her wine,
 therefore they have now gone mad.
 Babylon will suddenly fall and be broken.
 Wail over her!
 Get balm for her pain,
 perhaps she can be healed

We would have healed Babylon,
 but she cannot be healed;
 we will leave her and each go to his own land,
 for her judgment reaches to the skies,
 as high as the clouds.^c

The LORD has vindicated us,
 come let us tell in Zion
 what the LORD our God has done.^d

Sharpen the arrows,
 take up the shields!
 The LORD has stirred up the kings of the
 Medes
 because his purpose is to destroy Babylon.
 The LORD will take vengeance,
 vengeance for his temple
 Lift up a banner against the walls of Babylon!
 Reinforce the guard,
 station the watchmen,
 prepare an ambush!
 The LORD will carry out his purpose,
 his decree against the people of Babylon.
 You who live by many waters
 and are rich in treasures,
 your end has come,
 the time for you to be cut off
 The LORD Almighty has sworn by himself:
 I will surely fill you with men, as with a
 swarm of locusts,
 and they will shout in triumph over you.

He made the earth by his power;
 he founded the world by his wisdom
 and stretched out the heavens by his
 understanding
 When he thunders, the waters in the heavens
 roar,
 he makes clouds rise from the ends of the
 earth
 He sends lightning with the rain
 and brings out the wind from his
 storehouses

17"Every man is senseless and without
 knowledge;
 every goldsmith is shamed by his idols.
 His images are a fraud;
 they have no breath in them.
 18They are worthless, the objects of mockery;
 when their judgment comes, they will
 perish.

19He who is the Portion of Jacob is not like these,
 for he is the Maker of all things,
 including the tribe of his inheritance—
 the LORD Almighty is his name.

20"You are my war club,
 my weapon for battle—
 with you I shatter nations,
 with you I destroy kingdoms,
 21with you I shatter horse and rider,
 with you I shatter chariot and driver,
 22with you I shatter man and woman,
 with you I shatter old man and youth,
 with you I shatter young man and maiden,
 23with you I shatter shepherd and flock,
 with you I shatter farmer and oxen,
 with you I shatter governors and officials.

24"Before your eyes I will repay Babylon and all
 who live in Babylonia^d for all the wrong they have
 done in Zion," declares the LORD.

25"I am against you, O destroying mountain,
 you who destroy the whole earth,"
 declares the LORD.

"I will stretch out my hand against you,
 roll you off the cliffs,
 and make you a burned-out mountain.

26No rock will be taken from you for a
 cornerstone,
 nor any stone for a foundation,
 for you will be desolate forever,"
 declares the LORD.

27"Lift up a banner in the land!
 Blow the trumpet among the nations!
 Prepare the nations for battle against her;
 summon against her these kingdoms:
 Ararat, Minni and Ashkenaz.

Appoint a commander against her;
 send up horses like a swarm of locusts.
 28Prepare the nations for battle against her—
 the kings of the Medes,
 their governors and all their officials,
 and all the countries they rule.

29The land trembles and writhes,
 for the LORD's purposes against Babylon
 stand—

to lay waste the land of Babylon
 so that no one will live there.

30Babylon's warriors have stopped fighting;
 they remain in their strongholds.
 Their strength is exhausted;
 they have become like women.
 Her dwellings are set on fire;
 the bars of her gates are broken.

31One courier follows another
 and messenger follows messenger

^aThe Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them.
^bOr / and the land of the Babylonians.
^cOr Chaldea, also in verse 35

^dOr

an announce to the king of Babylon
 but his entire city is captured
 his messengers seized
 his marches set on fire
 and the soldiers terrified

This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of
 Israel says:

The Daughter of Babylon is like a threshing
 floor

at the time it is trampled
 the time to harvest her will soon come

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has
 devoured us

he has thrown us into confusion
 he has made us an empty jar
 like a serpent he has swallowed us
 and filled his stomach with our delicacies,
 and then has spewed us out

"May the violence done to our flesh^a be upon
 Babylon

say the inhabitants of Zion

May our blood be on those who live in
 Babylonia
 says Jerusalem

Therefore, this is what the LORD says:

See, I will defend your cause
 and avenge you

will dry up her sea
 and make her springs dry
 Babylon will be a heap of ruins,
 a haunt of jackals

an object of horror and scorn,
 a place where no one lives

Her people all roar like young lions,
 they growl like lion cubs

But while they are aroused,
 I will set out a feast for them
 and make them drunk,

so that they shout with laughter—
 then sleep forever and not awake,"
 declares the LORD.

"I will bring them down
 like lambs to the slaughter,
 like rams and goats

"How Sheshach^b will be captured,
 the boast of the whole earth seized!
 What a horror Babylon will be
 among the nations!

The sea will rise over Babylon,
 its roaring waves will cover her.

Her towns will be desolate,
 a dry and desert land,
 a land where no one lives,
 through which no man travels.

I will punish Bel in Babylon
 and make him spew out what he has
 swallowed

The nations will no longer stream to him.
 And the wall of Babylon will fall.

"Come out of her, my people!
 Run for your lives!

Run from the fierce anger of the LORD
 do not lose heart or be afraid
 when rumors are heard in the land;
 one rumor comes this year, another the next,
 rumors of violence in the land
 and of ruler against ruler

For the time will surely come
 when I will punish the idols of Babylon,
 her whole land will be disgraced
 and her slain will all lie fallen within her

Then heaven and earth and all that is in them
 will shout for joy over Babylon,
 for out of the north
 destroyers will attack her,"

declares the LORD.

"Babylon must fall because of Israel's slain,
 just as the slain in all the earth
 have fallen because of Babylon.

You who have escaped the sword,
 leave and do not linger!
 Remember the LORD in a distant land,
 and think on Jerusalem."

"We are disgraced,
 for we have been insulted
 and shame covers our faces,
 because foreigners have entered
 the holy places of the LORD's house."

"But days are coming," declares the LORD,
 "when I will punish her idols,
 and throughout her land
 the wounded will groan.

Even if Babylon reaches the sky
 and fortifies her lofty stronghold,
 I will send destroyers against her,"
 declares the LORD.

"The sound of a cry comes from Babylon,
 the sound of great destruction
 from the land of the Babylonians."

The LORD will destroy Babylon;
 he will silence her noisy din.
 Waves of enemies will rage like great waters;
 the roar of their voices will resound.

A destroyer will come against Babylon;
 her warriors will be captured,
 and their bows will be broken.

For the LORD is a God of retribution;
 he will repay in full.

I will make her officials and wise men drunk,

51:53 Apocalyptic Arrogance

The arrogance of Babylon—her sense of absolute, untouchable power—became an emblem of the forces God will ultimately destroy. Jeremiah probably was thinking only of Babylon's towering ziggurat (or temple) and double wall defenses. But Babylon's "reaching for the sky" suggested an image of a nation trying to compete with God. Revelation 18—written long after Jeremiah's Babylon had been destroyed—described the fall of another proud and wealthy "Babylon" at the end of the age.

^a35 Or done to us and to our children

^b41 Sheshach is a cryptogram for Babylon

^c54 Or Chaldeans

her governors, officers and waggoners as well, they will sleep forever and not awake." declares the King, whose name is the Lord Almighty.

⁵⁸This is what the Lord Almighty says:

"Babylon's thick wall will be leveled and her high gates set on fire, the peoples exhaust themselves for nothing, the nations' labor is only fuel for the flames."

⁵⁹This is the message Jeremiah gave to the staff officer Seraiah son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, when he went to Babylon with Zedekiah king of Judah in the fourth year of his reign. ⁶⁰Jeremiah had written on a scroll about all the disasters that would come upon Babylon—all that had been recorded concerning Babylon. ⁶¹He said to Seraiah, "When you get to Babylon, see that you read all these words aloud. ⁶²Then say, 'O Lord, you have said you will destroy this place, so that neither man nor animal will live in it; it will be desolate forever.' ⁶³When you finish reading this scroll, tie a stone to it and throw it into the Euphrates. ⁶⁴Then say, 'So will Babylon sink to rise no more because of the disaster I will bring upon her. And her people will fall.'"

The words of Jeremiah end here.

The Fall of Jerusalem

52 Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah; she was from Libnah. ²He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, just as Jehoiakim had done. ³It was because of the Lord's anger that all this happened to Jerusalem and Judah, and in the end he thrust them from his presence.

Now Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

⁴So in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his whole army. They camped outside the city and built siege works all around it. ⁵The city was kept under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah.

⁶By the ninth day of the fourth month the famine in the city had become so severe that there was no food for the people to eat. ⁷Then the city wall was broken through, and the whole army fled. They left the city at night through the gate between the two walls near the king's garden, though the Babylonians^a were surrounding the city. They fled toward the Arabah,^b but the Babylonian army pursued King Zedekiah and overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his soldiers were separated from him and scattered, ⁹and he was captured.

He was taken to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he pronounced sentence on him. ¹⁰There at Riblah the king of Babylon

daughters the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, he also killed all the officials of Judah. ¹¹Then he put out Zedekiah's eyes, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon, where he put him in prison till the day of his death.

¹²On the tenth day of the fifth month, in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard, who served the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. ¹³He set fire to the temple of the Lord, the royal palace and all the houses of Jerusalem. Every important building he burned down. ¹⁴The whole Babylonian army under the commander of the imperial guard broke down all the walls around Jerusalem. ¹⁵Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard carried into exile some of the poorest people and those who remained in the city, along with the rest of the craftsmen^c and those who had gone over to the king of Babylon. ¹⁶But Nebuzaradan left behind the rest of the poorest people of the land to work the vineyards and fields.

¹⁷The Babylonians broke up the bronze pillars, the movable stands and the bronze Sea that were at the temple of the Lord and they carried all the bronze to Babylon. ¹⁸They also took away the pots, shovels, wick trimmers, sprinkling bowls, dishes and all the bronze articles used in the temple service. ¹⁹The commander of the imperial guard took away the basins, censers, sprinkling bowls, pots, lampstands, dishes and bowls used for drink offerings—all that were made of pure gold or silver.

²⁰The bronze from the two pillars, the Sea and the twelve bronze bulls under it, and the movable stands, which King Solomon had made for the temple of the Lord, was more than could be weighed. ²¹Each of the pillars was eighteen cubits high and twelve cubits in circumference, each was four fingers thick, and hollow. ²²The bronze capital on top of the one pillar was five cubits high and was decorated with a network and pomegranates of bronze all around. The other pillar, with its pomegranates, was similar. ²³There were ninety-six pomegranates on the sides; the total number of pomegranates above the surrounding network was a hundred.

²⁴The commander of the guard took as prisoners Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the priest next in rank and the three doorkeepers. ²⁵Of those still in the city, he took the officer in charge of the fighting men, and seven royal advisers. He also took the secretary who was chief officer in charge of conscripting the people of the land and sixty of his men who were found in the city. ²⁶Nebuzaradan the commander took them all and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. ²⁷There at Riblah, in the land of Hamath, the king had them executed.

So Judah went into captivity, away from her land. ²⁸This is the number of the people Nebuchadnezzar carried into exile

in the seventh year, 3,023 Jews;

²⁹in Nebuchadnezzar's eighteenth year,

^a7 Or Chaldeans, also in verse 17

^b7 Or the Jordan Valley

^c8 Or Chaldeans, also in verse 14

^d15 Or populace

^e21 That

is, about 27 feet (about 8.1 meters) high and 18 feet (about 5.4 meters) in circumference

^f22 That is, about 7 1/2 feet (about 2.3

meters)

³³ Rescue from Jerusalem

³⁴ In the twenty-third year

48 Jews taken into exile by Nebuzaradan
the commander of the imperial guard

There were 4,600 people in all

Jehoiachin Released

³⁵ In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the year Evil-Merodach

became king of Babylon, he released Jehoiachin king of Judah and freed him from prison on the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month. ³⁶ He spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat of honor higher than those of the other kings who were with him in Babylon. ³⁷ So Jehoiachin put aside his prison clothes and for the rest of his life ate regularly at the king's table. ³⁸ Day by day the king of Babylon gave Jehoiachin a regular allowance as long as he lived, till the day of his death.

³⁷ Also called Amel-Marduk

LAMENTATIONS

INTRODUCTION

A City in Ruins

"How I weep and how I cry and how I mourn
because of the destruction of the city of Jerusalem."

—Lamentations 1:1

Lamentations is a book of five poems that describe the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. The author, who is not named, is believed to be the prophet Jeremiah. The poems are written in a style of Hebrew poetry that is known as "parallelism." This means that the words in the poems are often repeated in a way that creates a rhythmic pattern.

The book is divided into five chapters, each containing a poem. The poems are written in a style of Hebrew poetry that is known as "parallelism." This means that the words in the poems are often repeated in a way that creates a rhythmic pattern. The poems are written in a style of Hebrew poetry that is known as "parallelism." This means that the words in the poems are often repeated in a way that creates a rhythmic pattern.

THE AUTHOR OF LAMENTATIONS

Lamentations is a book of five poems that describe the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. The author, who is not named, is believed to be the prophet Jeremiah. The poems are written in a style of Hebrew poetry that is known as "parallelism." This means that the words in the poems are often repeated in a way that creates a rhythmic pattern.

The book is divided into five chapters, each containing a poem. The poems are written in a style of Hebrew poetry that is known as "parallelism." This means that the words in the poems are often repeated in a way that creates a rhythmic pattern. The poems are written in a style of Hebrew poetry that is known as "parallelism." This means that the words in the poems are often repeated in a way that creates a rhythmic pattern.

The book is divided into five chapters, each containing a poem. The poems are written in a style of Hebrew poetry that is known as "parallelism." This means that the words in the poems are often repeated in a way that creates a rhythmic pattern. The poems are written in a style of Hebrew poetry that is known as "parallelism." This means that the words in the poems are often repeated in a way that creates a rhythmic pattern.

THE MAIN MESSAGE OF LAMENTATIONS

The main message of Lamentations is that the destruction of Jerusalem was a punishment for the people's sin. The author, who is believed to be the prophet Jeremiah, writes that the people of Jerusalem had turned away from God and had done evil. As a result, God had sent them into exile. The book is a call to repentance and a promise of hope. The author writes that if the people of Jerusalem will turn back to God, they will be able to rebuild their city and live again in their land.

How to Read Lamentations

Lamentations is a book of five poems that describe the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. The author, who is not named, is believed to be the prophet Jeremiah. The poems are written in a style of Hebrew poetry that is known as "parallelism." This means that the words in the poems are often repeated in a way that creates a rhythmic pattern. The poems are written in a style of Hebrew poetry that is known as "parallelism." This means that the words in the poems are often repeated in a way that creates a rhythmic pattern.

that you catch the deep emotion. Note that the author does not rush to express his hope in God, but fully grieves for the tragedy he was involved in.

Lamentations is not difficult to understand, though some of the poetical allusions may become clearer if you use a Bible dictionary or a commentary. For a summary of the destruction that inspired Lamentations, read 2 Kings 25.

PLANS FOR READING LAMENTATIONS

PLAN 1: An Overview of Lamentations in 1 Day

- Day 1 Read the Introduction to Lamentations and chapter 3, which contains both bitter grief and quiet hope.

PLAN 2: All of Lamentations in 5 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

1^a How deserted lies the city,
once so full of people!
How like a widow is she,
who once was great among the nations!
She who was queen among the provinces
has now become a slave.

2 Bitterly she weeps at night,
tears are upon her cheeks.
Among all her lovers
there is none to comfort her.
All her friends have betrayed her;
they have become her enemies.

3 After affliction and harsh labor,
Judah has gone into exile.
She dwells among the nations;
she finds no resting place.
All who pursue her have overtaken her
in the midst of her distress.

4 The roads to Zion mourn,
for no one comes to her appointed feasts.
All her gateways are desolate,
her priests groan,
her maidens grieve,
and she is in bitter anguish.

5 Her foes have become her masters;
her enemies are at ease.
The LORD has brought her grief
because of her many sins.
Her children have gone into exile,
captive before the foe.

6 All the splendor has departed
from the Daughter of Zion.
Her princes are like deer

that find no pasture;
in weakness they have fled
before the pursuer.

7 In the days of her affliction and wandering
Jerusalem remembers all the treasures
that were hers in days of old.
When her people fell into enemy hands,
there was no one to help her.
Her enemies looked at her
and laughed at her destruction.

8 Jerusalem has sinned greatly
and so has become unclean.
All who honored her despise her,
for they have seen her nakedness;
she herself groans
and turns away.

9 Her filthiness clung to her skirts;
she did not consider her future.
Her fall was astounding,
there was none to comfort her.
"Look, O LORD, on my affliction,
for the enemy has triumphed."

10 The enemy laid hands
on all her treasures;
she saw pagan nations
enter her sanctuary—
those you had forbidden
to enter your assembly.

11 All her people groan
as they search for bread;
they barter their treasures for food
to keep themselves alive.
"Look, O LORD, and consider,

^aThis chapter is an acrostic poem, the verses of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet

in despair.¹
 Then he cut all your silver chain;
 he accused and set
 against me my strong-
 holds, he raised on me
 his strongholds, he set
 against me his strongholds.
 Then he cut the
 chain from my neck
 and a net for my foot
 he turned me back
 and he set me in
 chains, he set me in

My sins have been bound into a yoke;
 by his hands they were woven together.
 They have come upon my neck,
 and the Lord has sapped my strength.
 He has handed me over
 to those I cannot withstand.

The Lord has rejected
 all the warriors in my midst;
 he has summoned an army against me
 to crush my young men.
 In his winepress the Lord has trampled
 the Virgin Daughter of Judah.

This is why I weep
 and my eyes overflow with tears;
 because there is no one to comfort me
 to restore my spirit.
 My children are destitute
 because the enemy has prevailed.

Zion stretches out her hands
 but there is no one to comfort her.
 The Lord has decreed for Jacob
 that his neighbors become his foes;
 Jerusalem has become
 an unclean thing among them.

The Lord is righteous,
 yet I rebelled against his command.
 Listen, all you peoples,
 look upon my suffering.
 My young men and maidens
 have gone into exile.

¹⁰ "I called to my allies
 but they betrayed me.
 My priests and my elders
 perished in the city
 while they searched for food
 to keep themselves alive.

1:10 The Temple Destroyed

In order to keep God's house holy, non-Jews were not allowed to enter. But when the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem, they not only entered the temple, they looted and burned it. This shook devout Jews deeply; more than anything else it showed that God had given them up.

¹¹ "How I have been distressed I and
 I am in torment within
 and in my heart I am disturbed,
 for I have been most rebellious.
 Outside, the sword befalls;
 inside, there is only death.

¹² "People have heard my groaning
 but there is no one to comfort me.
 All my enemies have heard of my distress,
 they rejoice at what you have done.
 May you bring the day you have announced
 so they may become like me.

¹³ "Let all their wickedness come before you,
 deal with them
 as you have dealt with me
 because of all my sins.
 My groans are many
 and my heart is faint."

2 How the Lord has covered the Daughter of Zion

with the cloud of his anger!¹
 He has hurled down the splendor of Israel
 from heaven to earth,
 he has not remembered his footstool
 in the day of his anger.

² Without pity the Lord has swallowed up
 all the dwellings of Jacob;
 in his wrath he has torn down
 the strongholds of the Daughter of Judah.
 He has brought her kingdom and its princes
 down to the ground in dishonor.

³ In fierce anger he has cut off
 every horn² of Israel.
 He has withdrawn his right hand
 at the approach of the enemy.
 He has burned in Jacob like a flaming fire
 that consumes everything around it.

⁴ Like an enemy he has strung his bow;
 his right hand is ready.
 Like a foe he has slain
 all who were pleasing to the eye;
 he has poured out his wrath like fire
 on the tent of the Daughter of Zion.

⁵ The Lord is like an enemy;
 he has swallowed up Israel.
 He has swallowed up all her palaces
 and destroyed her strongholds.
 He has multiplied mourning and lamentation
 for the Daughter of Judah.

⁶ He has laid waste his dwelling like a garden;
 he has destroyed his place of meeting.
 The LORD has made Zion forget
 her appointed feasts and her Sabbaths;
 in his fierce anger he has spurned
 both king and priest.

⁷ The Lord has rejected his altar
 and abandoned his sanctuary.
 He has handed over to the enemy

¹ Most Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint *He kept watch over my sins*
 an acrostic poem, the verses of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet
² Or / all the strength; or every king, horn here symbolizes strength

¹⁵ Or has set a time for me / when he will

¹⁶ This chapter is

¹⁷ Or How the Lord in his anger / has

the walls of her palaces;
they have raised a shout in the house of the
LORD
as on the day of an appointed feast.

⁸The LORD determined to tear down
the wall around the Daughter of Zion
He stretched out a measuring line
and did not withhold his hand from
destroying.

He made ramparts and walls lament;
together they wasted away.

⁹Her gates have sunk into the ground;
their bars he has broken and destroyed.
Her king and her princes are exiled among the
nations,
the law is no more,
and her prophets no longer find
visions from the LORD.

¹⁰The elders of the Daughter of Zion
sit on the ground in silence;
they have sprinkled dust on their heads
and put on sackcloth.
The young women of Jerusalem
have bowed their heads to the ground.

¹¹My eyes fail from weeping,
I am in torment within,
my heart is poured out on the ground
because my people are destroyed,
because children and infants faint
in the streets of the city.

¹²They say to their mothers,
"Where is bread and wine?"
as they faint like wounded men
in the streets of the city,
as their lives ebb away
in their mothers' arms

¹³What can I say for you?
With what can I compare you,
O Daughter of Jerusalem?
To what can I liken you,
that I may comfort you,
O Virgin Daughter of Zion?
Your wound is as deep as the sea.
Who can heal you?

¹⁴The visions of your prophets
were false and worthless,
they did not expose your sin
to ward off your captivity.
The oracles they gave you
were false and misleading.

2:12 Pity the Children

Everyone suffered in the destruction of Jerusalem, rich and poor, young and old, male and female. Lamentations grieves for them all, but especially for the children, who were dying of hunger. During the long siege, hunger grew so fierce that mothers ate their own children (2:20; 4:10). Compassion for children had disappeared (4:3-4).

¹⁵All who pass your way
clap their hands at you;
they scoff and shake their heads
at the Daughter of Jerusalem:
"Is this the city that was called
the perfection of beauty,
the joy of the whole earth?"

¹⁶All your enemies open their mouths
wide against you,
they scoff and gnash their teeth
and say, "We have swallowed her up.
This is the day we have waited for;
we have lived to see it."

¹⁷The LORD has done what he planned,
he has fulfilled his word,
which he decreed long ago.
He has overthrown you without pity,
he has let the enemy gloat over you,
he has exalted the horn of your foes

¹⁸The hearts of the people
cry out to the LORD.
O wall of the Daughter of Zion,
let your tears flow like a river
day and night;
give yourself no relief,
your eyes no rest.

¹⁹Arise, cry out in the night,
as the watches of the night begin,
pour out your heart like water
in the presence of the LORD.
Lift up your hands to him
for the lives of your children,
who faint from hunger
at the head of every street.

²⁰Look, O LORD, and consider:
Whom have you ever treated like this?
Should women eat their offspring,
the children they have cared for?
Should priest and prophet be killed
in the sanctuary of the LORD?

²¹"Young and old lie together
in the dust of the streets;
my young men and maidens
have fallen by the sword.
You have slain them in the day of your anger;
you have slaughtered them without pity

²²"As you summon to a feast day,
so you summoned against me terrors on
every side."
In the day of the LORD's anger
no one escaped or survived;
those I cared for and reared,
my enemy has destroyed "

³I am the man who has seen affliction
by the rod of his wrath
²He has driven me away and made me walk
in darkness rather than light,
indeed, he has turned his hand against me
again and again, all day long

* *strong* here symbolizes strength

* This chapter is an acrostic poem: the verses of each stanza begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and the verses within each stanza begin with the same letter

He has made my skin and my flesh grow old
 and has broken my bones
 He has besieged me and surrounded me
 with bitterness and hardship
 He has made me dwell in darkness
 like those long dead
 He has walled me in so I cannot escape;
 he has weighed me down with chains.
 Even when I call out or cry for help,
 he shuts out my prayer.
 He has barred my way with blocks of stone;
 he has made my paths crooked.
 Like a bear lying in wait,
 like a lion in hiding,
 he dragged me from the path and mangled me
 and left me without help.
 He drew his bow
 and made me the target for his arrows.
 He pierced my heart
 with arrows from his quiver.
 I became the laughingstock of all my people;
 they mock me in song all day long.
 He has filled me with bitter herbs
 and sated me with gall
 He has broken my teeth with gravel;
 he has trampled me in the dust.
 I have been deprived of peace;
 I have forgotten what prosperity is.
 So I say, "My splendor is gone
 and all that I had hoped from the LORD."
 I remember my affliction and my wandering,
 the bitterness and the gall.
 I well remember them,
 and my soul is downcast within me.
 Yet this I call to mind
 and therefore I have hope:
 Because of the LORD's great love we are not
 consumed,
 for his compassions never fail.
 They are new every morning;
 great is your faithfulness
 I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion;
 therefore I will wait for him."
 The LORD is good to those whose hope is in
 him,
 to the one who seeks him;
 it is good to wait quietly
 for the salvation of the LORD.
 It is good for a man to bear the yoke
 while he is young.
 Let him sit alone in silence,
 for the LORD has laid it on him.
 Let him bury his face in the dust—
 there may yet be hope.
 Let him offer his cheek to one who would
 strike him,
 and let him be filled with disgrace.
 For men are not cast off
 by the LORD forever.
 Though he brings grief, he will show
 compassion,
 so great is his unfailing love.

For he does not willingly bring affliction
 or grief to the children of men.
 To crush underfoot
 all prisoners in the land,
 to deny a man his rights
 before the Most High,
 to deprive a man of justice—
 would not the Lord see such things?
 Who can speak and have it happen
 if the Lord has not decreed it?
 Is it not from the mouth of the Most High
 that both calamities and good things come?
 Why should any living man complain
 when punished for his sins?
 Let us examine our ways and test them,
 and let us return to the LORD.
 Let us lift up our hearts and our hands
 to God in heaven, and say:
 "We have sinned and rebelled
 and you have not forgiven."
 "You have covered yourself with anger and
 pursued us;
 you have slain without pity.
 You have covered yourself with a cloud
 so that no prayer can get through.
 You have made us scum and refuse
 among the nations.
 "All our enemies have opened their mouths
 wide against us.
 We have suffered terror and pitfalls,
 ruin and destruction."
 Streams of tears flow from my eyes
 because my people are destroyed.
 My eyes will flow unceasingly,
 without relief,
 until the LORD looks down
 from heaven and sees.
 What I see brings grief to my soul
 because of all the women of my city.
 Those who were my enemies without cause
 hunted me like a bird.
 They tried to end my life in a pit
 and threw stones at me;
 the waters closed over my head,
 and I thought I was about to be cut off.
 I called on your name, O LORD,
 from the depths of the pit.
 You heard my plea: "Do not close your ears
 to my cry for relief."
 You came near when I called you,
 and you said, "Do not fear."
 O Lord, you took up my case;

3:33 Hope for the Grieving

Lamentations bares the full horror of suffering, yet offers hope based on the character of God. He has let some survive (3:22), and he is not a God to be angry with them forever. Their duty is to accept fully their grief, and quietly meditate on its meaning while waiting for the Lord.

you redeemed my life
 59 You have seen, O LORD, the wrong done to me
 Uphold my cause!
 60 You have seen the depth of their vengeance,
 all their plots against me
 61 O LORD, you have heard their insults,
 all their plots against me—
 62 what my enemies whisper and mutter
 against me all day long
 63 Look at them! Sitting or standing,
 they mock me in their songs
 64 Pay them back what they deserve, O LORD,
 for what their hands have done.
 65 Put a veil over their hearts,
 and may your curse be on them!
 66 Pursue them in anger and destroy them
 from under the heavens of the LORD.

4 ¹How the gold has lost its luster,
 the fine gold become dull!
 The sacred gems are scattered
 at the head of every street
²How the precious sons of Zion,
 once worth their weight in gold,
 are now considered as pots of clay,
 the work of a potter's hands!
³Even jackals offer their breasts
 to nurse their young,
 but my people have become heartless
 like ostriches in the desert.
⁴Because of thirst the infant's tongue
 sticks to the roof of its mouth,
 the children beg for bread,
 but no one gives it to them.
⁵Those who once ate delicacies
 are destitute in the streets.
 Those nurtured in purple
 now lie on ash heaps.
⁶The punishment of my people
 is greater than that of Sodom,
 which was overthrown in a moment
 without a hand turned to help her.
⁷Their princes were brighter than snow
 and whiter than milk,
 their bodies more ruddy than rubies,
 their appearance like sapphires.^b
⁸But now they are blacker than soot;
 they are not recognized in the streets.
 Their skin has shriveled on their bones;
 it has become as dry as a stick.
⁹Those killed by the sword are better off
 than those who die of famine;
 racked with hunger, they waste away
 for lack of food from the field.
¹⁰With their own hands compassionate women
 have cooked their own children,
 who became their food
 when my people were destroyed.

¹¹The LORD has given full vent to his wrath;
 he has poured out his fierce anger.
 He kindled a fire in Zion
 that consumed her foundations.
¹²The kings of the earth did not believe,
 nor did any of the world's people,
 that enemies and foes could enter
 the gates of Jerusalem.
¹³But it happened because of the sins of her
 prophets
 and the iniquities of her priests,
 who shed within her
 the blood of the righteous.
¹⁴Now they grope through the streets
 like men who are blind.
 They are so defiled with blood
 that no one dares to touch their garments.
¹⁵"Go away! You are unclean!" men cry to them.
 "Away! Away! Don't touch us!"
 When they flee and wander about,
 people among the nations say,
 "They can stay here no longer."
¹⁶The LORD himself has scattered them;
 he no longer watches over them.
 The priests are shown no honor,
 the elders no favor.
¹⁷Moreover, our eyes failed,
 looking in vain for help;
 from our towers we watched
 for a nation that could not save us.
¹⁸Men stalked us at every step,
 so we could not walk in our streets.
 Our end was near, our days were numbered,
 for our end had come.
¹⁹Our pursuers were swifter
 than eagles in the sky;
 they chased us over the mountains
 and lay in wait for us in the desert.
²⁰The LORD's anointed, our very life breath,
 was caught in their traps.
 We thought that under his shadow
 we would live among the nations.
²¹Rejoice and be glad, O Daughter of Edom,
 you who live in the land of Uz.
 But to you also the cup will be passed;
 you will be drunk and stripped naked.
²²O Daughter of Zion, your punishment will
 end;
 he will not prolong your exile.

4:17 False Hope

In the last decades before Jerusalem was conquered, Judah's kings frequently tried to play Egypt, another superpower, against Babylon. Right to the end they expected Egypt's armies to rescue them. But as Jeremiah had warned, Egypt proved to be an unreliable ally (Jeremiah 2:36-37; 37:5-8).

^aThis chapter is an acrostic poem: the verses of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet

^b7 Or lapis lazuli

But, O Daughter of Edom, he will punish your
sin
 and expose your wickedness.

5 Remember, O Lord, what has happened to
 us,
 look and see our disgrace.
 Our land has been turned over to aliens,
 our homes to foreigners
 We have become orphans and fatherless,
 our mothers like widows
 We must buy the water we drink,
 our wood can be had only at a price.
 Those who pursue us are at our heels,
 we are weary and find no rest
 We submitted to Egypt and Assyria
 to get enough bread
 Our fathers sinned and are no more,
 and we bear their punishment
 Slaves rule over us,
 and there is none to free us from their
 hands
 We get our bread at the risk of our lives
 because of the sword in the desert
 Our skin is hot as an oven,
 feverish from hunger

11 Women have been ravished in Zion
 and virgin in the towns of Judah
12 Princes have been hung up by their hands,
 elders are shown no respect
13 Young men toil at the millstones
 boys stagger under loads of wood
14 The elders are gone from the city gate,
 the young men have stopped their music
15 Joy is gone from our hearts,
 our dancing has turned to mourning
16 The crown has fallen from our head
 Woe to us, for we have sinned!
17 Because of this our hearts are faint,
 because of these things our eyes grow dim
18 For Mount Zion, which lies desolate,
 with jackals prowling over it
19 You, O Lord, reign forever,
 your throne endures from generation to
 generation
20 Why do you always forget us?
 Why do you forsake us so long?
21 Restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may
 return,
 renew our days as of old
22 Unless you have utterly rejected us
 and are angry with us beyond measure.

EZEKIEL

INTRODUCTION

Seeing the Unseen God

God showed himself to Ezekiel in unearthly radiance

Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. . . . When I saw it, I fell facedown. 1:28

Ezekiel was quite sure that he had seen and heard the God of the Bible. While few have been privileged to see him as Ezekiel did, this God had been speaking plainly for generations. His words were on record.

Before such splendor Ezekiel felt utterly weak and inadequate, just as Isaiah had during a similar vision (Isaiah 6). He fell on his face, repeatedly. But God raised Ezekiel to his feet and gave him a message to deliver.

A Stunning Portrait of God

In describing his call by God, Ezekiel groped for words. He portrayed a God of stunning grandeur, above and beyond our world. Yet this supernatural God was inescapably near and real. He demanded complete obedience. Surprisingly, he appeared to Ezekiel in Babylon—the last place an Israelite expected to see him. This God could not be locked in by national or geographical boxes. He ruled the earth.

Ezekiel repeated this classic message over 60 times: "Then they will know that I am the LORD." God said it when promising the destruction of Jerusalem in the first 24 chapters. He said it when predicting the downfall of Israel's neighbors in chapters 25 through 32. And, after Jerusalem had fallen, God said it when promising a great future in the last 16 chapters. God did not want to remain vague or far off. He wanted his people to know him. More, Ezekiel's God wanted to live with his people. He wanted to make his home in the center of their city.

A Strange Book

Ezekiel has a reputation for strangeness, partly because of the unearthly visions with which his book begins and ends, and partly because Ezekiel acted out God's messages through some bizarre behavior. (For instance, for months at a time he lay in public on his side, bound by ropes, facing a clay model of Jerusalem.) His message came in the most vivid form possible, meant to force people to pay attention.

Ezekiel lived in perhaps the most tragic period of his people's existence. They had been tempting fate for generations, ignoring God's messengers (prophets like Micah, Amos, Isaiah) who warned that if they didn't listen to God, they would be destroyed. Finally, Babylonian armies swept through Judah, deporting large groups of citizens.

Ezekiel had gone into exile in one of the first groups, as had Daniel. Ezekiel became God's messenger as a captive in Babylon. His voice blended in stereo with Jeremiah's, still in Jerusalem. Both prophets warned their people (who kept plotting ways to break free of Babylon) that the captives were going to be in Babylon for a long time. They predicted that Babylon's oppression would grow heavier: Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed. Since Judah had ignored God's repeated warnings, God would use another means to get their attention: suffering.

A New Jerusalem

Yet even while punishing them, God's aim remained the same: to make himself known. God had warned Ezekiel that the Israelites were unlikely to listen (3:7), even from captivity. They preferred idols to the living God. Yet Ezekiel's messages and dramas and visions continued to come, year after year. It's as though God were saying through him, "Some way, some day, I will get through to them. If the message doesn't reach their hearts one way, I'll try another."

Ezekiel ends with hope. The final chapters show a new Jerusalem rising from the ruins of the old. The renewed city would never die, for it would be built on an unshifting reality: "They will

A New Jerusalem

Yet even while punishing them, God's aim remained the same: to make himself known. God had warned Ezekiel that the Israelites were unlikely to listen (3:7), even from captivity. They preferred idols to the living God. Yet Ezekiel's messages and dramas and visions continued to come year after year. It's as though God were saying through him, "Some way, some day, I will get through to them. If the message doesn't reach their hearts one way, I'll try another."

Ezekiel ends with hope. The final chapters show a new Jerusalem rising from the ruins of the old. The renewed city would never die, for it would be built on an unshifting reality: "They will know I am the Lord." The burning vision of God that Ezekiel had seen would become accessible to all. God would make himself at home there forever. Ezekiel's last verse says it all: "And the name of the city from that time on will be: THE LORD IS THERE."

How to Read Ezekiel

The special difficulty in reading Ezekiel is the dizzying variety of forms he used to get his message across. The book is a mix of visions, messages, dramas, poems. But three remarkable visions of God bracket the package, beginning, middle, and end (1:1-3:15, 8:1-6 and 11:16-25; 40:1-4 and 43:1-9). And throughout, one line is repeated: "Then they will know that I am the Lord." All God's messages are meant to shock his people into restoring a living relationship with him.

As you read Ezekiel, note down when each prophecy was made and its dominant image—Jerusalem as a prostitute, as a spreading grapevine, as a shaved head, etc. (for insight into why Ezekiel sometimes acted out his message in bizarre fashion, read "Living Parables," page 675.) Don't skip ahead too fast as you read—take time to think about the message in each section. Remember that the book of Ezekiel compresses messages God gave over 22 years. Try to imagine the impact of each message on the people who first heard or saw it.

Most of what Ezekiel said in Babylonia concerned a dramatic military situation hundreds of miles away in Jerusalem. His message changed from doom to hope in chapter 33; the turning point came with news of Jerusalem's fall. You can get to know the historical situation by reading 2 Kings 23:36-25:12. "A Lineup of Rulers," page 338, can help you place Ezekiel in Israel's history.

A fascinating though difficult study is the design of the renewed temple, which Ezekiel described in chapters 40-43. A commentary on Ezekiel or a Bible dictionary (under "Ezekiel" or "temple") can help immensely in understanding these visions.

PLANS FOR READING EZEKIEL

PLAN 1: An Overview of Ezekiel in 4 Days

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to Ezekiel, and chapter 1, the majestic vision of a living God who appeared to Ezekiel.
- ☐ Day 2. Read chapters 2-3, which tell how God called Ezekiel to deliver a difficult message.
- ☐ Day 3. Read chapter 4, one of the most dramatic of the "enacted parables" Ezekiel performed.
- ☐ Day 4. Read chapter 37, a message of hope and resurrection for a defeated people.

PLAN 2: All of Ezekiel in 47 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2-3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17
☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28 ☐ 29 ☐ 30 ☐ 31
☐ 32 ☐ 33 ☐ 34 ☐ 35 ☐ 36 ☐ 37 ☐ 38 ☐ 39 ☐ 40 ☐ 41 ☐ 42 ☐ 43 ☐ 44 ☐ 45
☐ 46 ☐ 47 ☐ 48

The Living Creatures and the Glory of the LORD

1 In the^a thirtieth year, in the fourth month on the fifth day, while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.

²On the fifth of the month—it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin—³the word of the LORD came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi,^b by the Kebar River in the land of the Babylonians.^c There the hand of the LORD was upon him.

⁴I looked, and I saw a windstorm coming out of the north—an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. The center of the fire looked like glowing metal, ⁵and in the fire was what looked like four living creatures. In appearance their form was that of a man, ⁶but each of them had four faces and four wings. ⁷Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf and gleamed like burnished bronze. ⁸Under their wings on their four sides they had the hands of a man. All four of them had faces and wings, ⁹and their wings touched one another. Each one went straight ahead; they did not turn as they moved.

¹⁰Their faces looked like this: Each of the four had the face of a man, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle. ¹¹Such were their faces. Their wings were spread out upward; each had two wings, one touching the wing of another creature on either side, and two wings covering its body. ¹²Each one went straight ahead. Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went. ¹³The appearance of the living creatures was like burning coals of fire or like torches. Fire moved back and forth among the creatures; it was bright, and lightning flashed out of it. ¹⁴The creatures sped back and forth like flashes of lightning.

¹⁵As I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the ground beside each creature with its four faces. ¹⁶This was the appearance and structure of the wheels: They sparkled like chrysolite, and all four looked alike. Each appeared to be made like a wheel intersecting a wheel. ¹⁷As they moved, they would go in any one of the four directions the creatures faced; the wheels did not turn about^d as the creatures went. ¹⁸Their rims were high and awesome, and all four rims were full of eyes all around.

¹⁹When the living creatures moved, the wheels beside them moved; and when the living creatures rose from the ground, the wheels also rose. ²⁰Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. ²¹When the creatures moved, they also moved; when the creatures stood still, they also stood still; and when the creatures rose from the ground, the wheels rose along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.

²²Spread out above the heads of the living creatures was what looked like an expanse, sparkling

like ice, and awesome. ²³Under the expanse their wings were stretched out one toward the other, and each had two wings covering its body. ²⁴When the creatures moved, I heard the sound of their wings, like the roar of rushing waters, like the voice of the Almighty,^e like the tumult of an army. When they stood still, they lowered their wings.

²⁵Then there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads as they stood with lowered wings. ²⁶Above the expanse over their heads was what looked like a throne of sapphire,^f and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. ²⁷I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. ²⁸Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him.

This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking.

Ezekiel's Call

2 He said to me, "Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you." ²As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me.

³He said: "Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their fathers have been in revolt against me to this very day. ⁴The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says.' ⁵And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a rebellious house—they will know that a prophet has been among them. ⁶And you, son of man, do not be afraid of them or their words. Do not be afraid, though briars and thorns are all around you and you live among scorpions. Do not be afraid of what they say or terrified by them, though they are a rebellious house. ⁷You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to listen, for they are rebellious. ⁸But you, son of man, listen to what I say to you. Do not rebel like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you."

⁹Then I looked, and I saw a hand stretched out to me. In it was a scroll, ¹⁰which he unrolled before me. On both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe.

3 And he said to me, "Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the house of Israel." ²So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat.

³Then he said to me, "Son of man, eat this scroll I am giving you and fill your stomach with it." So I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth.

⁴He then said to me: "Son of man, go now to the house of Israel and speak my words to them. ⁵You are not being sent to a people of obscure speech and difficult language, but to the house of Israel—⁶not to many peoples of obscure speech and difficult language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely if I had sent you to them, they would

^a1 Or, my, lazuli

^b3 Or Ezekiel son of Buzi the priest

^c3 Or Chaldeans

^d17 Or aside

^e24 Hebrew Shaddai

^f26 Or lapis

stoned to you. But the house of Israel is not listening; for they are not willing to listen. But I will make you as a stone as they are. I will make you a hardest stone, harder than flint, so that they will not be afraid of them or terrified by them, rebellious house.

Then he said to me, "Son of man, listen carefully to all the words I speak to you. I am speaking to the countrymen in exile and speak to them. This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Whether they listen or fail to listen."

Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me a rumbling sound—May the glory of the LORD be praised in his dwelling place!—13the wings of the living creatures brushing against each other and the sound of the wheels rushing by in a loud rumbling sound. 14The Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in the anger of my spirit, with the word of the LORD upon me. 15I came to the place where they were living, I sat among them seven days—overwhelmed.

Warning to Israel

At the end of seven days the word of the LORD came to me. "Son of man, I have made you a prophet to the house of Israel; so hear the word of the LORD and give them warning from me. 18When I speak to a wicked man, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his ways in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. 19But if you do warn the wicked man and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his evil ways, he will die for his sin, but you will have saved yourself.

Again, when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and does evil, and I put a stumbling block before him, he will die. Since you did not warn him, he will die for his sin. The righteous things he did will not be remembered, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. 21But if you do warn the righteous man not to sin and he does not sin, he will surely live because he took warning, and you will have saved yourself."

The hand of the LORD was upon me there, and he said to me, "Get up and go out to the plain, and there I will speak to you." 23So I got up and went out to the plain. And the glory of the LORD was standing there, like the glory I had seen by the Kebar River, and I fell facedown.

Then the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet. He spoke to me and said: "Go, shut yourself inside your house. 25And you, son of man, they will tie with ropes; you will be bound so that you cannot go out among the people. 26I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth so that you will be silent and unable to rebuke them, though they are a rebellious house. 27But when I speak to you, I will open your mouth and you shall say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD

says.' Whoever will listen let him listen, and whoever will refuse let him refuse; for they are a rebellious house."

Siege of Jerusalem Symbolized

4 "Now, son of man, take a clay tablet, put it in front of you and draw the city of Jerusalem on it. 2Then lay siege to it: Erect siege works against it, build a ramp up to it, set up camps against it and put battering rams around it. 3Then take an iron pan, place it as an iron wall between you and the city and turn your face toward it. It will be under siege, and you shall besiege it. This will be a sign to the house of Israel.

4 "Then lie on your left side and put the sin of the house of Israel upon yourself.^a You are to bear their sin for the number of days you lie on your side. 5I have assigned you the same number of days as the years of their sin. So for 390 days you will bear the sin of the house of Israel.

6 "After you have finished this, lie down again, this time on your right side, and bear the sin of the house of Judah. I have assigned you 40 days, a day for each year. 7Turn your face toward the siege of Jerusalem and with bared arm prophesy against her. 8I will tie you up with ropes so that you cannot turn from one side to the other until you have finished the days of your siege.

9 "Take wheat and barley, beans and lentils, millet and spelt; put them in a storage jar and use them to make bread for yourself. You are to eat it during the 390 days you lie on your side. 10Weigh out twenty shekels^c of food to eat each day and eat it at set times. 11Also measure out a sixth of a hin^d of water and drink it at set times. 12Eat the food as you would a barley cake; bake it in the sight of the people, using human excrement for fuel." 13The LORD said, "In this way the people of Israel will eat defiled food among the nations where I will drive them."

14 Then I said, "Not so, Sovereign LORD! I have never defiled myself. From my youth until now I have never eaten anything found dead or torn by wild animals. No unclean meat has ever entered my mouth."

15 "Very well," he said, "I will let you bake your bread over cow manure instead of human excrement."

16 He then said to me: "Son of man, I will cut off the supply of food in Jerusalem. The people will eat rationed food in anxiety and drink rationed water in despair, 17for food and water will be scarce. They will be appalled at the sight of each other and will waste away because of their sin.

5 "Now, son of man, take a sharp sword and use it as a barber's razor to shave your head and your beard. Then take a set of scales and divide up the hair. 2When the days of your siege come to an end, burn a third of the hair with fire inside the city. Take a third and strike it with the sword all around the city. And scatter a third to the wind. For I will pursue them with drawn sword. 3But take a few strands of hair and tuck them away in the folds of your garment. 4Again, take a few of

^a Or *on*, also in verses 19 and 20

^b Or *your side*

^c That is, about 8 ounces (about 0.2 kilogram)

^d That is, about

2.3 quart (about 0.6 liter)

^e Or *away in*

these and throw them into the fire and burn them up. A fire will spread from there to the whole house of Israel.

⁵"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: This is Jerusalem, which I have set in the center of the nations, with countries all around her. ⁶Yet in her wickedness she has rebelled against my laws and decrees more than the nations and countries around her. She has rejected my laws and has not followed my decrees.

Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: You have been more unruly than the nations around you and have not followed my decrees or kept my laws. You have not even conformed to the standards of the nations around you.

⁸"Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself am against you, Jerusalem, and I will inflict punishment on you in the sight of the nations. ⁹"Because of all your detestable idols, I will do to you what I have never done before and will never do again. ¹⁰Therefore in your midst fathers will eat their children, and children will eat their fathers. I will inflict punishment on you and will scatter all your survivors to the winds. ¹¹Therefore as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, because you have defiled my sanctuary with all your vile images and detestable practices, I myself will withdraw my favor; I will not look on you with pity or spare you. ¹²A third of your people will die of the plague or perish by famine inside you; a third will fall by the sword outside your walls, and a third I will scatter to the winds and pursue with drawn sword.

Then my anger will cease and my wrath against them will subside, and I will be avenged. And when I have spent my wrath upon them, they will know that I the LORD have spoken in my zeal.

I will make you a ruin and a reproach among the nations around you, in the sight of all who pass by. You will be a reproach and a taunt, a warning and an object of horror to the nations around you when I inflict punishment on you in anger and in wrath and with stinging rebuke. I the LORD have spoken. ¹⁶When I shoot at you with my deadly and destructive arrows of famine, I will shoot to destroy you. I will bring more and more famine upon you and cut off your supply of food. ¹⁷I will send famine and wild beasts against you, and they will leave you childless. Plague and bloodshed will sweep through you, and I will bring the sword against you. I the LORD have spoken."

5:5 Navel of the Universe

Maps dating from the Middle Ages often showed Jerusalem and Israel as the center of a flat world. The practice probably stemmed from several verses like this one, referring to Jerusalem as "the center of the nations." Geography was not what God had in mind, however. Jerusalem was at the center of his love. A lover might say something similar: "You're the center of my universe."

A Prophecy Against the Mountains of Israel

6 The word of the LORD came to me. ²"Son of man, set your face against the mountains of Israel; prophesy against them ³and say: 'O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Sovereign LORD. This is what the Sovereign LORD says to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys. I am about to bring a sword against you, and I will destroy your high places. ⁴Your altars will be demolished and your incense altars will be smashed; and I will slay your people in front of your idols. ⁵I will lay the dead bodies of the Israelites in front of their idols, and I will scatter your bones around your altars. ⁶Wherever you live, the towns will be laid waste and the high places demolished, so that your altars will be laid waste and devastated, your idols smashed and ruined, your incense altars broken down, and what you have made wiped out. ⁷Your people will fall slain among you, and you will know that I am the LORD.

⁸"But I will spare some, for some of you will escape the sword when you are scattered among the lands and nations. ⁹Then in the nations where they have been carried captive, those who escape will remember me—how I have been grieved by their adulterous hearts, which have turned away from me, and by their eyes, which have lusted after their idols. They will loathe themselves for the evil they have done and for all their detestable practices. ¹⁰And they will know that I am the LORD; I did not threaten in vain to bring this calamity on them.

¹¹"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Strike your hands together and stamp your feet and cry out "Alas!" because of all the wicked and detestable practices of the house of Israel, for they will fall by the sword, famine and plague. ¹²He that is far away will die of the plague, and he that is near will fall by the sword, and he that survives and is spared will die of famine. So will I spend my wrath upon them. ¹³And they will know that I am the LORD, when their people lie slain among their idols around their altars, on every high hill and on all the mountaintops, under every spreading tree and every leafy oak—places where they offered fragrant incense to all their idols. ¹⁴And I will stretch out my hand against them and make the land a desolate waste from the desert to Diblah^b—wherever they live. Then they will know that I am the LORD."

6:9 A Dim View of Idolatry

Ezekiel said little about exploitation and injustice. He concentrated on Israel's rejection of a relationship with the living God; they preferred idols instead. The Hebrew word translated "idols" here is used 38 times in Ezekiel, nine in the rest of the Old Testament. Some scholars believe the word is derived from "pellet of dung," indicating Ezekiel's scorn.

^a7 Most Hebrew manuscripts; some Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac You have
manuscripts Riblah

^b14 Most Hebrew manuscripts, a few Hebrew

The End Has Come

7 The word of the LORD came to me: ²"Son of man, this is what the Sovereign LORD says to the land of Israel. The end! The end has come upon the four corners of the land. ³The end is now upon you and I will unleash my anger against you. I will judge you according to your conduct and repay you for all your detestable practices. ⁴I will not look on you with pity or spare you; I will surely repay you for your conduct and the detestable practices among you. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

⁵"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Disaster! An unheard-of^a disaster is coming. ⁶The end has come! The end has come! It has roused itself against you. It has come! ⁷Doom has come upon you—you who dwell in the land. The time has come, the day is near; there is panic,^b not joy, upon the mountains. ⁸I am about to pour out my wrath on you and spend my anger against you; I will judge you according to your conduct and repay you for all your detestable practices. ⁹I will not look on you with pity or spare you; I will repay you in accordance with your conduct and the detestable practices among you. Then you will know that it is I the LORD who strikes the blow.

¹⁰"The day is here! It has come! Doom has burst forth, the rod has budded, arrogance has blossomed! ¹¹Violence has grown into^b a rod to punish wickedness; none of the people will be left, none of that crowd—no wealth, nothing of value. ¹²The time has come, the day has arrived. Let not the buyer rejoice nor the seller grieve, for wrath is upon the whole crowd. ¹³The seller will not recover the land he has sold as long as both of them live, for the vision concerning the whole crowd will not be reversed. Because of their sins, not one of them will preserve his life. ¹⁴Though they blow the trumpet and get everything ready, no one will go into battle, for my wrath is upon the whole crowd.

¹⁵"Outside is the sword, inside are plague and famine; those in the country will die by the sword, and those in the city will be devoured by famine and plague. ¹⁶All who survive and escape will be in the mountains, moaning like doves of the valleys, each because of his sins. ¹⁷Every hand will go limp, and every knee will become as weak as water. ¹⁸They will put on sackcloth and be clothed with terror. Their faces will be covered with shame and their heads will be shaved. ¹⁹They will throw their silver into the streets, and their gold will be an unclean thing. Their silver and gold will not be able to save them in the day of the LORD's wrath. They will not satisfy their hunger or fill their stomachs with it, for it has made them stumble into sin. ²⁰They were proud of their beautiful jewelry and used it to make their detestable idols and vile images. Therefore I will turn these into an unclean thing for them. ²¹I will hand it all over as plunder to foreigners and as loot to the wicked of the earth, and they will defile it. ²²I will turn my face away from them, and they will desecrate my treasured place; robbers will enter it and desecrate it.

²³"Prepare chains, because the land is full of bloodshed and the city is full of violence. ²⁴I will bring the most wicked of the nations to take possession of their houses; I will put an end to the pride of the mighty, and their sanctuaries will be desecrated. ²⁵When terror comes, they will seek peace, but there will be none. ²⁶Calamity upon calamity will come, and rumor upon rumor. They will try to get a vision from the prophet; the teaching of the law by the priest will be lost, as will the counsel of the elders. ²⁷The king will mourn, the prince will be clothed with despair, and the hands of the people of the land will tremble. I will deal with them according to their conduct, and by their own standards I will judge them. Then they will know that I am the LORD."

Idolatry in the Temple

8 In the sixth year, in the sixth month on the fifth day, while I was sitting in my house and the elders of Judah were sitting before me, the hand of the Sovereign LORD came upon me there. ²I looked, and I saw a figure like that of a man.^c From what appeared to be his waist down he was like fire, and from there up his appearance was as bright as glowing metal. ³He stretched out what looked like a hand and took me by the hair of my head. The Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and in visions of God he took me to Jerusalem, to the entrance to the north gate of the inner court, where the idol that provokes to jealousy stood. ⁴And there before me was the glory of the God of Israel, as in the vision I had seen in the plain.

⁵Then he said to me, "Son of man, look toward the north." So I looked, and in the entrance north of the gate of the altar I saw this idol of jealousy.

⁶And he said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing—the utterly detestable things the house of Israel is doing here, things that will drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see things that are even more detestable."

⁷Then he brought me to the entrance to the court. I looked, and I saw a hole in the wall. ⁸He said to me, "Son of man, now dig into the wall." So I dug into the wall and saw a doorway there.

⁹And he said to me, "Go in and see the wicked and detestable things they are doing here." ¹⁰So I went in and looked, and I saw portrayed all over the walls all kinds of crawling things and detestable animals and all the idols of the house of Israel. ¹¹In front of them stood seventy elders of the house of Israel, and Jaazaniah son of Shaphan was standing among them. Each had a censer in his hand, and a fragrant cloud of incense was rising.

¹²He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the darkness, each at the shrine of his own idol? They say, 'The LORD does not see us; the LORD has forsaken the land.'"^d ¹³Again, he said, "You will see them doing things that are even more detestable."

¹⁴Then he brought me to the entrance to the north gate of the house of the LORD, and I saw

^a Most Hebrew manuscripts, some Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac Disaster after a fiery figure

^b Or The violent one has become

^c Or saw

...sitting there ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...

9

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

6.4 The Testing Mark

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

The ... Reports From the Temple

10

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

...the ...
...the ...
...the ...
...the ...

the wheels went with them. They stopped at the entrance to the east gate of the Lord's house, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them.

These were the living creatures I had seen beneath the God of Israel by the Kebar River, and I realized that they were cherubim. Each had four faces and four wings, and under their wings was what looked like the hands of a man. Their faces had the same appearance as those I had seen by the Kebar River. Each one went straight ahead.

Judgment on Israel's Leaders

11 The Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the gate of the house of the Lord that was east. There at the entrance to the gate were four men, and I saw among them Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah son of Benaiah, leaders of the people. The Lord said to me, "Son of man, these are the men who are plotting evil and giving wicked advice in this city. They say, 'Will it not be time to build houses?' This city is a cooking pot, and we are the meat." Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, son of man."

Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon me, and he told me to say: "This is what the Lord says: That is what you are saying, O house of Israel, but I know what is going through your mind. You have killed many people in this city and filled its streets with the dead.

"Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: The bodies you have thrown there are the meat and this city is the pot, but I will drive you out of it. You fear the sword, and the sword is what I will bring against you, declares the Sovereign Lord. I will drive you out of the city and hand you over to foreigners and inflict punishment on you. You will fall by the sword, and I will execute judgment on you at the borders of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord. This city will not be a pot for you, nor will you be the meat in it; I will execute judgment on you at the borders of Israel. And you will know that I am the Lord, for you have not followed my decrees or kept my laws but have conformed to the standards of the nations around you."

Now as I was prophesying, Pelatiah son of Benaiah died. Then I fell facedown and cried out in a loud voice, "Ah, Sovereign Lord! Will you completely destroy the remnant of Israel?"

The word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, your brothers—your brothers who are your blood relatives^a and the whole house of Israel—are those of whom the people of Jerusalem have said, 'They are far away from the Lord; this land was given to us as our possession.'

Promised Return of Israel

Therefore say: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Although I sent them far away among the nations and scattered them among the countries, yet for a little while I have been a sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone.'

Therefore say: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will gather you from the nations and

bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again.'

They will return to it and remove all its vile images and detestable idols. I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them, I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God. But as for those whose hearts are devoted to their vile images and detestable idols, I will bring down on their own heads what they have done, declares the Sovereign Lord."

Then the cherubim, with the wheels beside them, spread their wings, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them. The glory of the Lord went up from within the city and stopped above the mountain east of it. The Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the exiles in Babylonia^d in the vision given by the Spirit of God.

Then the vision I had seen went up from me, and I told the exiles everything the Lord had shown me.

The Exile Symbolized

12 The word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, you are living among a rebellious people. They have eyes to see but do not see and ears to hear but do not hear, for they are a rebellious people.

"Therefore, son of man, pack your belongings for exile and in the daytime, as they watch, set out and go from where you are to another place. Perhaps they will understand, though they are a rebellious house. During the daytime, while they watch, bring out your belongings packed for exile. Then in the evening, while they are watching, go out like those who go into exile. While they watch, dig through the wall and take your belongings out through it. Put them on your shoulder as they are watching and carry them out at dusk. Cover your face so that you cannot see the land, for I have made you a sign to the house of Israel."

So I did as I was commanded. During the day I brought out my things packed for exile. Then in the evening I dug through the wall with my hands. I took my belongings out at dusk, carrying them on my shoulders while they watched.

In the morning the word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, did not that rebellious house of Israel ask you, 'What are you doing?'

"Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: This oracle concerns the prince in Jerusalem and the whole house of Israel who are there.' Say to them, 'I am a sign to you.'

12:12 Out Through the Hole

Ezekiel's prediction of Jerusalem's leader leaving through a hole in the wall was literally fulfilled. You can read about it in 2 Kings 25:4-7 or Jeremiah 39:4-7.

^a Or This is not the time to build houses of Jerusalem have said. Slav

^b Or are in exile with you (see Septuagint and Syriac)

^c Or Chaldean

^d Or those to whom the people

"As I have done, so it will be done to them. They will go into exile as captives.

¹²"The prince among them will put his things on his shoulder at dusk and leave, and a hole will be dug in the wall for him to go through. He will cover his face so that he cannot see the land. ¹³I will spread my net for him, and he will be caught in my snare; I will bring him to Babylonia, the land of the Chaldeans, but he will not see it, and there he will die. ¹⁴I will scatter to the winds all those around him—his staff and all his troops—and I will pursue them with drawn sword.

¹⁵"They will know that I am the LORD, when I disperse them among the nations and scatter them through the countries. ¹⁶But I will spare a few of them from the sword, famine and plague, so that in the nations where they go they may acknowledge all their detestable practices. Then they will know that I am the LORD."

¹⁷The word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁸"Son of man, tremble as you eat your food, and shudder in fear as you drink your water. ¹⁹Say to the people of the land: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says about those living in Jerusalem and in the land of Israel: They will eat their food in anxiety and drink their water in despair, for their land will be stripped of everything in it because of the violence of all who live there. ²⁰The inhabited towns will be laid waste and the land will be desolate. Then you will know that I am the LORD.'"

²¹The word of the LORD came to me: ²²"Son of man, what is this proverb you have in the land of Israel: 'The days go by and every vision comes to nothing'? ²³Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am going to put an end to this proverb, and they will no longer quote it in Israel.' Say to them, 'The days are near when every vision will be fulfilled. ²⁴For there will be no more false visions or flattering divinations among the people of Israel. ²⁵But I the LORD will speak what I will, and it shall be fulfilled without delay. For in your days, you rebellious house, I will fulfill whatever I say, declares the Sovereign LORD.'"

²⁶The word of the LORD came to me: ²⁷"Son of man, the house of Israel is saying, 'The vision he sees is for many years from now, and he prophesies about the distant future.'

²⁸"Therefore say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: None of my words will be delayed any longer; whatever I say will be fulfilled, declares the Sovereign LORD.'"

False Prophets Condemned

13 The word of the LORD came to me: ²"Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who are now prophesying. Say to those who prophesy out of their own imagination: 'Hear the word of the LORD! ³This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to the foolish⁴ prophets who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing! ⁴Your prophets, O Israel, are like jackals among ruins. ⁵You have not gone up to the breaks in the wall to repair it for the house of Israel so that it will stand firm in the battle on the day of the LORD. ⁶Their

visions are false and their divinations a lie. They say, 'The LORD declares,' when the LORD has not sent them; yet they expect their words to be fulfilled. ⁷Have you not seen false visions and uttered lying divinations when you say, 'The LORD declares,' though I have not spoken?

⁸"Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because of your false words and lying visions, I am against you, declares the Sovereign LORD. ⁹My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and utter lying divinations. They will not belong to the council of my people or be listed in the records of the house of Israel, nor will they enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Sovereign LORD.

¹⁰"Because they lead my people astray, saying, 'Peace,' when there is no peace, and because, when a flimsy wall is built, they cover it with whitewash, ¹¹therefore tell those who cover it with whitewash that it is going to fall. Rain will come in torrents, and I will send hailstones hurtling down, and violent winds will burst forth. ¹²When the wall collapses, will people not ask you, 'Where is the whitewash you covered it with?'

¹³"Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: In my wrath I will unleash a violent wind, and in my anger hailstones and torrents of rain will fall with destructive fury. ¹⁴I will tear down the wall you have covered with whitewash and will level it to the ground so that its foundation will be laid bare. When it falls, you will be destroyed in it; and you will know that I am the LORD. ¹⁵So I will spend my wrath against the wall and against those who covered it with whitewash. I will say to you, 'The wall is gone and so are those who whitewashed it, ¹⁶those prophets of Israel who prophesied to Jerusalem and saw visions of peace for her when there was no peace, declares the Sovereign LORD.'"

¹⁷"Now, son of man, set your face against the daughters of your people who prophesy out of their own imagination. Prophesy against them ¹⁸and say, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to the women who sew magic charms on all their wrists and make veils of various lengths for

13:10 Whitewash

The Hebrew word translated "whitewash" means "to plaster over." The picture is of a poorly constructed wall that is carefully plastered so it looks well built. False prophets, wanting everyone to be happy, spoke cheerfully about the future. But they were only covering up the surface of fundamental problems. A storm, God warns, will strip off their coat of whitewash, and the flawed wall will collapse. In contrast, real prophets were unafraid of exposing the truth, however bad, for only then could problems be remedied.

Ezekiel 13:6-9 asserts that the false prophets thought up messages, then attributed them to God. Ezekiel, on the other hand, was repeatedly seized by a supernatural power. See, for examples, Ezekiel 8:1-5; 10:1-2; 24:1-2; and 33:21-22.

⁴³ Or wicked

⁴⁴ Or the city

their heads in order to ensnare people. Will you ensnare the lives of my people but preserve your own? ¹⁹You have profaned me among my people for a few handfuls of barley and scraps of bread. By lying to my people, who listen to lies, you have killed those who should not have died and have spared those who should not live.

²⁰"Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says. I am against your magic charms with which you ensnare people like birds and I will tear them from your arms, I will set free the people that you ensnare like birds. ²¹I will tear off your veils and save my people from your hands, and they will no longer fall prey to your power. Then you will know that I am the Lord. ²²Because you disheartened the righteous with your lies, when I had brought them no grief, and because you encouraged the

wicked not to turn from their evil ways and so save their lives, ²³therefore you will no longer see false visions or practice divination. I will save my people from your hands. And then you will know that I am the Lord."

Idolaters Condemned

14 Some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat down in front of me. ²Then the word of the Lord came to me: ³"Son of man, these men have set up idols in their hearts and put wicked stumbling blocks before their faces. Should I let them inquire of me at all? ⁴Therefore speak to them and tell them, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: When any Israelite sets up idols in his heart and puts a wicked stumbling block before his face and then goes to a prophet, I the Lord will answer

INSIGHT

The Sad Truth

Ezekiel became popular overnight—but the praise was empty

"My people come to you . . . and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice." 33:31

God warned Ezekiel it would be a terrible job. Nobody would listen to his message. He would find his own people "hardened and obstinate" (3:7). And how would God help him? "I will make you as unyielding and hardened as they are" (3:8).

As a result Ezekiel lived a lonely life. Those few who believed his prophecies expected nothing to happen in their lifetime (12:27). People thought of Ezekiel as someone just telling stories (20:49). They couldn't believe that God would let Jerusalem fall, as Ezekiel was stubbornly predicting.

Then, after years of prophecy, news came that Babylon had conquered Jerusalem (33:21). Suddenly Ezekiel was popular. People talked about him, flocked to hear his words, expressed devotion. But they listened to Ezekiel without changing their hearts. He was just someone "who sings love songs with a beautiful voice" (33:32). The people heard his words but did not put them into practice.

A Dreadful Message

In some ways Ezekiel could sympathize with the people's negative attitude. He did not like his message either; sometimes it horrified him. Twice, seeing God's judgment, he fell facedown in horror, crying out (9:8; 11:13). When God told him to cook food on human excrement, a symbol of defilement, he was too shocked to agree (4:14). When his wife, "the delight of his eyes," died, he was not even allowed to weep (24:15-24).

Ezekiel had to subordinate ordinary human emotions to the unpleasant task God had given him: to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and to tell it in a way that the Israelites could not ignore. "As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?" (33:11).

Phony Optimism

The false prophets, by contrast, tended to be optimists. They overlooked their nation's corruption and predicted that everything would work out. Chapter 13 records Ezekiel's words against them. "Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing!" he said (13:3). They would "whitewash" a bad situation with claims that God could never let Jerusalem be destroyed (13:10-16).

In the end Ezekiel got to deliver genuine good news: the promise of restored life. He saw a vision that still lives in song, scattered, bleached bones coming to life (37:1-14). In another vision, he saw God return to live in Jerusalem (43:1-5). Ezekiel didn't live to see these hopeful predictions fulfilled. But you can be sure he enjoyed making them far more than he enjoyed his predictions of disaster.

Life Questions. Is there any place today for "bad news" of the kind Ezekiel proclaimed?

him myself in keeping with his great idolatry. ⁵I will do this to recapture the hearts of the people of Israel, who have all deserted me for their idols.

⁶"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Repent! Turn from your idols and renounce all your detestable practices!'

⁷"When any Israelite or any alien living in Israel separates himself from me and sets up idols in his heart and puts a wicked stumbling block before his face and then goes to a prophet to inquire of me, I the LORD will answer him myself. ⁸I will set my face against that man and make him an example and a byword. I will cut him off from my people. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

⁹"And if the prophet is enticed to utter a prophecy, I the LORD have enticed that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand against him and destroy him from among my people Israel. ¹⁰They will bear their guilt—the prophet will be as guilty as the one who consults him. ¹¹Then the people of Israel will no longer stray from me, nor will they defile themselves anymore with all their sins. They will be my people, and I will be their God, declares the Sovereign LORD."

Judgment Inescapable

¹²The word of the LORD came to me: ¹³"Son of man, if a country sins against me by being unfaithful and I stretch out my hand against it to cut off its food supply and send famine upon it and kill its men and their animals, ¹⁴even if these three men—Noah, Daniel^a and Job—were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness, declares the Sovereign LORD

¹⁵"Or if I send wild beasts through that country and they leave it childless and it becomes desolate so that no one can pass through it because of the beasts, ¹⁶as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, even if these three men were in it, they could not save their own sons or daughters. They alone would be saved, but the land would be desolate

¹⁷"Or if I bring a sword against that country and say, 'Let the sword pass throughout the land,' and I kill its men and their animals, ¹⁸as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, even if these three men were in it, they could not save their own sons or daughters. They alone would be saved.

¹⁹"Or if I send a plague into that land and pour out my wrath upon it through bloodshed, killing its men and their animals, ²⁰as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, even if Noah, Daniel and Job were in it, they could save neither son nor daughter. They would save only themselves by their righteousness.

²¹"For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: How much worse will it be when I send against Jerusalem my four dreadful judgments—sword and famine and wild beasts and plague—to kill its men and their animals! ²²Yet there will be some survivors—sons and daughters who will be brought out of it. They will come to you, and when

you see their conduct and their actions, you will be consoled regarding the disaster I have brought upon Jerusalem—every disaster I have brought upon it. ²³You will be consoled when you see their conduct and their actions, for you will know that I have done nothing in it without cause, declares the Sovereign LORD."

Jerusalem, A Useless Vine

15 The word of the LORD came to me: ²"Son of man, how is the wood of a vine better than that of a branch on any of the trees in the forest? ³Is wood ever taken from it to make anything useful? Do they make pegs from it to hang things on? ⁴And after it is thrown on the fire as fuel and the fire burns both ends and chars the middle, is it then useful for anything? ⁵If it was not useful for anything when it was whole, how much less can it be made into something useful when the fire has burned it and it is charred?

⁶"Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: As I have given the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest as fuel for the fire, so will I treat the people living in Jerusalem. ⁷I will set my face against them. Although they have come out of the fire, the fire will yet consume them. And when I set my face against them, you will know that I am the LORD. ⁸I will make the land desolate because they have been unfaithful, declares the Sovereign LORD."

An Allegory of Unfaithful Jerusalem

16 The word of the LORD came to me: ²"Son of man, confront Jerusalem with her detestable practices ³and say, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says to Jerusalem: Your ancestry and birth were in the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. ⁴On the day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to make you clean, nor were you rubbed with salt or wrapped in cloths. ⁵No one looked on you with pity or had compassion enough to do any of these things for you. Rather, you were thrown out into the open field, for on the day you were born you were despised.

⁶"Then I passed by and saw you kicking about in your blood, and as you lay there in your blood I said to you, 'Live!' ⁷I made you grow like a plant of the field. You grew up and developed and became the most beautiful of jewels. ⁸Your breasts were formed and your hair grew, you who were naked and bare.

⁸"Later I passed by, and when I looked at you and saw that you were old enough for love, I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness. I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign LORD, and you became mine.

⁹"I bathed^d you with water and washed the blood from you and put ointments on you. ¹⁰I clothed you with an embroidered dress and put leather sandals on you. I dressed you in fine linen and covered you with costly garments. ¹¹I adorned

^a14 Or Daniel the Hebrew spelling may suggest a person other than the prophet Daniel also in verse 20
manuscripts Septuagint and Syriac most Hebrew manuscripts Live' And as you lay there in your blood I said to you 'Live'

^b6 A few Hebrew

became mature 49 Or I had bathed

^c7 Or

you with jewelry. I put bracelets on your arms and a necklace around your neck. I and I put a ring on your nose, earrings on your ears and a beautiful crown on your head. I and you were adorned with gold and silver, your clothes were of fine linen and costly fabric and embroidered cloth. Your food was fine flour, honey and olive oil. You became very beautiful and rose to be a queen. I and your beauty spread among the nations on account of your beauty, because the splendor I had given you made your beauty perfect, declares the Sovereign Lord.

18 "But you trusted in your beauty and used your fame to become a prostitute. You lavished your favors on anyone who passed by and your beauty became his. 19 You took some of your garments to make gaudy high places, where you carried on your prostitution. Such things should not happen, nor should they ever occur. 20 You also took the fine jewelry I gave you, the jewelry made of my gold and silver, and you made for yourself male idols and engaged in prostitution with them. 21 And you took your embroidered clothes to put on them, and you offered my oil and incense before them. 22 Also the food I provided for you—the fine flour, olive oil and honey I gave you to eat, you offered as fragrant incense before them. That is what happened, declares the Sovereign Lord.

23 And you took your sons and daughters whom you bore to me and sacrificed them as food to the idols. Was your prostitution not enough? 24 You slaughtered my children and sacrificed them to the idols. 25 In all your detestable practices and your prostitution you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, kicking about in your blood.

26 Woe! Woe to you, declares the Sovereign Lord. In addition to all your other wickedness, 27 you built a mound for yourself and made a lofty shrine in every public square. 28 At the head of every street you built your lofty shrines and degraded your beauty, offering your body with increasing promiscuity to anyone who passed by. 29 You engaged in prostitution with the Egyptians, your lustful neighbors, and provoked me to anger with your increasing promiscuity. 30 So I stretched out my hand against you and reduced your territory; I gave you over to the greed of your enemies, the daughters of the Philistines, who were shocked by your lewd conduct. 31 You engaged in prostitution with the Assyrians too, because you were insatiable; and even after that, you still were not satisfied. 32 Then you increased your promiscuity to include Babylonia, a land of merchants, but even with this you were not satisfied.

33 "How weak-willed you are, declares the Sovereign Lord, when you do all these things, acting like a brazen prostitute! 34 When you built your mounds at the head of every street and made your lofty shrines in every public square, you were unlike a prostitute, because you scorned payment.

35 "You adulterous wife! You prefer strangers to your own husband! 36 Every prostitute receives a

fee, but you give gifts to all your lovers, bringing them to come to you from everywhere for your illicit favors. 37 In your prostitution you are the opposite of others, no one runs after you for your favors. You are the very opposite, for you give payment and none is given to you.

38 "Therefore, you prostitute, hear the word of the Lord! 39 This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Because you poured out your wealth and exposed your nakedness in your promiscuity with your lovers, and because of all your detestable idols, and because you gave them your children's blood, 40 therefore I am going to gather all your lovers, with whom you found pleasure, those you loved as well as those you hated. I will gather them against you from all around and will strip you in front of them, and they will see all your nakedness. 41 I will sentence you to the punishment of women who commit adultery and who shed blood; I will bring upon you the blood vengeance of my wrath and jealous anger. 42 Then I will hand you over to your lovers, and they will tear down your mounds and destroy your lofty shrines. They will strip you of your clothes and take your fine jewelry and leave you naked and bare. 43 They will bring a mob against you, who will stone you and hack you to pieces with their swords. 44 They will burn down your houses and inflict punishment on you in the sight of many women. I will put a stop to your prostitution, and you will no longer pay your lovers. 45 Then my wrath against you will subside and my jealous anger will turn away from you; I will be calm and no longer angry.

46 "Because you did not remember the days of your youth but enraged me with all these things, I will surely bring down on your head what you have done, declares the Sovereign Lord. Did you not add lewdness to all your other detestable practices?

47 "Everyone who quotes proverbs will quote this proverb about you: "Like mother, like daughter." 48 You are a true daughter of your mother, who despised her husband and her children; and you are a true sister of your sisters, who despised their husbands and their children. Your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite. 49 Your older sister was Samaria, who lived to the north of you with her daughters; and your younger sister, who lived to the south of you with her daughters, was Sodom. 50 You not only walked in their ways and copied their detestable practices, but in all your ways you soon became more depraved than they. 51 As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, your sister Sodom and her daughters never did what you and your daughters have done.

52 "Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. 53 They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen. 54 Samaria did not commit half the sins you did. You have done more detestable things than they, and have made your sisters seem

¹⁸ Most Hebrew manuscripts, one Hebrew manuscript (see some Septuagint manuscripts) by Such a thing should not happen

²¹ Or and made them pass through the fire.

²⁹ Or Chaldea

⁴³ Or lust

righteous by all these things you have done. ⁵²Bear your disgrace, for you have furnished some justification for your sisters. Because your sins were more vile than theirs, they appear more righteous than you. So then, be ashamed and bear your disgrace, for you have made your sisters appear righteous.

⁵³"However, I will restore the fortunes of Sodom and her daughters and of Samaria and her daughters, and your fortunes along with them, ⁵⁴so that you may bear your disgrace and be ashamed of all you have done in giving them comfort. ⁵⁵And your sisters, Sodom with her daughters and Samaria with her daughters, will return to what they were before; and you and your daughters will return to what you were before. ⁵⁶You would not even mention your sister Sodom in the day of your pride, ⁵⁷before your wickedness was uncovered. Even so, you are now scorned by the daughters of Edom^a and all her neighbors and the daughters of the Philistines—all those around you who despise you. ⁵⁸You will bear the consequences of your lewdness and your detestable practices, declares the LORD.

⁵⁹"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will deal with you as you deserve, because you have despised my oath by breaking the covenant. ⁶⁰Yet I will remember the covenant I made with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you. ⁶¹Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed when you receive your sisters, both those who are older than you and those who are younger. I will give them to you as daughters, but not on the basis of my covenant with you. ⁶²So I will establish my covenant with you, and you will know that I am the LORD. ⁶³Then, when I make atonement for you for all you have done, you will remember and be ashamed and never again open your mouth because of your humiliation, declares the Sovereign LORD."

Two Eagles and a Vine

17 The word of the LORD came to me: ²"Son of man, set forth an allegory and tell the house of Israel a parable. ³Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: A great eagle with powerful wings, long feathers and full plumage of varied colors came to Lebanon. Taking hold of the top of a cedar, ⁴he broke off its topmost shoot and carried it away to a land of merchants, where he planted it in a city of traders.

⁵"He took some of the seed of your land and put it in fertile soil. He planted it like a willow by abundant water, ⁶and it sprouted and became a

low, spreading vine. Its branches turned toward him, but its roots remained under it. So it became a vine and produced branches and put out leafy boughs.

⁷"But there was another great eagle with powerful wings and full plumage. The vine now sent out its roots toward him from the plot where it was planted and stretched out its branches to him for water. ⁸It had been planted in good soil by abundant water so that it would produce branches, bear fruit and become a splendid vine.'

⁹"Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Will it thrive? Will it not be uprooted and stripped of its fruit so that it withers? All its new growth will wither. It will not take a strong arm or many people to pull it up by the roots. ¹⁰Even if it is transplanted, will it thrive? Will it not wither completely when the east wind strikes it—wither away in the plot where it grew?' "

¹¹Then the word of the LORD came to me: ¹²"Say to this rebellious house, 'Do you not know what these things mean?' Say to them: 'The king of Babylon went to Jerusalem and carried off her king and her nobles, bringing them back with him to Babylon. ¹³Then he took a member of the royal family and made a treaty with him, putting him under oath. He also carried away the leading men of the land, ¹⁴so that the kingdom would be brought low, unable to rise again, surviving only by keeping his treaty. ¹⁵But the king rebelled against him by sending his envoys to Egypt to get horses and a large army. Will he succeed? Will he who does such things escape? Will he break the treaty and yet escape?

¹⁶"As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, he shall die in Babylon, in the land of the king who put him on the throne, whose oath he despised and whose treaty he broke. ¹⁷Pharaoh with his mighty army and great horde will be of no help to him in war, when ramps are built and siege works erected to destroy many lives. ¹⁸He despised the oath by breaking the covenant. Because he had given his hand in pledge and yet did all these things, he shall not escape.

¹⁹"Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: As surely as I live, I will bring down on his head my oath that he despised and my covenant that he broke. ²⁰I will spread my net for him, and he will be caught in my snare. I will bring him to Babylon and execute judgment upon him there because he was unfaithful to me. ²¹All his fleeing troops will fall by the sword, and the survivors will be scattered to the winds. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken.

²²"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will take a shoot from the very top of a cedar and plant it; I will break off a tender sprig from its topmost shoots and plant it on a high and lofty mountain. ²³On the mountain heights of Israel I will plant it; it will produce branches and bear fruit and become a splendid cedar. Birds of every kind will nest in it; they will find shelter in the shade of its branches. ²⁴All the trees of the field will know that I the LORD bring down the tall tree and make

16:49 The Sin of Sodom

Why had God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah? The Genesis 19 account suggests sexual perversion and violence as the cause. Ezekiel here adds an interesting aspect: arrogant, uncaring wealth. The attempt at homosexual gang rape, chronicled in Genesis, was only part of a bigger problem.

^a Many Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac; most Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint and Vulgate Aram

the low tree grows tall. I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish.

I the Lord have spoken, and I will do it."

The Sinner Who *Will* Die

18 The word of the Lord came to me: "What do you people mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel:

'The fathers eat sour grapes,
and the children's teeth are set on edge?'

"A surely as I live," declares the Sovereign Lord, "you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel. For every living soul belongs to me, the father as well as the son—both alike belong to me. The soul who sins is the one who will die."

"Suppose there is a righteous man
who does what is just and right:

²He does not eat at the mountain shrines
or look to the idols of the house of Israel.

³He does not defile his neighbor's wife
or lie with a woman during her period.

⁴He does not oppress anyone,
but returns what he took in pledge for a loan.

⁵He does not commit robbery,
but gives his food to the hungry
and provides clothing for the naked.

⁶He does not lend at usury
or take excessive interest."

⁷He withholds his hand from doing wrong
and judges fairly between man and man.

⁸He follows my decrees
and faithfully keeps my laws.

That man is righteous,
he will surely live,"

declares the Sovereign Lord.

"Suppose he has a violent son, who sheds blood or does any of these other things?^b ¹¹(though the father has done none of them)

"He eats at the mountain shrines

He defiles his neighbor's wife

¹²He oppresses the poor and needy.

He commits robbery

He does not return what he took in pledge.

He looks to the idols

He does detestable things.

¹³He lends at usury and takes excessive interest.

Will such a man live? He will not! Because he has done all these detestable things, he will surely be put to death and his blood will be on his own head.

¹⁴But suppose this son has a son who does all the same his father committed, and though he sees them, he does not do such things:

¹⁵"He does not eat at the mountain shrines
or look to the idols of the house of Israel.

He does not defile his neighbor's wife

¹⁶He does not oppress anyone

or require a pledge for a loan.

He does not commit robbery

but gives his food to the hungry

and provides clothing for the naked.

¹⁷He withholds his hand from sin
and takes no usury or excessive interest.

He keeps my laws and follows my decrees.

He will not die for his father's sin; he will surely live. ¹⁸But his father will die for his own sin, because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother and did what was wrong among his people.

¹⁹"Yet you ask, 'Why does the son not share the guilt of his father?' Since the son has done what is just and right and has been careful to keep all my decrees, he will surely live. ²⁰The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous man will be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him.

²¹"But if a wicked man turns away from all the sins he has committed and keeps all my decrees and does what is just and right, he will surely live; he will not die. ²²None of the offenses he has committed will be remembered against him. Because of the righteous things he has done, he will live. ²³Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign Lord. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?

²⁴"But if a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin and does the same detestable things the wicked man does, will he live? None of the righteous things he has done will be remembered. Because of the unfaithfulness he is guilty of and because of the sins he has committed, he will die.

²⁵"Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' Hear, O house of Israel: Is my way unjust? Is it not your ways that are unjust? ²⁶If a righteous man

18:2 Jeremiah and Ezekiel

This proverb, which suggests the way children pay for their parents' sins, was also quoted by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:29). While Ezekiel did his work in Babylon, Jeremiah carried out a parallel work in Jerusalem. Neither mentions the other, but their messages carry many similarities. Note particularly Jeremiah 1:14-19; 3:6-13; 6:27-30; 8:10-11; 15:1-2; 16:5-8; 23:16-40; 24; 29; 31:27-34; 39—all passages that have close parallels in Ezekiel.

18:25 God Is Unfair?

"The way of the Lord is not just" probably was less a complaint than a fatalistic sigh, much like our saying, "Life isn't fair." People had lost any sense that they were suffering because of their sins. They were saying that it made no difference how they acted. Determined to break down this attitude, God guaranteed forgiveness for those who turn away from their sins.

^a8 Or take interest, similarly in verses 13 and 17 poor

^b10 Or things to a brother

^c17 Septuagint (see also verse 8), Hebrew from the

turns from his righteousness and commits sin, he will die for it; because of the sin he has committed he will die. ²⁷But if a wicked man turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he will save his life. ²⁸Because he considers all the offenses he has committed and turns away from them, he will surely live; he will not die. ²⁹Yet the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' Are my ways unjust, O house of Israel? Is it not your ways that are unjust?

³⁰"Therefore, O house of Israel, I will judge you, each one according to his ways, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. ³¹Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³²For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live!

A Lament for Israel's Princes

19 "Take up a lament concerning the princes of Israel ²and say:

"What a lioness was your mother
among the lions!

She lay down among the young lions
and reared her cubs.

³She brought up one of her cubs,
and he became a strong lion

He learned to tear the prey
and he devoured men.

⁴The nations heard about him,
and he was trapped in their pit.

They led him with hooks
to the land of Egypt

⁵"When she saw her hope unfulfilled,
her expectation gone,

she took another of her cubs
and made him a strong lion.

⁶He prowled among the lions,
for he was now a strong lion.

He learned to tear the prey
and he devoured men.

⁷He broke down^a their strongholds
and devastated their towns.

The land and all who were in it
were terrified by his roaring.

⁸Then the nations came against him,
those from regions round about.

They spread their net for him,
and he was trapped in their pit.

⁹With hooks they pulled him into a cage
and brought him to the king of Babylon.

They put him in prison,
so his roar was heard no longer
on the mountains of Israel.

¹⁰"Your mother was like a vine in your
vineyard^b

planted by the water;
it was fruitful and full of branches
because of abundant water.

¹¹Its branches were strong,

fit for a ruler's scepter.

It towered high
above the thick foliage,
conspicuous for its height
and for its many branches.

¹²But it was uprooted in fury
and thrown to the ground.

The east wind made it shrivel,
it was stripped of its fruit;
its strong branches withered
and fire consumed them.

¹³Now it is planted in the desert,
in a dry and thirsty land.

¹⁴Fire spread from one of its main^c branches
and consumed its fruit.

No strong branch is left on it
fit for a ruler's scepter.'

This is a lament and is to be used as a lament."

Rebellious Israel

20 In the seventh year, in the fifth month on the tenth day, some of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the LORD, and they sat down in front of me.

²Then the word of the LORD came to me: ³"Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel and say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Have you come to inquire of me? As surely as I live, I will not let you inquire of me, declares the Sovereign LORD.'

⁴"Will you judge them? Will you judge them, son of man? Then confront them with the detestable practices of their fathers ⁵and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On the day I chose Israel, I swore with uplifted hand to the descendants of the house of Jacob and revealed myself to them in Egypt. With uplifted hand I said to them, "I am the LORD your God." ⁶On that day I swore to them that I would bring them out of Egypt into a land; I had searched out for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands. ⁷And I said to them, "Each of you, get rid of the vile images you have set your eyes on, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am the LORD your God."

⁸"But they rebelled against me and would not listen to me; they did not get rid of the vile images they had set their eyes on, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. So I said I would pour out my wrath on them and spend my anger against them in Egypt. ⁹But for the sake of my name I did what would keep it from being profaned in the eyes of the nations they lived among and in whose sight I had revealed myself to the Israelites by bringing them out of Egypt. ¹⁰Therefore I led them out of Egypt and brought them into the desert. ¹¹I gave them my decrees and made known to them my laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. ¹²Also I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I the LORD made them holy.

¹³"Yet the people of Israel rebelled against me in the desert. They did not follow my decrees but

^a7 Targum (see Septuagint), Hebrew *He knew from under its*

^b10 Two Hebrew manuscripts; most Hebrew manuscripts *your blood*

^c14 Or

rejected my laws—although the man who obeys them will live by them—and they utterly desecrated my Sabbaths. So I said I would pour out my wrath on them and destroy them in the desert. ¹⁴But for the sake of my name I did what would keep it from being profaned in the eyes of the nations in whose sight I had brought them out.

Also with uplifted hand I swore to them in the desert that I would not bring them into the land I had given them—a land flowing with milk and honey, most beautiful of all lands—¹⁶because they rejected my laws and did not follow my decrees and desecrated my Sabbaths. For their hearts were devoted to their idols. ¹⁷Yet I looked on them with pity and did not destroy them or put an end to them in the desert. ¹⁸I said to their children in the desert, “Do not follow the statutes of your fathers or keep their laws or defile yourselves with their idols. ¹⁹I am the LORD your God; follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. ²⁰Keep my Sabbaths holy, that they may be a sign between us. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.”

²¹“But the children rebelled against me: They did not follow my decrees, they were not careful to keep my laws—although the man who obeys them will live by them—and they desecrated my Sabbaths. So I said I would pour out my wrath on them and spend my anger against them in the desert. ²²But I withheld my hand, and for the sake of my name I did what would keep it from being profaned in the eyes of the nations in whose sight I had brought them out. ²³Also with uplifted hand I swore to them in the desert that I would disperse them among the nations and scatter them through the countries, ²⁴because they had not obeyed my laws but had rejected my decrees and desecrated my Sabbaths, and their eyes [lusted] after their fathers’ idols. ²⁵I also gave them over to statutes that were not good and laws they could not live by; ²⁶I let them become defiled through their gifts—the sacrifice of every firstborn^a—that I might fill them with horror so they would know that I am the LORD.”

²⁷“Therefore, son of man, speak to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: In this also your fathers blasphemed me by forsaking me: ²⁸When I brought them into the land I had sworn to give them and they saw any high hill or any leafy tree, there they offered their sacrifices, made offerings that provoked me to anger, presented their fragrant incense and poured out their drink offerings. ²⁹Then I said to them: What is this high place you go to?’” (It is called Bamah^b to this day.)

Judgment and Restoration

³⁰“Therefore say to the house of Israel: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Will you defile yourselves the way your fathers did and lust after their vile images? ³¹When you offer your gifts—the sacrifice of your sons in^c the fire—you continue to defile yourselves with all your idols to this day. Am I to let you inquire of me, O house of Israel? As

surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I will not let you inquire of me.

³²“You say, ‘We want to be like the nations, like the peoples of the world, who serve wood and stone.’ But what you have in mind will never happen. ³³As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I will rule over you with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with outpoured wrath. ³⁴I will bring you from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered—with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with outpoured wrath. ³⁵I will bring you into the desert of the nations and there, face to face, I will execute judgment upon you. ³⁶As I judged your fathers in the desert of the land of Egypt, so I will judge you, declares the Sovereign LORD. ³⁷I will take note of you as you pass under my rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. ³⁸I will purge you of those who revolt and rebel against me. Although I will bring them out of the land where they are living, yet they will not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

³⁹“As for you, O house of Israel, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Go and serve your idols, every one of you! But afterward you will surely listen to me and no longer profane my holy name with your gifts and idols. ⁴⁰For on my holy mountain, the high mountain of Israel, declares the Sovereign LORD, there in the land the entire house of Israel will serve me, and there I will accept them. There I will require your offerings and your choice gifts,^d along with all your holy sacrifices. ⁴¹I will accept you as fragrant incense when I bring you out from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will show myself holy among you in the sight of the nations. ⁴²Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, the land I had sworn with uplifted hand to give to your fathers. ⁴³There you will remember your conduct and all the actions by which you have defiled yourselves, and you will loathe yourselves for all the evil you have done. ⁴⁴You will know that I am the LORD, when I deal with you for my name’s sake and not according to your evil ways and your corrupt practices, O house of Israel, declares the Sovereign LORD.”

Prophecy Against the South

⁴⁵The word of the LORD came to me: ⁴⁶“Son of man, set your face toward the south; preach against the south and prophesy against the forest of the southland. ⁴⁷Say to the southern forest: ‘Hear the word of the LORD. This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am about to set fire to you, and it will consume all your trees, both green and dry. The blazing flame will not be quenched, and every face from south to north will be scorched by it. ⁴⁸Everyone will see that I the LORD have kindled it; it will not be quenched.’”

⁴⁹Then I said, “Ah, Sovereign LORD! They are saying of me, ‘Isn’t he just telling parables?’”

^a26 Or —making every firstborn pass through the fire,

^b29 Bamah means high place

^c31 Or —making your sons pass through

^d40 Or and the gifts of your firstfruits

Babylon, God's Sword of Judgment

21 The word of the LORD came to me: ²"Son of man, set your face against Jerusalem and speak against the sanctuary. Prophesy against the land of Israel and say to her: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "Against you I will draw my sword. I will slay you both the righteous and the wicked. ⁴Because I am going to do this to the righteous and the wicked my sword will be unsheathed against everyone from south to north. ⁵Then all people will know that I the LORD have drawn my sword from its scabbard, it will not return again."

⁶"Therefore great son of man! Groan before them with broken heart and bitter grief. ⁷And when they ask you: 'What are you groaning?' you shall say: 'Because of the news that is coming. Every heart will melt and every hand go limp, every spirit will become faint and every knee become as weak as water. ⁸'It is coming! It will surely take place,' declares the Sovereign LORD."

⁹"The word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁰"Son of man, prophesy and say: 'This is what the LORD says:

A sword, a sword,
sharpened and polished—
drawn for the slaughter,
polished to flash like lightning!

I will use the scepter of my son.
The sword despises every such stick.

The sword is appointed to be polished,
to be grasped with the hand,
to be sharpened and polished,
made ready for the hand of the slayer.
¹³On that day and wall, son of man,
I will be against my people,
I will be against all the princes of Israel.
They are thrown to the sword
along with my people.
Therefore beat your breast.

Testing will surely come. And what if the scepter of Judah, which the sword despises, does not continue? declares the Sovereign LORD.'

¹⁵ So then, son of man, prophesy and strike your hands together. Let the sword strike twice, even three times. It is a sword for slaughter— a sword for great slaughter, closing in on them from every side. ¹⁶So that hearts may melt and the fallen be many, I have stationed the sword for slaughter at all their gates. Oh! It is made to flash like lightning, it is grasped for slaughter. ¹⁷O sword, slash to the right, then to the left, wherever your blade is turned.

¹⁷ I too will strike my hands together, and my wrath will subside. I the LORD have spoken."

¹⁸The word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁹"Son of man, mark out two roads for the sword of the king of Babylon to take, both starting from the same country. Make a signpost where the road branches off to the city. ²⁰Mark out one road for the sword to come against Rabbah of the Ammonites and another against Judah and fortified Jerusalem. ²¹For the king of Babylon will stop at the fork in the road, at the junction of the two roads, to seek an omen: He will cast lots with arrows, he will consult his idols, he will examine the liver. ²²Into his right hand will come the lot for Jerusalem, where he is to set up battering rams, to give the command to slaughter, to sound the battle cry, to set battering rams against the gates, to build a ramp and to erect siege works. ²³It will seem like a false omen to those who have sworn allegiance to him, but he will remind them of their guilt and take them captive.

²⁴"Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'Because you people have brought to mind your guilt by your open rebellion, revealing your sins in all that you do—because you have done this, you will be taken captive.

²⁵"O profane and wicked prince of Israel, whose day has come, whose time of punishment has reached its climax, ²⁶thus is what the Sovereign LORD says: Take off the turban, remove the crown. It will not be as it was: The lowly will be exalted and the exalted will be brought low. ²⁷A ruin! A ruin! I will make it a ruin! It will not be restored until he comes to whom it rightfully belongs; to him I will give it.'

²⁸"And you, son of man, prophesy and say, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says about the Ammonites and their insults:

"A sword, a sword,
drawn for the slaughter,
polished to consume
and to flash like lightning!

²⁹Despite false visions concerning you and lying divinations about you, it will be laid on the necks of the wicked who are to be slain, whose day has come, whose time of punishment has reached its climax.

³⁰Return the sword to its scabbard. In the place where you were created, in the land of your ancestry, I will judge you.

³¹I will pour out my wrath upon you and breathe out my fiery anger against you; I will hand you over to brutal men, men skilled in destruction.

³²You will be fuel for the fire, your blood will be shed in your land, you will be remembered no more; for I the LORD have spoken.'"

*15 Septuagint, the meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

Jerusalem's Sins

22 The word of the LORD came to me: ²"Son of man, will you judge her? Will you judge this city of bloodshed? Then confront her with all her detestable practices ³and say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O city that brings on herself doom by shedding blood in her midst and defiles herself by making idols, ⁴you have become guilty because of the blood you have shed and have become defiled by the idols you have made. You have brought your days to a close, and the end of your years has come. Therefore I will make you an object of scorn to the nations and a laughingstock to all the countries. ⁵Those who are near and those who are far away will mock you, O infamous city, full of turmoil.

⁶"See how each of the princes of Israel who are in you uses his power to shed blood. ⁷In you they have treated father and mother with contempt; in you they have oppressed the alien and mistreated the fatherless and the widow. ⁸You have despised my holy things and desecrated my Sabbaths. ⁹In you are slanderous men bent on shedding blood; in you are those who eat at the mountain shrines and commit lewd acts. ¹⁰In you are those who dishonor their fathers' bed; in you are those who violate women during their period, when they are ceremonially unclean. ¹¹In you one man commits a detestable offense with his neighbor's wife, another shamefully defiles his daughter-in-law, and another violates his sister, his own father's daughter. ¹²In you men accept bribes to shed blood; you take usury and excessive interest^a and make unjust gain from your neighbors by extortion. And you have forgotten me, declares the Sovereign LORD.

¹³"I will surely strike my hands together at the unjust gain you have made and at the blood you have shed in your midst. ¹⁴Will your courage endure or your hands be strong in the day I deal with you? I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it. ¹⁵I will disperse you among the nations and scatter you through the countries; and I will put an end to your uncleanness. ¹⁶When you have been defiled^b in the eyes of the nations, you will know that I am the LORD."

¹⁷Then the word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁸"Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to me; all of them are the copper, tin, iron and lead left inside a furnace. They are but the dross of silver. ¹⁹Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'Because you have all become dross, I will gather you into Jerusalem. ²⁰As men gather silver, copper, iron, lead and tin into a furnace to melt it with a fiery blast, so will I gather you in my anger and my wrath and put you inside the city and melt you. ²¹I will gather you and I will blow on you with my fiery wrath, and you will be melted inside her. ²²As silver is melted in a furnace, so you will be melted inside her, and you will know that I the LORD have poured out my wrath upon you.'"

²³Again the word of the LORD came to me: ²⁴"Son of man, say to the land, 'You are a land that

has had no rain or showers^c in the day of wrath.'

²⁵There is a conspiracy of her princes^d within her like a roaring lion tearing its prey; they devour people, take treasures and precious things and make many widows within her. ²⁶Her priests do violence to my law and profane my holy things; they do not distinguish between the holy and the common; they teach that there is no difference between the unclean and the clean; and they shut their eyes to the keeping of my Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them. ²⁷Her officials within her are like wolves tearing their prey; they shed blood and kill people to make unjust gain. ²⁸Her prophets whitewash these deeds for them by false visions and lying divinations. They say, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says'—when the LORD has not spoken. ²⁹The people of the land practice extortion and commit robbery; they oppress the poor and needy and mistreat the alien, denying them justice.

³⁰"I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none. ³¹So I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger, bringing down on their own heads all they have done, declares the Sovereign LORD."

Two Adulterous Sisters

23 The word of the LORD came to me: ²"Son of man, there were two women, daughters of the same mother. ³They became prostitutes in Egypt, engaging in prostitution from their youth. In that land their breasts were fondled and their virgin bosoms caressed. ⁴The older was named Oholah, and her sister was Oholibah. They were mine and gave birth to sons and daughters. Oholah is Samaria, and Oholibah is Jerusalem.

⁵"Oholah engaged in prostitution while she was still mine; and she lusted after her lovers, the Assyrians—warriors^e clothed in blue, governors and commanders, all of them handsome young men, and mounted horsemen. ⁷She gave herself as a prostitute to all the elite of the Assyrians and defiled herself with all the idols of everyone she lusted after. ⁸She did not give up the prostitution she began in Egypt, when during her youth men slept with her, caressed her virgin bosom and poured out their lust upon her.

⁹"Therefore I handed her over to her lovers, the Assyrians, for whom she lusted. ¹⁰They stripped her naked, took away her sons and daughters and killed her with the sword. She became a byword among women, and punishment was inflicted on her.

¹¹"Her sister Oholibah saw this, yet in her lust and prostitution she was more depraved than her sister. ¹²She too lusted after the Assyrians—governors and commanders, warriors in full dress, mounted horsemen, all handsome young men. ¹³I saw that she too defiled herself; both of them went the same way.

¹⁴"But she carried her prostitution still further.

^a12 Or usury and interest
ch

^b16 Or When I have allotted you your inheritance

^c24 Septuagint; Hebrew has not been cleansed or ruined

^d25 Septuagint; Hebrew prophets

She saw men portrayed on a wall, figures of Chaldeans^a portrayed in red, ¹⁵with belts around their waists and flowing turbans on their heads; all of them looked like Babylonian chariot officers, natives of Chaldea.^b ¹⁶As soon as she saw them, she lusted after them and sent messengers to them in Chaldea. ¹⁷Then the Babylonians came to her, to the bed of love, and in their lust they defiled her. After she had been defiled by them, she turned away from them in disgust. ¹⁸When she carried on her prostitution openly and exposed her nakedness, I turned away from her in disgust, just as I had turned away from her sister. ¹⁹Yet she became more and more promiscuous as she recalled the days of her youth, when she was a prostitute in Egypt. ²⁰There she lusted after her lovers, whose genitals were like those of donkeys and whose emission was like that of horses. ²¹So you longed for the lewdness of your youth, when in Egypt your bosom was caressed and your young breasts fondled.^c

²²"Therefore, Oholibah, this is what the Sover-

eign LORD says: I will stir up your lovers against you, those you turned away from in disgust, and I will bring them against you from every side—²³the Babylonians and all the Chaldeans, the men of Pekod and Shoa and Koa, and all the Assyrians with them, handsome young men, all of them governors and commanders, chariot officers and men of high rank, all mounted on horses. ²⁴They will come against you with weapons,^d chariots and wagons and with a throng of people; they will take up positions against you on every side with large and small shields and with helmets. I will turn you over to them for punishment, and they will punish you according to their standards. ²⁵I will direct my jealous anger against you, and they will deal with you in fury. They will cut off your noses and your ears, and those of you who are left will fall by the sword. They will take away your sons and daughters, and those of you who are left will be consumed by fire. ²⁶They will also strip you of your clothes and take your fine jewelry. ²⁷So I will put a stop to the lewdness and prostitution you began in

^a14 Or Babylonians

^b15 Or Babylonian, also in verse 16

^c24 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain

^d21 Syriac (see also verse 3), Hebrew caressed because of your young breasts

INSIGHT

The Runaways

A story meant to make you feel sick

"Now let them use her as a prostitute, for that is all she is." 23:43

This story uses sexually explicit language. It tells of two sisters who choose promiscuous sex. Once they are involved, nothing satisfies them. They go from one man to the next. God calls them prostitutes, but they don't do it for the money. They do it because they like to live perversely.

Finally, in grief and frustration, God turns them over to their chosen lovers, who treat them like trash. God seems to take angry satisfaction in this. Love makes him angry—angry enough to weep.

An Allegory of Love

Ezekiel doesn't pretend that these two sisters are real people. From the beginning he identifies them with the capitals of the two halves of Israel—Samaria in the North, which the Assyrians had wiped out over 100 years before, and Jerusalem in the South. Samaria was properly rewarded for her prostitution, Ezekiel says, and Jerusalem will be too. The story of the two sisters is, in a sense, one more graphic way of saying that God has been patient with Jerusalem long enough. (A similar story is told in Ezekiel 16.)

A Drastic Dose of Reality

God had promised the Israelites everything their hearts desired if they would stick by him. But they were always turning to other nations whose prosperity and power they envied. In those days, a little nation like Israel couldn't just sign a friendship pact with a big power. Political alliances meant accepting the big power's religion and worshiping its gods alongside your own. God warned Israel against this repeatedly, but they ignored the warning. Therefore, Ezekiel says, they will get their wish. They will experience firsthand the care and concern of their Babylonian "lovers."

God responds like a father who has finally given up trying to regulate his daughter's bad habits. He tells her, "Get out! Find out for yourself what life is like on the street!" God says, "You will drink your sister's cup, a cup large and deep; it will bring scorn and derision, for it holds so much. . . . You will drink it and drain it dry; you will dash it to pieces and tear your breasts" (23:32-34). He says it in anger, but also in hope that such bitter grief will awaken Israel to the disastrous choices she made in rejecting God's care.

Life Questions: Have you ever loved someone who didn't love you back? What emotions did you feel?

¹⁴"I the LORD have spoken. The time has come for me to act. I will not hold back; I will not have pity, nor will I relent. You will be judged according to your conduct and your actions, declares the Sovereign LORD."

Ezekiel's Wife Dies

¹⁵The word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁶"Son of man, with one blow I am about to take away from you the delight of your eyes. Yet do not lament or weep or shed any tears. ¹⁷Groan quietly; do not mourn for the dead. Keep your turban fastened and your sandals on your feet; do not cover the lower part of your face or eat the customary food of mourners."

¹⁸So I spoke to the people in the morning, and in the evening my wife died. The next morning I did as I had been commanded.

¹⁹Then the people asked me, "Won't you tell us what these things have to do with us?"

²⁰So I said to them, "The word of the LORD came to me: ²¹Say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am about to desecrate my sanctuary—the stronghold in which you take pride, the delight of your eyes, the object of your affection. The sons and daughters you left behind will fall by the sword. ²²And you will do as I have done. You will not cover the lower part of your face or eat the customary food of mourners. ²³You will keep your turbans on your heads and your sandals on your feet. You will not mourn or weep but will waste away because of your sins and groan among yourselves. ²⁴Ezekiel will be a sign to you; you will do just as he has done. When this happens, you will know that I am the Sovereign LORD.'

²⁵"And you, son of man, on the day I take away their stronghold, their joy and glory, the delight of their eyes, their heart's desire, and their sons and daughters as well— ²⁶on that day a fugitive will come to tell you the news. ²⁷At that time your mouth will be opened; you will speak with him and will no longer be silent. So you will be a sign to them, and they will know that I am the LORD."

A Prophecy Against Ammon

25 The word of the LORD came to me: ²"Son of man, set your face against the Ammonites and prophesy against them. ³Say to them, 'Hear the word of the Sovereign LORD. This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because you said "Aha!" over my sanctuary when it was desecrated and over the land of Israel when it was laid waste and over the people of Judah when they went into exile, ⁴therefore I am going to give you to the people of the East as a possession. They will set up their camps and pitch their tents among you; they will eat your fruit and drink your milk. ⁵I will turn Rabbah into a pasture for camels and Ammon into a resting place for sheep. Then you will know that I am the LORD. ⁶For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because you have clapped your hands and stamped your feet, rejoicing with all the malice of your heart against the land of Israel, ⁷there-

fore I will stretch out my hand against you and give you as plunder to the nations. I will cut you off from the nations and exterminate you from the countries. I will destroy you, and you will know that I am the LORD.'"

A Prophecy Against Moab

⁸"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'Because Moab and Seir said, "Look, the house of Judah has become like all the other nations," ⁹therefore I will expose the flank of Moab, beginning at its frontier towns—Beth Jeshmoth, Baal Meon and Kiriathaim—the glory of that land. ¹⁰I will give Moab along with the Ammonites to the people of the East as a possession, so that the Ammonites will not be remembered among the nations; ¹¹and I will inflict punishment on Moab. Then they will know that I am the LORD.'"

A Prophecy Against Edom

¹²"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'Because Edom took revenge on the house of Judah and became very guilty by doing so, ¹³therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will stretch out my hand against Edom and kill its men and their animals. I will lay it waste, and from Teman to Dedan they will fall by the sword. ¹⁴I will take vengeance on Edom by the hand of my people Israel, and they will deal with Edom in accordance with my anger and my wrath; they will know my vengeance, declares the Sovereign LORD.'"

A Prophecy Against Philistia

¹⁵"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'Because the Philistines acted in vengeance and took revenge with malice in their hearts, and with ancient hostility sought to destroy Judah, ¹⁶therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am about to stretch out my hand against the Philistines, and I will cut off the Kerethites and destroy those remaining along the coast. ¹⁷I will carry out great vengeance on them and punish them in my wrath. Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I take vengeance on them.'"

A Prophecy Against Tyre

26 In the eleventh year, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me: ²"Son of man, because Tyre has said of Jerusalem, 'Aha! The gate to the nations is broken, and its doors have swung open to me; now that she lies in ruins I will prosper,' ³therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, O Tyre, and I will bring many nations against you, like the sea casting up its waves. ⁴They will destroy the walls of Tyre and pull down her towers; I will scrape away her rubble and make her a bare rock. ⁵Out in the sea she will become a place to spread fishnets, for I have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD. She will become plunder for the nations, ⁶and her settlements on the mainland will be ravaged by the sword. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

⁷"For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: From the north I am going to bring against Tyre

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses and chariots, with horsemen and a great army. ⁸He will ravage your settlements on the mainland with the sword; he will set up siege works against you, build a ramp up to your walls and raise his shields against you. ⁹He will direct the bows of his battering rams against your walls and demolish your towers with his weapons. ¹⁰His horses will be so many that they will cover you

with dust. Your walls will tremble at the noise of the war horses, wagons and chariots when he enters your gates as men enter a city whose walls have been broken through. ¹¹The hoofs of his horses will trample all your streets; he will kill your people with the sword, and your strong pillars will fall to the ground. ¹²They will plunder your wealth and loot your merchandise; they will break down your walls and demolish your fine houses and

He will direct the bows of his battering rams is a variant, here and often in Ezekiel and Jeremiah

INSIGHT

Just What They Deserved *God will judge every nation in the world*

"I will carry out great vengeance on them and punish them in my wrath. Then they will know that I am the Lord." 25:17

World War II ended in Europe with the surrender of the German army. People danced in the streets.

But the victorious allies could not simply pack and go home. They had captured thousands of Nazis. Among them were some of the most brutal murderers the world has ever known—monsters, really, who had enriched themselves with the gold and jewelry of the millions of Jews they had exterminated.

A question came up: Under what law could the Nazis be tried? American, British, or French law didn't apply in Germany. Faced with this dilemma, the Allies invented something new: the Nuremberg trials. Judgments were based on a belief in a higher law—an international code of right and wrong that applies to every person, regardless of country. Under this unwritten law many Nazi leaders were condemned to death.

Nations on Trial

Ezekiel introduces a similar concept of justice, beginning in chapter 25. In the first 24 chapters he had spoken harsh words to the Israelites, who had repeatedly broken the law God had given them. But now Ezekiel's vision expands to nations who never had that law. Ezekiel marches through Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia—four nations that, on the small scale of Palestinian geography, could be seen with the naked eye from Jerusalem.

Each nation has its moment in court, and each is condemned for its inhumane malice against Israel. (The sentences Ezekiel gave were soon carried out historically. The nations listed vanished from the face of the earth, victims of the same violence they had used against Israel.)

Ezekiel goes on to Tyre, 100 miles up the coast. Tyre's soul was profit; its merchants controlled trade for the whole Mediterranean. Because of their wealth and success, they considered themselves virtual gods (28:2,6). They had callously rejoiced in Jerusalem's downfall, seeing it as a chance for increased trade (26:2). For such unfeeling arrogance, God would sentence them. Nebuchadnezzar began this punishment in Ezekiel's era, and centuries later Alexander the Great finished it off by destroying the city. Tyre became, as Ezekiel had predicted, "a bare rock, a place to spread fishnets" (26:14).

A Comic Condemnation

Pausing briefly to give a judgment of Sidon, Ezekiel travels on to Egypt. His words might have seemed comic. Who does he think he is, passing judgment on one of the great powers of his day? Yet Ezekiel confidently asserts that Egypt can start mourning now. As it happened, Egypt, a great power for many centuries, lost its dominance and has never regained it (29:15).

Perhaps, in taking up these nations' fates, Ezekiel intended to build suspense for the climactic tragedy of Jerusalem's fall. But certainly this trial of the nations demonstrated that Jerusalem had not been singled out for justice. Every nation would be judged by the standard of right and wrong that they knew. If God was harder on Judah, it was only because Judah knew so much more about God and his expectations.

Life Questions Do you believe in universal standards of right and wrong? What "code of conduct" applies to everybody, regardless of their upbringing?

throw your stones—timber and rubble into the sea.
 4 I will put an end to your noisy songs, and the
 music of your harps will be heard no more. 14 I will
 make you a bare rock, and you will become a place
 to spread fishnets. You will never be rebuilt, for I
 the Lord have spoken, declares the Sovereign
 Lord.

This is what the Sovereign Lord says to Tyre:
 Will not the coastlands tremble at the sound of
 your fall, when the wounded groan and the
 slaughter takes place in you? 6 Then all the princes
 of the coast will step down from their thrones and
 lay aside their robes and take off their embroidered
 coverings. Clothed with terror, they will sit on the
 ground, trembling every moment, appalled at
 you. 7 Then they will take up a lament concerning
 you and say to you:

How you are destroyed, O city of renown,
 peopled by men of the sea!
 You were a power on the seas;
 you and your citizens
 you put your terror
 on all who lived there.
 8 Now the coastlands tremble
 on the day of your fall;
 the islands in the sea
 are terrified at your collapse.^a

9 This is what the Sovereign Lord says: When
 I make you a desolate city, like cities no longer
 inhabited, and when I bring the ocean depths over
 you and its vast waters cover you, 20 then I will
 bring you down with those who go down to the
 pit—the people of long ago. I will make you dwell
 in the earth below, as in ancient ruins, with those
 who go down to the pit, and you will not return or
 take your place^a in the land of the living. 21 I will
 bring you to a horrible end and you will be no
 more. You will be sought, but you will never again
 be found, declares the Sovereign Lord.^b

A Lament for Tyre

27 The word of the Lord came to me: 2^a Son of
 man, take up a lament concerning Tyre.
 3 Say to Tyre, situated at the gateway to the sea,
 merchant of peoples on many coasts, This is what
 the Sovereign Lord says:

4 You say, O Tyre,
 "I am perfect in beauty."
 5 Your domain was on the high seas;
 your builders brought your beauty to
 perfection.
 6 They made all your timbers
 of pine trees from Senir^b;
 they took a cedar from Lebanon
 to make a mast for you.
 7 Of oaks from Bashan
 they made your oars;
 of cypress wood^c from the coasts of Cyprus^d
 they made your deck, inlaid with ivory.
 8 Fine embroidered linen from Egypt was your
 sail

and served as your banner;
 your awnings were of blue and purple
 from the coasts of Elishah.
 9 Men of Sidon and Arvad were your oarmen,
 your skilled men, O Tyre, were aboard as
 your seamen.

10 Veteran craftsmen of Gebah were on board
 as shipwrights to caulk your seams.
 All the ships of the sea and their sailors
 came alongside to trade for your wares.

11 Men of Persia, Lydia and Put
 served as soldiers in your army.
 They hung their shields and helmets on your
 walls,

bringing you splendor.
 12 Men of Arvad and Helech
 manned your walls on every side;
 men of Gammad
 were in your towers.

They hung their shields around your walls;
 they brought your beauty to perfection.

13 Tarshish did business with you because of
 your great wealth of goods; they exchanged silver,
 iron, tin and lead for your merchandise.

14 Greece, Tubal and Meshech traded with
 you; they exchanged slaves and articles of bronze
 for your wares.

15 Men of Beth Togarmah exchanged work
 horses, war horses and mules for your merchan-
 dise.

16 The men of Rhodes^e traded with you, and
 many coastlands were your customers; they paid
 you with ivory tusks and ebony.

17 Aram did business with you because of
 your many products; they exchanged turquoise,
 purple fabric, embroidered work, fine linen, coral
 and rubies for your merchandise.

18 Judah and Israel traded with you; they ex-
 changed wheat from Minnith and confections,^f
 honey, oil and balm for your wares.

19 Damascus, because of your many products
 and great wealth of goods, did business with you
 in wine from Helbon and wool from Zahar.

20 Danites and Greeks from Uzal bought your
 merchandise; they exchanged wrought iron, cassia
 and calamus for your wares.

21 Dedan traded in saddle blankets with you.

22 Arabia and all the princes of Kedar were
 your customers; they did business with you in
 lambs, rams and goats.

23 The merchants of Sheba and Raamah traded
 with you; for your merchandise they exchanged
 the finest of all kinds of spices and precious stones,
 and gold.

24 Haran, Canneh and Eden and merchants of
 Sheba, Asshur and Kilmad traded with you. 25 In
 your marketplace they traded with you beautiful
 garments, blue fabric, embroidered work and mul-
 ticolored rugs with cords twisted and tightly knot-
 ted.

26 The ships of Tarshish serve

^a20 Septuagint, Hebrew *return*, and I will give glory
 of the consonants.

^b46 Hebrew *Kittim*

^c9 That is, Byblos

manuscripts, some Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac *Edom*

^d5 That is, Hermon

^e6 Targum, the Masoretic Text has a different division

^f15 Septuagint, Hebrew *Dedan*

^g16 Most Hebrew

^h17 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

as carriers for your wares.
 You are filled with heavy cargo
 in the heart of the sea
 26 Your oarsmen take you
 out to the high seas.
 But the east wind will break you to pieces
 in the heart of the sea.
 27 Your wealth, merchandise and wares,
 1 your mariners, seamen and shipwrights,
 your merchants and all your soldiers,
 and everyone else on board
 will sink into the heart of the sea
 on the day of your shipwreck.
 28 The shorelands will quake
 when your seamen cry out.
 29 All who handle the oars
 will abandon their ships;
 the mariners and all the seamen
 will stand on the shore.
 30 They will raise their voice
 and cry bitterly over you;
 they will sprinkle dust on their heads
 and roll in ashes.
 31 They will shave their heads because of you
 and will put on sackcloth.
 They will weep over you with anguish of soul
 and with bitter mourning
 32 As they wail and mourn over you,
 they will take up a lament concerning you:
 "Who was ever silenced like Tyre,
 surrounded by the sea?"
 33 When your merchandise went out on the seas,
 you satisfied many nations;
 with your great wealth and your wares
 you enriched the kings of the earth.
 34 Now you are shattered by the sea
 in the depths of the waters;
 your wares and all your company
 have gone down with you.
 35 All who live in the coastlands
 are appalled at you;
 their kings shudder with horror
 and their faces are distorted with fear.
 36 The merchants among the nations hiss at you;
 you have come to a horrible end
 and will be no more."

A Prophecy Against the King of Tyre

28 The word of the LORD came to me. ²"Son of man, say to the ruler of Tyre, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

" 'In the pride of your heart
 you say, "I am a god;
 I sit on the throne of a god
 in the heart of the seas."
 But you are a man and not a god,
 though you think you are as wise as a god.
 3 Are you wiser than Daniel?
 Is no secret hidden from you?
 4 By your wisdom and understanding
 you have gained wealth for yourself
 and amassed gold and silver
 in your treasuries.

⁵By your great skill in trading
 you have increased your wealth,
 and because of your wealth
 your heart has grown proud

⁶"Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD
 says:

" 'Because you think you are wise,
 as wise as a god,
 7 I am going to bring foreigners against you,
 the most ruthless of nations,
 they will draw their swords against your
 beauty and wisdom
 and pierce your shining splendor.
 8 They will bring you down to the pit,
 and you will die a violent death
 in the heart of the seas.
 9 Will you then say, "I am a god,"
 in the presence of those who kill you?
 You will be but a man, not a god,
 in the hands of those who slay you
 10 You will die the death of the uncircumcised
 at the hands of foreigners

I have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD."

¹¹The word of the LORD came to me. ¹²"Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says

" 'You were the model of perfection,
 full of wisdom and perfect in beauty
 13 You were in Eden,
 the garden of God;
 every precious stone adorned you:
 ruby, topaz and emerald,
 chrysolite, onyx and jasper,
 sapphire,^b turquoise and beryl.
 Your settings and mountings^d were made of
 gold,
 on the day you were created they were
 prepared.
 14 You were anointed as a guardian cherub,
 for so I ordained you.
 You were on the holy mount of God,
 you walked among the fiery stones.
 15 You were blameless in your ways
 from the day you were created
 till wickedness was found in you.
 16 Through your widespread trade
 you were filled with violence,
 and you sinned.
 So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of
 God,
 and I expelled you, O guardian cherub,
 from among the fiery stones.
 17 Your heart became proud
 on account of your beauty,
 and you corrupted your wisdom
 because of your splendor.
 So I threw you to the earth.
 I made a spectacle of you before kings.
 18 By your many sins and dishonest trade
 you have desecrated your sanctuaries

^a Or Daniel; the Hebrew spelling may suggest a person other than the prophet Daniel.
^b Or lapis lazuli.
^c The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain.

^d Or lapidary.

^e The precious

So I made a fire come out from you,
and it consumed you,
and I reduced you to ashes on the ground
in the sight of all who were watching.
19 All the nations who knew you
are appalled at you;
you have come to a horrible end
and will be no more."

A Prophecy Against Sidon

20 The word of the LORD came to me: 21 "Son of man, set your face against Sidon, prophesy against her 22 and say, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

'I am against you, O Sidon,
and I will gain glory within you.
They will know that I am the LORD,
when I inflict punishment on her
and show myself holy within her.
23 I will send a plague upon her
and make blood flow in her streets.
The slain will fall within her,
with the sword against her on every side.
Then they will know that I am the LORD.

24 No longer will the people of Israel have malicious neighbors who are painful briars and sharp thorns. Then they will know that I am the Sovereign LORD.

25 This is what the Sovereign LORD says: When I gather the people of Israel from the nations where they have been scattered, I will show myself holy among them in the sight of the nations. Then they will live in their own land, which I gave to my servant Jacob. 26 They will live there in safety and will build houses and plant vineyards; they will live in safety when I inflict punishment on all their neighbors who maligned them. Then they will know that I am the LORD their God.'"

A Prophecy Against Egypt

29 In the tenth year, in the tenth month on the twelfth day, the word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt and prophesy against him and against all Egypt. 3 Speak to him and say, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

'I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt,
you great monster lying among your
streams.
You say, "The Nile is mine;
I made it for myself."
4 But I will put hooks in your jaws
and make the fish of your streams stick to
your scales.
I will pull you out from among your streams,
with all the fish sticking to your scales.
5 I will leave you in the desert,
you and all the fish of your streams.
You will fall on the open field
and not be gathered or picked up.
I will give you as food

to the beasts of the earth and the birds of the air.

6 Then all who live in Egypt will know that I am the LORD.

7 "You have been a staff of reed for the house of Israel. 7 When they grasped you with their hands, you splintered and you tore open their shoulders, when they leaned on you, you broke and their backs were wrenched."

8 "Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will bring a sword against you and kill your men and their animals. 9 Egypt will become a desolate wasteland. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

10 "Because you said, "The Nile is mine; I made it," 10 therefore I am against you and against your streams, and I will make the land of Egypt a ruin and a desolate waste from Migdol to Aswan, as far as the border of Cush. 11 No foot of man or animal will pass through it; no one will live there for forty years. 12 I will make the land of Egypt desolate among devastated lands, and her cities will lie desolate forty years among ruined cities. And I will disperse the Egyptians among the nations and scatter them through the countries.

13 "Yet this is what the Sovereign LORD says: At the end of forty years I will gather the Egyptians from the nations where they were scattered. 14 I will bring them back from captivity and return them to Upper Egypt, the land of their ancestry. There they will be a lowly kingdom. 15 It will be the lowliest of kingdoms and will never again exalt itself above the other nations. I will make it so weak that it will never again rule over the nations. 16 Egypt will no longer be a source of confidence for the people of Israel but will be a reminder of their sin in turning to her for help. Then they will know that I am the Sovereign LORD.'"

17 In the twenty-seventh year, in the first month on the first day, the word of the LORD came to me: 18 "Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon drove his army in a hard campaign against Tyre; every head was rubbed bare and every shoulder made raw. Yet he and his army got no reward from the campaign he led against Tyre. 19 Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am going to give Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he will carry off its wealth. He will loot and plunder the land as pay for his army. 20 I have given him Egypt as a reward for his efforts because he and his army did it for me, declares the Sovereign LORD. 21 "On that day I will make a horn^d grow for the

29:7 Unreliable Egypt

When threatened by another superpower (Babylon or Assyria) Israel often turned to Egypt for help. Each time that nation let Israel down. Right up until the final destruction of Jerusalem, the Israelites expected Egypt to come to their rescue, but its mighty armies never appeared.

^a Syriac (see also Septuagint and Vulgate) Hebrew *and you caused their backs to stand*
¹⁴ Hebrew *to Patrus* ²¹ Horn here symbolizes strength

¹⁰ That is, the upper Nile region

house of Israel and I will open your mouth among them. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

A Lament for Egypt

30 The word of the LORD came to me: ²“Son of man, prophesy and say: This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

Wail and say:
Alas for that day!

For the day is near
the day of the LORD is near
a day of clouds

a time of doom for the nations.
⁴A sword will come against Egypt,
and anguish will come upon Cush.⁴

When the slain fall in Egypt,
her wealth will be carried away
and her foundations torn down

⁵Cush and Put, Lydia and all Arabia, Libya⁶ and
the people of the covenant land will fall by the
sword along with Egypt

⁷This is what the LORD says:

The allies of Egypt will fall
and her proud strength will fall
From Migdol to Aswan
they will fall by the sword within her,
declares the Sovereign LORD.

They will be desolate
among desolate lands,
and their cities will lie
among ruined cities

⁸Then they will know that I am the LORD,
when I set fire to Egypt
and all her helpers are crushed.

⁹On that day messengers will go out from me
in ships to frighten Cush out of her complacency.
Anguish will take hold of them on the day of
Egypt's doom, for it is sure to come.

¹⁰“This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

“I will put an end to the hordes of Egypt
by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of
Babylon.

¹¹He and his army—the most ruthless of
nations—
will be brought in to destroy the land.
They will draw their swords against Egypt
and fill the land with the slain.

¹²I will dry up the streams of the Nile
and sell the land to evil men;
by the hand of foreigners
I will lay waste the land and everything in it.

I the LORD have spoken.

¹³“This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

“I will destroy the idols
and put an end to the images in Memphis.⁷
No longer will there be a prince in Egypt,
and I will spread fear throughout the land.

¹⁴I will lay waste Upper Egypt,⁸
set fire to Zoan

and inflict punishment on Thebes,⁹
¹⁵I will pour out my wrath on Pelusium,¹⁰
the stronghold of Egypt,
and cut off the hordes of Thebes.

¹⁶I will set fire to Egypt,
Pelusium will writhe in agony.
Thebes will be taken by storm;
Memphis will be in constant distress.

¹⁷The young men of Heliopolis and Bubastis¹¹
will fall by the sword,
and the cities themselves will go into
captivity.

¹⁸Dark will be the day at Tahpanhes
when I break the yoke of Egypt;
there her proud strength will come to an
end.

She will be covered with clouds,
and her villages will go into captivity.

¹⁹So I will inflict punishment on Egypt,
and they will know that I am the LORD.”

²⁰In the eleventh year, in the first month on the
seventh day, the word of the LORD came to me:
²¹“Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh
king of Egypt. It has not been bound up for healing
or put in a splint so as to become strong enough to
hold a sword. ²²Therefore this is what the Sover-
eign LORD says: I am against Pharaoh king of
Egypt. I will break both his arms, the good arm as
well as the broken one, and make the sword fall
from his hand. ²³I will disperse the Egyptians
among the nations and scatter them through the
countries. ²⁴I will strengthen the arms of the king
of Babylon and put my sword in his hand, but I
will break the arms of Pharaoh, and he will groan
before him like a mortally wounded man. ²⁵I will
strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the
arms of Pharaoh will fall limp. Then they will
know that I am the LORD, when I put my sword
into the hand of the king of Babylon and he brand-
ishes it against Egypt. ²⁶I will disperse the Eryp-
tians among the nations and scatter them through
the countries. Then they will know that I am the
LORD.”

A Cedar in Lebanon

31 In the eleventh year, in the third month on
the first day, the word of the LORD came to
me: ²“Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt
and to his hordes:

“Who can be compared with you in majesty?
³Consider Assyria, once a cedar in Lebanon,
with beautiful branches overshadowing the
forest;

it towered on high,
its top above the thick foliage.

⁴The waters nourished it,
deep springs made it grow tall;
their streams flowed
all around its base
and sent their channels
to all the trees of the field.

⁵So it towered higher

⁴ That is, the upper Nile region, also in verses 5 and 9
waste Pathros ¹⁴ Hebrew No, also in verses 15 and 16

¹⁷ Hebrew Pt Bweth

⁵ Hebrew Cub

¹⁵ Hebrew Sin, also in verse 16

¹³ Hebrew Nuph, also in verse 16

¹⁴ Hebrew

¹⁷ Hebrew Awen (or On)

than all the trees of the field,
its boughs increased
and its branches grew long,
spreading because of abundant waters.

⁶All the birds of the air
nested in its boughs,
all the beasts of the field
gave birth under its branches;
all the great nations
lived in its shade.

⁷It was majestic in beauty,
with its spreading boughs,
for its roots went down
to abundant waters.

⁸The cedars in the garden of God
could not rival it,
nor could the pine trees
equal its boughs,
nor could the plane trees
compare with its branches—
no tree in the garden of God
could match its beauty.

⁹I made it beautiful
with abundant branches,
the envy of all the trees of Eden
in the garden of God.

¹⁰"Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because it towered on high, lifting its top above the thick foliage, and because it was proud of its height, ¹¹I handed it over to the ruler of the nations, for him to deal with according to its wickedness. I cast it aside, ¹²and the most ruthless of foreign nations cut it down and left it. Its boughs fell on the mountains and in all the valleys; its branches lay broken in all the ravines of the land. All the nations of the earth came out from under its shade and left it. ¹³All the birds of the air settled on the fallen tree, and all the beasts of the field were among its branches. ¹⁴Therefore no other trees by the waters are ever to tower proudly on high, lifting their tops above the thick foliage. No other trees so well-watered are ever to reach such a height; they are all destined for death, for the earth below, among mortal men, with those who go down to the pit.

¹⁵"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On the day it was brought down to the grave^a I covered the deep springs with mourning for it; I held back its streams, and its abundant waters were restrained. Because of it I clothed Lebanon with gloom, and all the trees of the field withered away. ¹⁶I made the nations tremble at the sound of its fall when I brought it down to the grave with those who go down to the pit. Then all the trees of Eden, the choicest and best of Lebanon, all the trees that were well-watered, were consoled in the earth below. ¹⁷Those who lived in its shade, its allies among the nations, had also gone down to the grave with it, joining those killed by the sword.

¹⁸"Which of the trees of Eden can be compared with you in splendor and majesty? Yet you, too, will be brought down with the trees of Eden to the earth below; you will lie among the uncircumcised, with those killed by the sword.

"This is Pharaoh and all his hordes, declares the Sovereign LORD."

A Lament for Pharaoh

32 In the twelfth year, in the twelfth month on the first day, the word of the LORD came to me: ²"Son of man, take up a lament concerning Pharaoh king of Egypt and say to him:

"You are like a lion among the nations;
you are like a monster in the seas
thrashing about in your streams,
churning the water with your feet
and muddying the streams.

³"This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"With a great throng of people
I will cast my net over you,
and they will haul you up in my net.

⁴I will throw you on the land
and hurl you on the open field.

I will let all the birds of the air settle on you
and all the beasts of the earth gorge
themselves on you.

⁵I will spread your flesh on the mountains
and fill the valleys with your remains.

⁶I will drench the land with your flowing blood
all the way to the mountains,
and the ravines will be filled with your flesh.

⁷When I snuff you out, I will cover the heavens
and darken their stars;

I will cover the sun with a cloud,
and the moon will not give its light.

⁸All the shining lights in the heavens
I will darken over you;

I will bring darkness over your land,

declares the Sovereign LORD.

⁹I will trouble the hearts of many peoples
when I bring about your destruction among
the nations,
among^b lands you have not known.

¹⁰I will cause many peoples to be appalled at
you,

and their kings will shudder with horror
because of you

when I brandish my sword before them.

On the day of your downfall

each of them will tremble

every moment for his life.

¹¹"For this is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"The sword of the king of Babylon
will come against you.

¹²I will cause your hordes to fall
by the swords of mighty men—
the most ruthless of all nations.

They will shatter the pride of Egypt,
and all her hordes will be overthrown.

¹³I will destroy all her cattle
from beside abundant waters
no longer to be stirred by the foot of man
or muddied by the hoofs of cattle.

¹⁴Then I will let her waters settle
and make her streams flow like oil,

declares the Sovereign LORD.

^a15 Hebrew Sheol, also in verses 16 and 17

^b9 Hebrew; Septuagint bring you into captivity among the nations 10

18 When I make Egypt desolate and strip the land of everything in it when I strike down all who live there then they will know that I am the Lord.

19 This is the lament they will chant for her. The daughters of the nations will chant it; for Egypt and all her hordes they will chant it, declares the Sovereign Lord.

20 In the twelfth year, on the fifteenth day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me: 21 Son of man, warn the hordes of Egypt and consign to the earth below both her and the daughters of mighty nations, with those who go down to the pit. 22 Say to them, 'Are you more favored than others? Go down and be laid among the uncircumcised.' 23 They will fall among those killed by the sword. The sword is drawn; let her be dragged off with all her hordes. 24 From within the grave the mighty leaders will say of Egypt and her allies, 'They have come down and they lie with the uncircumcised, with those killed by the sword.'

25 Assyria is there with her whole army, she is surrounded by the graves of all her slain, all who have fallen by the sword. 26 Their graves are in the depths of the pit and her army lies around her grave. All who had spread terror in the land of the living are slain, fallen by the sword.

27 Elam is there, with all her hordes around her grave. All of them are slain, fallen by the sword. All who had spread terror in the land of the living went down uncircumcised to the earth below. They bear their shame with those who go down to the pit. 28 A bed is made for her among the slain, with all her hordes around her grave. All of them are uncircumcised, killed by the sword. Because their terror had spread in the land of the living, they bear their shame with those who go down to the pit; they are laid among the slain.

29 Meshech and Tubal are there, with all their hordes around their graves. All of them are uncircumcised, killed by the sword because they spread their terror in the land of the living. 30 Do they not lie with the other uncircumcised warriors who have fallen, who went down to the grave with their weapons of war, whose swords were placed under their heads? The punishment for their sins rested on their bones, though the terror of these warriors had stalked through the land of the living.

31 You too, O Pharaoh, will be broken and will lie among the uncircumcised, with those killed by the sword.

32:21 The Afterlife

Though eternal life shines through a few Old Testament passages (see "Life after Death," page 474), life after death was extremely vague in most of the Old Testament. The grave was represented by a place called "Sheol." The fate of the nations described here as "within the grave" gives a vivid, eerie sense of death.

40 Edom is there, her kings and all her princes despite their power, they are laid with those killed by the sword. They lie with the uncircumcised, with those who go down to the pit.

41 All the princes of the north and all the Edomites are there; they went down with the slain in disgrace despite the terror caused by their power. They lie uncircumcised with those killed by the sword and bear their shame with those who go down to the pit.

42 Pharaoh—he and all his army—will see them and he will be consoling for all his hordes that were killed by the sword, declares the Sovereign Lord.

43 Although I had him spread terror in the land of the living, Pharaoh and all his hordes will be laid among the uncircumcised, with those killed by the sword, declares the Sovereign Lord.

Ezekiel a Watchman

33 The word of the Lord came to me: 2 Son of man, speak to your countrymen and say to them: 'When I bring the sword against a land, and the people of the land choose one of their men and make him their watchman, 3 and he sees the sword coming against the land and blows the trumpet to warn the people, 4 then if anyone hears the trumpet but does not take warning and the sword comes and takes his life, his blood will be on his own head. 5 Since he heard the sound of the trumpet but did not take warning, his blood will be on his own head. If he had taken warning, he would have saved himself. 6 But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes the life of one of them, that man will be taken away because of his sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for his blood.'

7 Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. 8 When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you will surely die,' and you do not speak out to dissuade him from his ways, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. 9 But if you do warn the wicked man to turn from his ways and he does not do so, he will die for his sin, but you will have saved yourself.

10 Son of man, say to the house of Israel, 'This is what you are saying: "Our offenses and sins weigh us down, and we are wasting away because of them. How then can we live?"' 11 Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?'

12 Therefore, son of man, say to your countrymen, 'The righteousness of the righteous man will not save him when he disobeys, and the wickedness of the wicked man will not cause him to fall when he turns from it. The righteous man, if he sins, will not be allowed to live because of his former righteousness.' 13 If I tell the righteous man that he will surely live, but then he trusts in his

421 Hebrew Sheol; also in verse 27

48 Or in; also in verse 9

410 Or away in

righteousness and does evil, none of the righteous things he has done will be remembered; he will die for the evil he has done. ¹⁴And if I say to the wicked man, 'You will surely die,' but he then turns away from his sin and does what is just and right— ¹⁵if he gives back what he took in pledge for a loan, returns what he has stolen, follows the decrees that give life, and does no evil, he will surely live; he will not die. ¹⁶None of the sins he has committed will be remembered against him. He has done what is just and right; he will surely live.

¹⁷"Yet your countrymen say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' But it is their way that is not just. ¹⁸If a righteous man turns from his righteousness

and does evil, he will die for it. ¹⁹And if a wicked man turns away from his wickedness and does what is just and right, he will live by doing so. ²⁰Yet, O house of Israel, you say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' But I will judge each of you according to his own ways."

Jerusalem's Fall Explained

²¹In the twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth month on the fifth day, a man who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said, "The city has fallen!" ²²Now the evening before the man arrived, the hand of the Lord was upon me, and he opened my mouth before the man came to me in the morn-

INSIGHT

The Turning Point

From here forward, Ezekiel offers good news

In the twelfth year of our exile . . . a man who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said, "The city has fallen!" 33:21

To their children parents can seem frighteningly inconsistent. One minute a father is gripping his son's wrist, shouting about something. The next moment, punishment over, he is talking quietly and lovingly to his son. How can he change so drastically? Why so angry one minute and so loving the next?

The sudden change makes sense only if you grasp that most parents hate the role of disciplinarian. They punish in order to correct something they see as harmful. Afterwards, they put punishment behind them as quickly as possible, because they dream of better times in the future.

A Happier Life for Ezekiel

Ezekiel portrays just such a drastic change between God and Israel. Until chapter 33 he had offered mostly anger and threats. Suddenly, in verse 21, the news of Jerusalem's fall reached Ezekiel. The punishment, long threatened, had come. From this point on, Ezekiel's message from God became dominated by dreams of the future—happy dreams. Ezekiel's life became happier too. After seven years of virtual silence (3:26-27—he spoke only what God told him to), he opened his mouth freely again.

God, speaking through Ezekiel, began to paint the future with the same vivid colors he had used to promise punishment. He spoke of Israel as a flock of sheep and himself as their loving shepherd (chapter 34). He previewed the mountains of Israel as they will look under his full blessing (chapter 36)—very different from the prediction given those same mountains in chapter 6.

God showed Ezekiel a valley of dried bones rising up and taking life (chapter 37), a vision that has inspired musicians and preachers ever since. He forecast a fantastic battle with evil forces from the north, Gog and Magog, in which God's people would triumph magnificently (chapters 38-39). Then, in his final vision, God showed Ezekiel the nation of Israel restored, with its boundaries extended far into hostile territory, its temple rebuilt in new splendor (chapters 40-48). The Lord would come back to his home, to live with his people.

The Temple's Significance

The temple, to Israel, was a sign of God's love. By taking up a home there, he committed himself to be with them permanently—not to come and go but to be available at any and all times to his people. When he left the temple (10:18) and let it be razed by the Babylonians (2 Kings 25:9), he communicated clearly that Israel had forfeited any right to his care.

So Ezekiel's vision of a rebuilt temple, with God's glory filling it, was a promise of new hope. The temple has never been rebuilt according to the precise description Ezekiel gave (chapters 40-43), and many scholars understand his portrayal as symbolic. But the central beauty of the temple is this: "THE LORD IS THERE." The glorious, astonishing God whom Ezekiel first saw in the Babylonian desert will make his home in the center of the land. He will not always be angry. He has great plans for the happiness of his people.

Life Questions: In your relationship with God, are you more concerned with past failures? Or with hopes for the future?

ing. So my mouth was opened and I was no longer silent.

²³Then the word of the LORD came to me: ²⁴"Son of man, the people living in those ruins in the land of Israel are saying, 'Abraham was only one man, yet he possessed the land. But we are many; surely the land has been given to us as our possession.'

²⁵Therefore say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Since you eat meat with the blood still in it and look to your idols and shed blood, should you then possess the land? ²⁶You rely on your sword, you do detestable things, and each of you defiles his neighbor's wife. Should you then possess the land?'

²⁷"Say this to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: As surely as I live, those who are left in the ruins will fall by the sword, those out in the country I will give to the wild animals to be devoured, and those in strongholds and caves will die of a plague. ²⁸I will make the land a desolate waste, and her proud strength will come to an end, and the mountains of Israel will become desolate so that no one will cross them. ²⁹Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I have made the land a desolate waste because of all the detestable things they have done.'

³⁰"As for you, son of man, your countrymen are talking together about you by the walls and at the doors of the houses, saying to each other, 'Come and hear the message that has come from the LORD.' ³¹My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain. ³²Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice.

³³"When all this comes true—and it surely will—then they will know that a prophet has been among them."

Shepherds and Sheep

34 The word of the LORD came to me: ¹"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? ²You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. ³You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. ⁴So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. ⁵My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.

⁶"Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: ⁷As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, because my flock lacks a shepherd and so has been plundered and has become food for all

the wild animals, and because my shepherds did not search for my flock but cared for themselves rather than for my flock, ⁸therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the LORD. ⁹This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them.

¹⁰"For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. ¹¹As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. ¹²I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. ¹³I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁴I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD. ¹⁵I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will band up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.

¹⁶"As for you, my flock, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will judge between one sheep and another, and between rams and goats. ¹⁷Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? ¹⁸Must my flock feed on what you have trampled and drink what you have muddied with your feet?

¹⁹"Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says to them: See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. ²⁰Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away, ²¹I will save my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between one

34:11 The Good Shepherd

Ezekiel, who used strong imagery throughout his writing, developed the image of God as a shepherd with more detail than any other author in the Bible. To people who herded sheep for a living, the simile had tremendous impact.

The same comparison is used repeatedly throughout the Bible. One much-loved passage is Psalm 23, which begins, "The LORD is my shepherd." Jesus called himself "the good shepherd" (John 10:11-16) and had compassion on crowds because they were like "sheep without a shepherd" (Mark 6:34). The image of God as a shepherd begins with Jacob (Genesis 48:15) and ends with Revelation 7:17.

sheep and another. ²³I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. ²⁴I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the LORD have spoken.

²⁵"I will make a covenant of peace with them and rid the land of wild beasts so that they may live in the desert and sleep in the forests in safety. ²⁶I will bless them and the places surrounding my hill. ²⁷I will send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessing. ²⁸The trees of the field will yield their fruit and the ground will yield its crops; the people will be secure in their land. They will know that I am the LORD, when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from the hands of those who enslaved them. ²⁹They will no longer be plundered by the nations, nor will wild animals devour them. They will live in safety, and no one will make them afraid. ³⁰I will provide for them a land renowned for its crops, and they will no longer be victims of famine in the land or bear the scorn of the nations. ³¹Then they will know that I, the LORD their God, am with them and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, declares the Sovereign LORD. ³²You my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are people, and I am your God, declares the Sovereign LORD."

A Prophecy Against Edom

35 The word of the LORD came to me: ²"Son of man, set your face against Mount Seir; prophesy against it ³and say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, Mount Seir, and I will stretch out my hand against you and make you a desolate waste. ⁴I will turn your towns into ruins and you will be desolate. Then you will know that I am the LORD

⁵"'Because you harbored an ancient hostility and delivered the Israelites over to the sword at the time of their calamity, the time their punishment reached its climax, ⁶therefore as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I will give you over to bloodshed and it will pursue you. Since you did not hate bloodshed, bloodshed will pursue you. ⁷I will make Mount Seir a desolate waste and cut off from it all who come and go. ⁸I will fill your mountains with the slain; those killed by the sword will fall on your hills and in your valleys and in all your ravines. ⁹I will make you desolate forever; your towns will not be inhabited. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

¹⁰"'Because you have said, "These two nations and countries will be ours and we will take possession of them," even though I the LORD was there, ¹¹therefore as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I will treat you in accordance with the anger and jealousy you showed in your hatred of them and I will make myself known among them when I judge you. ¹²Then you will know that I the LORD have heard all the contemptible things you have said against the mountains of Israel. You said, "They have been laid waste and have been given over to us to devour." ¹³You boasted against

me and spoke against me without restraint, and I heard it. ¹⁴This is what the Sovereign LORD says: While the whole earth rejoices, I will make you desolate. ¹⁵Because you rejoiced when the inheritance of the house of Israel became desolate, that is how I will treat you. You will be desolate, O Mount Seir, you and all of Edom. Then they will know that I am the LORD."

A Prophecy to the Mountains of Israel

36 "Son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel and say, 'O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD. ²This is what the Sovereign LORD says: The enemy said of you, "Aha! The ancient heights have become our possession." ³Therefore prophesy and say, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because they ravaged and hounded you from every side so that you became the possession of the rest of the nations and the object of people's malicious talk and slander, ⁴therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Sovereign LORD. This is what the Sovereign LORD says to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys, to the desolate ruins and the deserted towns that have been plundered and ridiculed by the rest of the nations around you— ⁵this is what the Sovereign LORD says: In my burning zeal I have spoken against the rest of the nations, and against all Edom, for with glee and with malice in their hearts they made my land their own possession so that they might plunder its pastureland.' ⁶Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel and say to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I speak in my jealous wrath because you have suffered the scorn of the nations. ⁷Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I swear with uplifted hand that the nations around you will also suffer scorn.

⁸"'But you, O mountains of Israel, will produce branches and fruit for my people Israel, for they will soon come home. ⁹I am concerned for you and will look on you with favor; you will be plowed and sown, ¹⁰and I will multiply the number of people upon you, even the whole house of Israel. The towns will be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. ¹¹I will increase the number of men and animals upon you, and they will be fruitful and become numerous. I will settle people on you as in the past and will make you prosper more than before. Then you will know that I am the LORD. ¹²I will cause people, my people Israel, to walk upon you. They will possess you, and you will be their inheritance, you will never again deprive them of their children.

¹³"'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because people say to you, "You devour men and deprive your nation of its children," ¹⁴therefore you will no longer devour men or make your nation childless, declares the Sovereign LORD. ¹⁵No longer will I make you hear the taunts of the nations, and no longer will you suffer the scorn of the peoples or cause your nation to fall, declares the Sovereign LORD."

²⁶ Or I will make them and the places surrounding my hill a blessing

¹⁸Again the word of the Lord came to me.

Son of man, when the people of Israel were living in their own land, they defiled it by their conduct and their actions. Their conduct was like a woman's monthly uncleanness in my sight. ¹⁸So I poured out my wrath on them because they had shed blood in the land and because they had defiled it with their idols. ¹⁹I dispersed them among the nations, and they were scattered through the countries; I judged them according to their conduct and their actions. ²⁰And wherever they went among the nations they profaned my holy name, for it was said of them, 'These are the Lord's people, and yet they had to leave his land.'

I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel profaned among the nations where they had gone.

²¹"Therefore say to the house of Israel, This is what the Sovereign Lord says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. ²³I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.

²⁴"For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. ²⁵I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. ²⁶I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. ²⁸You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God. ²⁹I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you. ³⁰I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine. ³¹Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices. ³²I want you to know that I am not doing this for your sake, declares the Sovereign Lord. Be ashamed and disgraced for your conduct, O house of Israel!

³³"This is what the Sovereign Lord says: On

the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will reestablish your towns, and the ruins will be rebuilt.

³⁴The desolate land will be cultivated instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass through it. ³⁵They will say, "This land that was laid waste has become like the garden of Eden, the cities that were lying in ruins, desolate and destroyed, are now fortified and inhabited." ³⁶Then the nations around you that remain will know that I the Lord have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate. I the Lord have spoken, and I will do it."

³⁷"This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Once again I will yield to the plea of the house of Israel and do this for them: I will make their people as numerous as sheep, ³⁸as numerous as the flocks for offerings at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts. So will the ruined cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the Lord."

The Valley of Dry Bones

37 The hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. ³He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

I said, "O Sovereign Lord, you alone know."

⁴Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! ⁵This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. ⁶I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.'"

⁷So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. ⁸I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

⁹Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe into these slain, that they may live.'"

¹⁰So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army. ¹¹Then he said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' ¹²Therefore prophecy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. ¹⁴I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.'"

36:27 A New Spirit

Like Jeremiah, Ezekiel realized that Israel needed more than a fresh start. To avoid making the same mistakes all over again, they needed new motivation and orientation. God must work radical surgery on them, to implant a new heart and a new spirit. Jesus' followers believed that this began when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost (Acts 2:17-21).

³⁵ The Hebrew for this word can also mean *wind* or *spirit* (see verses 6-14).

One Nation Under One King

¹⁵The word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁶"Son of man, take a stick of wood and write on it, 'Belonging to Judah and the Israelites associated with him.' Then take another stick of wood, and write on it, 'Ephraim's stick, belonging to Joseph and all the house of Israel associated with him.' ¹⁷Join them together into one stick so that they will become one in your hand.

¹⁸"When your countrymen ask you, 'Won't you tell us what you mean by this?' ¹⁹Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am going to take the stick of Joseph—which is in Ephraim's hand—and of the Israelite tribes associated with him, and join it to Judah's stick, making them a single stick of wood, and they will become one in my hand.' ²⁰Hold before their eyes the sticks you have written on ²¹and say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. ²²I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms. ²³They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding,^a and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

²⁴"My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees. ²⁵They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children will live there forever, and David my servant will be their prince forever. ²⁶I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever. ²⁷My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people. ²⁸Then the nations will know that I the LORD make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever.' "

A Prophecy Against Gog

38 The word of the LORD came to me: ²"Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of^b Meshech and Tubal; prophesy against him ³and say: 'This is what the

Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. ⁴I will turn you around, put hooks in your jaws and bring you out with your whole army—your horses, your horsemen fully armed, and a great horde with large and small shields, all of them brandishing their swords. ⁵Persia, Cush^d and Put will be with them, all with shields and helmets, ⁶also Gomer with all its troops, and Beth Togarmah from the far north with all its troops—the many nations with you.

⁷"Get ready; be prepared, you and all the hordes gathered about you, and take command of them. ⁸After many days you will be called to arms. In future years you will invade a land that has recovered from war, whose people were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate. They had been brought out from the nations, and now all of them live in safety. ⁹You and all your troops and the many nations with you will go up, advancing like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land.

¹⁰"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On that day thoughts will come into your mind and you will devise an evil scheme. ¹¹You will say, "I will invade a land of unwalled villages; I will attack a peaceful and unsuspecting people—all of them living without walls and without gates and bars. ¹²I will plunder and loot and turn my hand against the resettled ruins and the people gathered from the nations, rich in livestock and goods, living at the center of the land." ¹³Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish and all her villages^e will say to you, "Have you come to plunder? Have you gathered your hordes to loot, to carry off silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods and to seize much plunder?"

¹⁴"Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: In that day, when my people Israel are living in safety, will you not take notice of it? ¹⁵You will come from your place in the far north, you and many nations with you, all of them riding on horses, a great horde, a mighty army. ¹⁶You will advance against my people Israel like a cloud that covers the land. In days to come, O Gog, I will bring you against my land, so that the nations may know me when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.

¹⁷"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Are you not the one I spoke of in former days by my servants the prophets of Israel? At that time they prophesied for years that I would bring you against them. ¹⁸This is what will happen in that day: When Gog attacks the land of Israel, my hot anger will be aroused, declares the Sovereign LORD. ¹⁹In my zeal and fiery wrath I declare that at that time there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. ²⁰The fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, every creature that moves along the ground, and all the people on the face of the earth will tremble at my presence. The mountains will be overturned, the cliffs will crumble and every wall will fall to the ground. ²¹I will

37:22 North and South Reunited

Israel longed to be reunited. They had been split into two nations (sometimes at war) since the days of Solomon, over 300 years before. Yet, like East and West Germany and North and South Korea today, they had not forgotten their common origin. God promised to reunite the two—even though one had been in exile, scattered among other nations, for over 100 years.

^a23 Many Hebrew manuscripts (see also Septuagint), most Hebrew manuscripts all their dwelling places where they sinned
^b2 Or Gog, prince of Rosh.
^c3 Or Gog, prince of Rosh.
^d45 That is, the upper Nile region
^e13 Or her strong lions

²2 Or the

draw a sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Sovereign Lord. Every man will be against his brother. I will execute judgment upon him with plague and bloodshed. I will bring down torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulfur on him and on his troops and on the cities with him. And so I will show my wrath and my holiness, and I will make myself known in the sight of many nations. Then the Sovereign Lord says:

39 "Son of man, prophesy against Gog and say, 'The Sovereign Lord says: I am against you, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. I will bring you around and drag you away from the far north and send you against the mountains of Israel. Then I will bring you from your left hand and make you attack from your right hand. On the day that you will fall, you and all your troops who are with you, I will give you as food to the birds of carrion birds and to the wild beasts. You will fall in the open field, for I have spoken, declares the Sovereign Lord. I will send fire against those who live in safety in the mountains, and they will know that I am the Lord.'

I will make known my holy name among my people Israel. I will no longer let my holy name be profaned, and the nations will know that I the Lord am the Holy One in Israel. It is coming! It will surely take place, declares the Sovereign Lord. This is the day I have spoken of.

Then those who live in the towns of Israel will go out and use the weapons for fuel and burn them up—the small and large shields, the bows and arrows, the war clubs and spears. For seven years they will use them for fuel. They will not need to gather wood from the fields or cut it from the forests, because they will use the weapons for fuel. And they will plunder those who plundered them and loot those who looted them, declares the Sovereign Lord.

On that day I will give Gog a burial place in Israel in the valley of those who travel east toward the Sea. It will block the way of travelers, because Gog and all his hordes will be buried there. So it will be called the Valley of Hamon Gog.

12 "For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them in order to cleanse the land. **13** All the people of the land will bury them, and the day I am glorified will be a memorable day for them, declares the Sovereign Lord.

14 "Men will be regularly employed to cleanse the land. Some will go throughout the land and, in addition to them, others will bury those that remain on the ground. At the end of the seven months they will begin their search. **15** As they go through the land and one of them sees a human bone, he will set up a marker beside it until the gravediggers have buried it in the Valley of Hamon Gog. **16** (Also a town called Hamonah will be there.) And so they will cleanse the land."

17 "Son of man, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: Call out to every kind of bird and all the wild animals. 'Assemble and come together from all around to the sacrifice I am preparing for you, the great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel. There you will eat flesh and drink blood.' **18** You will eat the flesh of mighty men and drink the blood of the princes of the earth as if they were rams and lambs, goats and bulls—all of them fattened animals from Bashan. **19** At the sacrifice I am preparing for you, you will eat fat till you are glutted and drink blood till you are drunk. **20** At my table you will eat your fill of horses and riders, mighty men and soldiers of every kind,' declares the Sovereign Lord.

21 I will display my glory among the nations, and all the nations will see the punishment I inflict and the hand I lay upon them. **22** From that day forward the house of Israel will know that I am the Lord their God. **23** And the nations will know that the people of Israel went into exile for their sin, because they were unfaithful to me. So I hid my face from them and handed them over to their enemies, and they all fell by the sword. **24** I dealt with them according to their uncleanness and their offenses, and I hid my face from them.

25 Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will now bring Jacob back from captivity and will have compassion on all the people of Israel, and I will be zealous for my holy name. **26** They will forget their shame and all the unfaithfulness they showed toward me when they lived in safety in their land with no one to make them afraid. **27** When I have brought them back from the nations and have gathered them from the countries of their enemies, I will show myself holy through them in the sight of many nations. **28** Then they will know that I am the Lord their God, for though I sent them into exile among the nations, I will gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind. **29** I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel, declares the Sovereign Lord."

The New Temple Area

40 In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth of the month, in the fourteenth year after the fall of the city—on that very day the hand of the Lord was upon me and he took me there. **2** In visions of God he took me to the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain, on whose south side were some buildings that looked like a city. **3** He took me there, and I saw a man whose appearance was like bronze; he was standing in the gateway with a linen cord and a measuring rod in his hand. **4** The man said to me, "Son of man, look with your eyes and hear with your ears and pay attention to everything I am going to show you, for that is why you have been brought here. Tell the house of Israel everything you see."

The East Gate to the Outer Court

5 I saw a wall completely surrounding the temple

¹² Or Gog, prince of Rosh. ¹¹ Or of ¹¹ That is, the Dead Sea

¹¹ Hamon Gog means hordes of Gog.

¹⁶ Hamonah

¹²⁵ Or now restore the fortunes of Jacob

area. The length of the measuring rod in the man's hand was six long cubits, each of which was a cubit^a and a handbreadth.^b He measured the wall; it was one measuring rod thick and one rod high.

⁶Then he went to the gate facing east. He climbed its steps and measured the threshold of the gate; it was one rod deep.^c ⁷The alcoves for the guards were one rod long and one rod wide, and the projecting walls between the alcoves were five cubits thick. And the threshold of the gate next to the portico facing the temple was one rod deep.

⁸Then he measured the portico of the gateway; ⁹it^d was eight cubits deep and its jambs were two cubits thick. The portico of the gateway faced the temple.

¹⁰Inside the east gate were three alcoves on each side; the three had the same measurements, and the faces of the projecting walls on each side had the same measurements. ¹¹Then he measured the width of the entrance to the gateway; it was ten cubits and its length was thirteen cubits. ¹²In front of each alcove was a wall one cubit high, and the alcoves were six cubits square. ¹³Then he measured the gateway from the top of the rear wall of one alcove to the top of the opposite one; the distance was twenty-five cubits from one parapet opening to the opposite one. ¹⁴He measured along the faces of the projecting walls all around the inside of the gateway—sixty cubits. The measurement was up to the portico^e facing the courtyard.^f ¹⁵The distance from the entrance of the gateway to the far end of its portico was fifty cubits. ¹⁶The alcoves and the projecting walls inside the gateway were surmounted by narrow parapet openings all around, as was the portico; the openings all around faced inward. The faces of the projecting walls were decorated with palm trees.

The Outer Court

¹⁷Then he brought me into the outer court. There I saw some rooms and a pavement that had been constructed all around the court; there were thirty rooms along the pavement. ¹⁸It abutted the sides of the gateways and was as wide as they were long; this was the lower pavement. ¹⁹Then he measured the distance from the inside of the lower gateway to the outside of the inner court; it was a hundred cubits on the east side as well as on the north.

The North Gate

²⁰Then he measured the length and width of the gate facing north, leading into the outer court. ²¹Its alcoves—three on each side—its projecting walls and its portico had the same measurements as those of the first gateway. It was fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. ²²Its openings, its portico and its palm tree decorations had the same measurements as those of the gate facing east. Seven steps led up to it, with its portico opposite

them. ²³There was a gate to the inner court facing the north gate, just as there was on the east. He measured from one gate to the opposite one; it was a hundred cubits.

The South Gate

²⁴Then he led me to the south side and I saw a gate facing south. He measured its jambs and its portico, and they had the same measurements as the others. ²⁵The gateway and its portico had narrow openings all around, like the openings of the others. It was fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. ²⁶Seven steps led up to it, with its portico opposite them; it had palm tree decorations on the faces of the projecting walls on each side. ²⁷The inner court also had a gate facing south, and he measured from this gate to the outer gate on the south side; it was a hundred cubits.

Gates to the Inner Court

²⁸Then he brought me into the inner court through the south gate, and he measured the south gate; it had the same measurements as the others. ²⁹Its alcoves, its projecting walls and its portico had the same measurements as the others. The gateway and its portico had openings all around. It was fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. ³⁰(The porticoes of the gateways around the inner court were twenty-five cubits wide and five cubits deep.) ³¹Its portico faced the outer court; palm trees decorated its jambs, and eight steps led up to it.

³²Then he brought me to the inner court on the east side, and he measured the gateway; it had the same measurements as the others. ³³Its alcoves, its projecting walls and its portico had the same measurements as the others. The gateway and its portico had openings all around. It was fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. ³⁴Its portico faced the outer court; palm trees decorated the jambs on either side, and eight steps led up to it.

³⁵Then he brought me to the north gate and measured it. It had the same measurements as the others, ³⁶as did its alcoves, its projecting walls and its portico, and it had openings all around. It was fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. ³⁷Its portico^g faced the outer court; palm trees decorated the jambs on either side, and eight steps led up to it.

The Rooms for Preparing Sacrifices

³⁸A room with a doorway was by the portico in each of the inner gateways, where the burnt offerings were washed. ³⁹In the portico of the gateway were two tables on each side, on which the burnt offerings, sin offerings and guilt offerings were slaughtered. ⁴⁰By the outside wall of the portico of the gateway, near the steps at the entrance to the north gateway were two tables, and on the other side of the steps were two tables. ⁴¹So there were four tables on one side of the gateway and four on

^a5 The common cubit was about 1 1/2 feet (about 0.5 meter).

Hebrew deep, the first threshold one rod deep

^b8,9 Many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; most Hebrew manuscripts gateway facing the temple it was one rod deep. ^cThen he measured the portico of the gateway it

projecting wall

jambs

^d14 The meaning of the Hebrew for this verse is uncertain

^e5 That is, about 3 inches (about 8 centimeters)

^f6 Septuagint,

^g14 Septuagint Hebrew

^h13 Septuagint (see also verses 31 and 34), Hebrew

the other—eight tables in all—on which the sacrifices were slaughtered. ⁴²There were also four tables of dressed stone for the burnt offerings, each a cubit and a half long, a cubit and a half wide and a cubit high. On them were placed the utensils for slaughtering the burnt offerings and the other sacrifices. ⁴³And double-pronged hooks, each a handbreadth long, were attached to the wall all around. The tables were for the flesh of the offerings.

Rooms for the Priests

⁴⁴Outside the inner gate, within the inner court, were two rooms, one^a at the side of the north gate and facing south, and another at the side of the south^b gate and facing north. ⁴⁵He said to me,

The room facing south is for the priests who have charge of the temple, ⁴⁶and the room facing north is for the priests who have charge of the altar. These are the sons of Zadok, who are the only Levites who may draw near to the LORD to minister before him.

⁴⁷Then he measured the court: It was square—a hundred cubits long and a hundred cubits wide. And the altar was in front of the temple.

The Temple

⁴⁸He brought me to the portico of the temple and measured the jambs of the portico; they were five cubits wide on either side. The width of the entrance was fourteen cubits and its projecting walls were three cubits wide on either side. ⁴⁹The portico was twenty cubits wide, and twelve^c cubits from front to back. It was reached by a flight of stairs,^e and there were pillars on each side of the jambs.

41 Then the man brought me to the outer sanctuary and measured the jambs; the width of the jambs was six cubits^f on each side.^g ²The entrance was ten cubits wide, and the projecting walls on each side of it were five cubits wide. He also measured the outer sanctuary; it was forty cubits long and twenty cubits wide.

Then he went into the inner sanctuary and measured the jambs of the entrance; each was two cubits wide. The entrance was six cubits wide, and the projecting walls on each side of it were seven cubits wide. ⁴And he measured the length of the inner sanctuary; it was twenty cubits, and its

width was twenty cubits across the end of the outer sanctuary. He said to me, "This is the Most Holy Place."

⁵Then he measured the wall of the temple; it was six cubits thick, and each side room around the temple was four cubits wide. ⁶The side rooms were on three levels, one above another, thirty on each level. There were ledges all around the wall of the temple to serve as supports for the side rooms, so that the supports were not inserted into the wall of the temple. ⁷The side rooms all around the temple were wider at each successive level. The structure surrounding the temple was built in ascending stages, so that the rooms widened as one went upward. A stairway went up from the lowest floor to the top floor through the middle floor.

⁸I saw that the temple had a raised base all around it, forming the foundation of the side rooms. It was the length of the rod, six long cubits. ⁹The outer wall of the side rooms was five cubits thick. The open area between the side rooms of the temple ¹⁰and the [priests'] rooms was twenty cubits wide all around the temple. ¹¹There were entrances to the side rooms from the open area, one on the north and another on the south; and the base adjoining the open area was five cubits wide all around.

¹²The building facing the temple courtyard on the west side was seventy cubits wide. The wall of the building was five cubits thick all around, and its length was ninety cubits.

¹³Then he measured the temple; it was a hundred cubits long, and the temple courtyard and the building with its walls were also a hundred cubits long. ¹⁴The width of the temple courtyard on the east, including the front of the temple, was a hundred cubits.

¹⁵Then he measured the length of the building facing the courtyard at the rear of the temple, including its galleries on each side; it was a hundred cubits.

The outer sanctuary, the inner sanctuary and the portico facing the court, ¹⁶as well as the thresholds and the narrow windows and galleries around the three of them—everything beyond and including the threshold was covered with wood. The floor, the wall up to the windows, and the windows were covered. ¹⁷In the space above the outside of the entrance to the inner sanctuary and on the walls at regular intervals all around the inner and outer sanctuary ¹⁸were carved cherubim and palm trees. Palm trees alternated with cherubim. Each cherub had two faces: ¹⁹the face of a man toward the palm tree on one side and the face of a lion toward the palm tree on the other. They were carved all around the whole temple. ²⁰From the floor to the area above the entrance, cherubim and palm trees were carved on the wall of the outer sanctuary.

²¹The outer sanctuary had a rectangular door-frame, and the one at the front of the Most Holy Place was similar. ²²There was a wooden altar

41:2 Seeing the New Temple

You'll find it easier to visualize Ezekiel's temple if you look at a sketch from a Bible dictionary. (Look under "Temple" or "Ezekiel.") Ezekiel's description reveals fascinating insights. For instance, the number of steps up toward the Holy Place grows greater at each stage, so that a worshiper mounts increasingly higher. But the doorways grow narrower (40:48; 41:2-3)—suggesting that the nearer to God's presence one climbs, the narrower the path he or she must follow.

^a44 Septuagint, Hebrew: two rooms for singers, which were

^b45 Septuagint, Hebrew: door

^c47 Septuagint

^d49 Hebrew Septuagint Ten steps led up to it

^e44 Septuagint, Hebrew: east

^f48 Septuagint, Hebrew: entrance was

^g1 The common cubit was about 1 1/2 feet (about

1 1/2 feet) 1. One Hebrew manuscript and Septuagint, most Hebrew manuscripts: side, the width of the tent

three cubits high and two cubits square^a; its corners, its base^b and its sides were of wood. The man said to me, "This is the table that is before the LORD."²³ Both the outer sanctuary and the Most Holy Place had double doors.²⁴ Each door had two leaves—two hinged leaves for each door.²⁵ And on the doors of the outer sanctuary were carved cherubim and palm trees like those carved on the walls, and there was a wooden overhang on the front of the portico.²⁶ On the sidewalls of the portico were narrow windows with palm trees carved on each side. The side rooms of the temple also had overhangs

Rooms for the Priests

42 Then the man led me northward into the outer court and brought me to the rooms opposite the temple courtyard and opposite the outer wall on the north side.² The building whose door faced north was a hundred cubits^c long and fifty cubits wide.³ Both in the section twenty cubits from the inner court and in the section opposite the pavement of the outer court, gallery faced gallery at the three levels.⁴ In front of the rooms was an inner passageway ten cubits wide and a hundred cubits^d long. Their doors were on the north.⁵ Now the upper rooms were narrower, for the galleries took more space from them than from the rooms on the lower and middle floors of the building.⁶ The rooms on the third floor had no pillars, as the courts had; so they were smaller in floor space than those on the lower and middle floors.⁷ There was an outer wall parallel to the rooms and the outer court; it extended in front of the rooms for fifty cubits.⁸ While the row of rooms on the side next to the outer court was fifty cubits long, the row on the side nearest the sanctuary was a hundred cubits long.⁹ The lower rooms had an entrance on the east side as one enters them from the outer court.

¹⁰ On the south side^e along the length of the wall of the outer court, adjoining the temple courtyard and opposite the outer wall, were rooms¹¹ with a passageway in front of them. These were like the rooms on the north; they had the same length and width, with similar exits and dimensions. Similar to the doorways on the north¹² were the doorways of the rooms on the south. There was a doorway at the beginning of the passageway that was parallel to the corresponding wall extending eastward, by which one enters the rooms.

¹³ Then he said to me, "The north and south rooms facing the temple courtyard are the priests' rooms, where the priests who approach the LORD will eat the most holy offerings. There they will put the most holy offerings—the grain offerings, the sin offerings and the guilt offerings—for the place is holy.¹⁴ Once the priests enter the holy precincts, they are not to go into the outer court until they leave behind the garments in which they minister, for these are holy. They are to put on other clothes

before they go near the places that are for the people."

¹⁵ When he had finished measuring what was inside the temple area, he led me out by the east gate and measured the area all around:¹⁶ He measured the east side with the measuring rod; it was five hundred cubits.¹⁷ He measured the north side; it was five hundred cubits^g by the measuring rod.¹⁸ He measured the south side; it was five hundred cubits by the measuring rod.¹⁹ Then he turned to the west side and measured; it was five hundred cubits by the measuring rod.²⁰ So he measured the area on all four sides. It had a wall around it, five hundred cubits long and five hundred cubits wide, to separate the holy from the common.

The Glory Returns to the Temple

43 Then the man brought me to the gate facing east,² and I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east. His voice was like the roar of rushing waters, and the land was radiant with his glory.³ The vision I saw was like the vision I had seen when he^h came to destroy the city and like the visions I had seen by the Kebar River, and I fell facedown.⁴ The glory of the LORD entered the temple through the gate facing east.⁵ Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

⁶ While the man was standing beside me, I heard someone speaking to me from inside the temple.⁷ He said: "Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place for the soles of my feet. This is where I will live among the Israelites forever. The house of Israel will never again defile my holy name—neither they nor their kings—by their prostitutionⁱ and the lifeless idols^j of their kings at their high places.⁸ When they placed their threshold next to my threshold and their doorposts beside my doorposts, with only a wall between me and them, they defiled my holy name by their detestable practices. So I destroyed them in my anger.⁹ Now let them put away from me their prostitution and the lifeless idols of their kings, and I will live among them forever.

¹⁰ "Son of man, describe the temple to the people of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their sins. Let them consider the plan,¹¹ and if they are ashamed of all they have done, make known to them the design of the temple—its arrangement, its exits and entrances—its whole design and all its

43:4 The Glory Returns

Nineteen years had passed since Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord leave the temple (11:22-23). That temple was now dust and ashes and broken^k ones: the conquering Babylonians had burnt and destroyed it. The new temple Ezekiel saw in his vision symbolized that God would live again with his renewed people.

^a22 Septuagint, Hebrew long

^b22 Septuagint, Hebrew length

^c4 Septuagint and Syriac; Hebrew and one cubit

^d10 Septuagint;

rods; also in verses 18 and 19.

^e17 Septuagint, Hebrew rods

manuscripts l ^f7 Or their spiritual adultery; also in verse 9

^g2 The common cubit was about 1 1/2 feet (about 0.5 meter).

Hebrew Eastward ^h16 See Septuagint of verse 17; Hebrew

ⁱ3 Some Hebrew manuscripts and Vulgate; most Hebrew

^j7 Or the corpses, also in verse 9

regulations^a and laws. Write these down before them so that they may be faithful to its design and follow all its regulations.

¹²"This is the law of the temple: All the surrounding area on top of the mountain will be most holy. Such is the law of the temple.

The Altar

These are the measurements of the altar in long cubits, that cubit being a cubit^b and a hand-breadth. Its gutter is a cubit deep and a cubit wide, with a rim of one span^c around the edge. And this is the height of the altar. ¹⁴From the gutter on the ground up to the lower ledge it is two cubits high and a cubit wide, and from the smaller ledge up to the larger ledge it is four cubits high and a cubit wide. ¹⁵The altar hearth is four cubits high, and four horns project upward from the hearth. ¹⁶The altar hearth is square, twelve cubits long and twelve cubits wide. ¹⁷The upper ledge also is square, fourteen cubits long and fourteen cubits wide, with a rim of half a cubit and a gutter of a cubit all around. The steps of the altar face east."

¹⁸Then he said to me, "Son of man, this is what the Sovereign LORD says. These will be the regulations for sacrificing burnt offerings and sprinkling blood upon the altar when it is built: ¹⁹You are to give a young bull as a sin offering to the priests, who are Levites, of the family of Zadok, who come near to minister before me, declares the Sovereign LORD. ²⁰You are to take some of its blood and put it on the four horns of the altar and on the four corners of the upper ledge and all around the rim, and so purify the altar and make atonement for it. ²¹You are to take the bull for the sin offering and burn it in the designated part of the temple area outside the sanctuary.

²²"On the second day you are to offer a male goat without defect for a sin offering, and the altar is to be purified as it was purified with the bull. ²³When you have finished purifying it, you are to offer a young bull and a ram from the flock, both without defect. ²⁴You are to offer them before the LORD, and the priests are to sprinkle salt on them and sacrifice them as a burnt offering to the LORD.

²⁵"For seven days you are to provide a male goat daily for a sin offering; you are also to provide a young bull and a ram from the flock, both without defect. ²⁶For seven days they are to make atonement for the altar and cleanse it; thus they will dedicate it. ²⁷At the end of these days, from the eighth day on, the priests are to present your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings^d on the altar. Then I will accept you, declares the Sovereign LORD."

The Prince, the Levites, the Priests

44 Then the man brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary, the one facing east, and it was shut. ²The LORD said to me, "This gate is to remain shut. It must not be opened; no one may enter through it. It is to remain shut because the LORD, the God of Israel, has entered through it.

³The prince himself is the only one who may sit inside the gateway to eat in the presence of the LORD. He is to enter by way of the portico of the gateway and go out the same way."

⁴Then the man brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the temple. I looked and saw the glory of the LORD filling the temple of the LORD, and I fell facedown.

⁵The LORD said to me, "Son of man, look carefully, listen closely and give attention to everything I tell you concerning all the regulations regarding the temple of the LORD. Give attention to the entrance of the temple and all the exits of the sanctuary. ⁶Say to the rebellious house of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Enough of your detestable practices, O house of Israel! ⁷In addition to all your other detestable practices, you brought foreigners uncircumcised in heart and flesh into my sanctuary, desecrating my temple while you offered me food, fat and blood, and you broke my covenant. ⁸Instead of carrying out your duty in regard to my holy things, you put others in charge of my sanctuary. ⁹This is what the Sovereign LORD says: No foreigner uncircumcised in heart and flesh is to enter my sanctuary, not even the foreigners who live among the Israelites.

¹⁰"The Levites who went far from me when Israel went astray and who wandered from me after their idols must bear the consequences of their sin. ¹¹They may serve in my sanctuary, having charge of the gates of the temple and serving in it; they may slaughter the burnt offerings and sacrifices for the people and stand before the people and serve them. ¹²But because they served them in the presence of their idols and made the house of Israel fall into sin, therefore I have sworn with uplifted hand that they must bear the consequences of their sin, declares the Sovereign LORD. ¹³They are not to come near to serve me as priests or come near any of my holy things or my most holy offerings; they must bear the shame of their detestable practices. ¹⁴Yet I will put them in charge of the duties of the temple and all the work that is to be done in it.

¹⁵"But the priests, who are Levites and descendants of Zadok and who faithfully carried out the duties of my sanctuary when the Israelites went astray from me, are to come near to minister before me; they are to stand before me to offer sacrifices of fat and blood, declares the Sovereign LORD. ¹⁶They alone are to enter my sanctuary; they alone are to come near my table to minister before me and perform my service.

¹⁷"When they enter the gates of the inner court, they are to wear linen clothes; they must not wear any woolen garment while ministering at the gates of the inner court or inside the temple. ¹⁸They are to wear linen turbans on their heads and linen undergarments around their waists. They must not wear anything that makes them perspire. ¹⁹When they go out into the outer court where the people are, they are to take off the clothes they have been ministering in and are to

^a1. Some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint: most Hebrew manuscripts: regulations and its whole design.

^b13 That is, about 3 inches (about 8 centimeters).

^c27 Traditionally: peace offerings.

^d13 The common cubit was about 1 1/2 feet (about 0.5 meter).

^e13 That is, about 9 inches (about 22 centimeters).

eat them in the sacred rooms and put on other robes so that they do not consecrate the people by means of their garments.

They must not shave their heads or let their hair grow long, but they are to keep the hair of their heads trimmed. A priest is to drink wine when he enters the inner court. They must not marry widows or divorced women; they may marry only virgins of Israelite descent or widows of priests. They are to teach my people the difference between the holy and the common and show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean.

In any dispute, the priests are to serve as judges and decide it according to my ordinances. They are to keep my laws and my decrees for all my appointed feasts, and they are to keep my Sabbaths holy.

A priest must not denile himself by going near a dead person, however, if the dead person was his father or mother, son or daughter, brother or unmarried sister, then he may denile himself. After he is cleansed, he must wait seven days. On the day he goes into the inner court of the sanctuary to minister in the sanctuary, he is to offer a sin offering for himself, declares the Sovereign LORD.

I am to be the only inheritance the priests have. You are to give them no possession in Israel; I will be their possession. They will eat the grain offerings, the sin offerings and the guilt offerings, and everything in Israel devoted to the LORD will belong to them. The best of all the firstfruits and all your special gifts will belong to the priests. You are to give them the first portion of your ground meal so that a blessing may rest on your household. The priests must not eat anything, bird or animal, found dead or torn by wild animals.

Division of the Land

45 "When you allot the land as an inheritance, you are to present to the LORD a portion of the land as a sacred district, 25,000 cubits long and 20,000 cubits wide; the entire area will belong to him. Of this, a section 500 cubits square is to be for the sanctuary, with 50 cubits around it for open land. In the sacred district, measure off a section 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 cubits wide. In it will be the sanctuary, the Most Holy Place. It will be the sacred portion of the land for the priests, who minister in the sanctuary and who draw near to minister before the LORD. It will be a place for their houses as well as a holy place for the sanctuary. An area 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 cubits wide will belong to the Levites, who serve in the temple, as their possession for towns to live in."

"You are to give the city as its property an area 5,000 cubits wide and 25,000 cubits long, adjoining the sacred portion; it will belong to the whole house of Israel."

"The prince will have the land bordering each side of the area formed by the sacred district and the property of the city. It will extend westward from the west side and eastward from the east side, running lengthwise from the western to the eastern border parallel to one of the tribal portions. This land will be his possession in Israel. And my princes will no longer oppress my people but will allow the house of Israel to possess the land according to their tribes."

"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: You have gone far enough, O princes of Israel! Give up your violence and oppression and do what is just and right. Stop dispossessing my people, declares the Sovereign LORD. You are to use accurate scales, an accurate ephah and an accurate bath. The ephah and the bath are to be the same size, the bath containing a tenth of a homer and the ephah a tenth of a homer; the homer is to be the standard measure for both. The shekel is to consist of twenty gerahs. Twenty shekels plus twenty-five shekels plus fifteen shekels equal one mina."

Offerings and Holy Days

"This is the special gift you are to offer: a sixth of an ephah from each homer of wheat and a sixth of an ephah from each homer of barley. The prescribed portion of oil, measured by the bath, is a tenth of a bath from each cor (which consists of ten baths or one homer, for ten baths are equivalent to a homer). Also one sheep is to be taken from every flock of two hundred from the well-watered pastures of Israel. These will be used for the grain offerings, burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to make atonement for the people, declares the Sovereign LORD. All the people of the land will participate in this special gift for the use of the prince in Israel. It will be the duty of the prince to provide the burnt offerings, grain offerings and drink offerings at the festivals, the New Moons and the Sabbaths—at all the appointed feasts of the house of Israel. He will provide the sin offerings, grain offerings, burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to make atonement for the house of Israel."

"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: In the first month on the first day you are to take a young bull without defect and purify the sanctuary. The

45:10 Honest Weight

The Bible, always practical, doesn't bother to define honesty in philosophic terms. It merely says, "Don't cheat on your measures." Such cheating was a common problem in Judah (see, for instance, Micah 6:10-12). Archaeologists have found many weights once used in Hebrew marketplaces, but very few have weighed exactly the weight inscribed on them.

²⁹ The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD and ⁴⁸ Hebrew ³⁰ 44.

³¹ Septuagint, Hebrew ³² temple; they will have as their possession towns. ³³ That is, about 7 miles (about 12 kilometers).

³⁴ A shekel weighed about 2.5 ounce (about 11.5 grams).

³⁵ A homer was a dry measure is, 60 shekels, the common mina was 50 shekels.

³⁶ Traditionally peace offerings, also in verse 17.

³⁷ Septuagint (see also verses 3 and 5).

³⁸ That is, about 3 miles (about 5 kilometers).

³⁹ An ephah was a dry measure.

⁴⁰ A bath was a

⁴¹ That

priest is to take some of the blood of the sin offering and put it on the doorposts of the temple, on the four corners of the upper ledge of the altar and on the gateposts of the inner court. ²⁰You are to do the same on the seventh day of the month for anyone who sins unintentionally or through ignorance: so you are to make atonement for the temple.

²¹"In the first month on the fourteenth day you are to observe the Passover, a feast lasting seven days, during which you shall eat bread made without yeast. ²²On that day the prince is to provide a bull as a sin offering for himself and for all the people of the land. ²³Every day during the seven days of the Feast he is to provide seven bulls and seven rams without defect as a burnt offering to the LORD, and a male goat for a sin offering. ²⁴He is to provide as a grain offering an ephah for each bull and an ephah for each ram, along with a hin^a of oil for each ephah.

²⁵"During the seven days of the Feast, which begins in the seventh month on the fifteenth day, he is to make the same provision for sin offerings, burnt offerings, grain offerings and oil.

46 "This is what the Sovereign LORD says. The gate of the inner court facing east is to be shut on the six working days, but on the Sabbath day and on the day of the New Moon it is to be opened. ²The prince is to enter from the outside through the portico of the gateway and stand by the gatepost. The priests are to sacrifice his burnt offering and his fellowship offerings.^b He is to worship at the threshold of the gateway and then go out, but the gate will not be shut until evening. ³On the Sabbaths and New Moons the people of the land are to worship in the presence of the LORD at the entrance to that gateway. ⁴The burnt offering the prince brings to the LORD on the Sabbath day is to be six male lambs and a ram, all without defect. ⁵The grain offering given with the ram is to be an ephah,^c and the grain offering with the lambs is to be as much as he pleases, along with a hin^a of oil for each ephah. ⁶On the day of the New Moon he is to offer a young bull, six lambs and a ram, all without defect. ⁷He is to provide as a grain offering one ephah with the bull, one ephah with the ram, and with the lambs as much as he wants to give, along with a hin of oil with each ephah. ⁸When the prince enters, he is to go in through the portico of the gateway, and he is to come out the same way.

⁹"When the people of the land come before the LORD at the appointed feasts, whoever enters by the north gate to worship is to go out the south gate; and whoever enters by the south gate is to go out the north gate. No one is to return through the gate by which he entered, but each is to go out the opposite gate. ¹⁰The prince is to be among them, going in when they go in and going out when they go out.

¹¹"At the festivals and the appointed feasts, the grain offering is to be an ephah with a bull, an ephah with a ram, and with the lambs as much as

one pleases, along with a hin of oil for each ephah. ¹²When the prince provides a freewill offering to the LORD—whether a burnt offering or fellowship offerings—the gate facing east is to be opened for him. He shall offer his burnt offering or his fellowship offerings as he does on the Sabbath day. Then he shall go out, and after he has gone out, the gate will be shut.

¹³"Every day you are to provide a year-old lamb without defect for a burnt offering to the LORD; morning by morning you shall provide it. ¹⁴You are also to provide with it morning by morning a grain offering, consisting of a sixth of an ephah with a third of a hin of oil to moisten the flour. The presenting of this grain offering to the LORD is a lasting ordinance. ¹⁵So the lamb and the grain offering and the oil shall be provided morning by morning for a regular burnt offering.

¹⁶"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: If the prince makes a gift from his inheritance to one of his sons, it will also belong to his descendants; it is to be their property by inheritance. ¹⁷If, however, he makes a gift from his inheritance to one of his servants, the servant may keep it until the year of freedom; then it will revert to the prince. His inheritance belongs to his sons only; it is theirs. ¹⁸The prince must not take any of the inheritance of the people, driving them off their property. He is to give his sons their inheritance out of his own property, so that none of my people will be separated from his property."

¹⁹Then the man brought me through the entrance at the side of the gate to the sacred rooms facing north, which belonged to the priests, and showed me a place at the western end. ²⁰He said to me, "This is the place where the priests will cook the guilt offering and the sin offering and bake the grain offering, to avoid bringing them into the outer court and consecrating the people."

²¹He then brought me to the outer court and led me around to its four corners, and I saw in each corner another court. ²²In the four corners of the outer court were enclosed^d courts, forty cubits long and thirty cubits wide; each of the courts in the four corners was the same size. ²³Around the inside of each of the four courts was a ledge of stone, with places for fire built all around under the ledge. ²⁴He said to me, "These are the kitchens where those who minister at the temple will cook the sacrifices of the people."

The River From the Temple

47 The man brought me back to the entrance of the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar. ²He then brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was flowing from the south side.

³As the man went eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off a thousand cu-

^a24.5 That is, probably about 4 quarts (about 4 liters) about 3/5 bushel (about 22 liters)

^b2 Traditionally peace offerings, also in verse 12

^c5 That is, probably

^d22 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain

bits^a and then led me through water that was ankle-deep. ⁴He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water that was knee-deep. He measured off another thousand and led me through water that was up to the waist. ⁵He measured off another thousand, but now it was a river that I could not cross, because the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in—a river that no one could cross. ⁶He asked me, "Son of man, do you see this?"

Then he led me back to the bank of the river. When I arrived there, I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river. ⁸He said to me,

This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah,^b where it enters the Sea.^c When it empties into the Sea,^c the water there becomes fresh. ⁹Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live. ¹⁰Fishermen will stand along the shore; from En Gedi to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds—like the fish of the Great Sea.^d ¹¹But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. ¹²Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing."

The Boundaries of the Land

¹³This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "These are the boundaries by which you are to divide the land for an inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel, with two portions for Joseph. ¹⁴You are to divide it equally among them. Because I swore with uplifted hand to give it to your forefathers, this land will become your inheritance.

¹⁵"This is to be the boundary of the land:

"On the north side it will run from the Great Sea by the Hethlon road past Lebo^e Hamath to Zedad, ¹⁶Berothah^f and Sibraim (which lies on the border between Damascus and Hamath), as far as Hazer Hatticon, which is on the border of Hauran. ¹⁷The boundary will extend from the sea to Hazer Enan,^g

along the northern border of Damascus, with the border of Hamath to the north. This will be the north boundary.

¹⁸"On the east side the boundary will run between Hauran and Damascus, along the Jordan between Gilead and the land of Israel, to the eastern sea and as far as Tamar.^h This will be the east boundary.

¹⁹"On the south side it will run from Tamar as far as the waters of Meribah Kadesh, then along the Wadi of Egypt to the Great Sea. This will be the south boundary.

²⁰"On the west side, the Great Sea will be the boundary to a point opposite Lebo^e Hamath. This will be the west boundary.

²¹"You are to distribute this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel. ²²You are to allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the aliens who have settled among you and who have children. You are to consider them as native-born Israelites; along with you they are to be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel. ²³In whatever tribe the alien settles, there you are to give him his inheritance," declares the Sovereign LORD.

The Division of the Land

48 "These are the tribes, listed by name: At the northern frontier, Dan will have one portion; it will follow the Hethlon road to Lebo^e Hamath; Hazer Enan and the northern border of Damascus next to Hamath will be part of its border from the east side to the west side.

²"Asher will have one portion; it will border the territory of Dan from east to west.

³"Naphtali will have one portion; it will border the territory of Asher from east to west.

⁴"Manasseh will have one portion; it will border the territory of Naphtali from east to west.

⁵"Ephraim will have one portion; it will border the territory of Manasseh from east to west.

⁶"Reuben will have one portion; it will border the territory of Ephraim from east to west.

⁷"Judah will have one portion; it will border the territory of Reuben from east to west.

⁸"Bordering the territory of Judah from east to west will be the portion you are to present as a special gift. It will be 25,000 cubits^k wide, and its length from east to west will equal one of the tribal portions; the sanctuary will be in the center of it.

⁹"The special portion you are to offer to the LORD will be 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 cubits^l wide. ¹⁰This will be the sacred portion for the priests. It will be 25,000 cubits long on the north side, 10,000 cubits wide on the west side, 10,000 cubits wide on the east side and 25,000 cubits long on the south side. In the center of it will be the sanctuary of the LORD. ¹¹This will be for the consecrated priests, the Zadokites, who were faithful in serving me and did not go astray as the Levites did when the Israelites went astray. ¹²It will be a

^a3 That is, about 1,500 feet (about 450 meters) Mediterranean, also in verses 15, 19 and 20
^bgo into Zedad, ¹⁶Hamath, Berothah
^cmeasure to the eastern sea
^d19 That is, about 3 miles (about 5 kilometers)

^e8 Or the Jordan Valley
^f15 Or past the entrance to
^g17 Hebrew Enon, a variant of Enan

^h8 That is, the Dead Sea
ⁱ10 That is, the
^j15,16 See Septuagint and Ezekiel 48 1, Hebrew road to
^k18 Septuagint and Syriac; Hebrew Israel. You will
^l18 That is, about 7 miles (about 12,

special gift to them from the sacred portion of the land, a most holy portion, bordering the territory of the Levites

13"Alongside the territory of the priests, the Levites will have an allotment 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 cubits wide. Its total length will be 25,000 cubits and its width 10,000 cubits. 14They must not sell or exchange any of it. This is the best of the land and must not pass into other hands, because it is holy to the LORD

15"The remaining area, 5,000 cubits wide and 25,000 cubits long, will be for the common use of the city, for houses and for pastureland. The city will be in the center of it 16and will have these measurements: the north side 4,500 cubits, the south side 4,500 cubits, the east side 4,500 cubits, and the west side 4,500 cubits. 17The pastureland for the city will be 250 cubits on the north, 250 cubits on the south, 250 cubits on the east, and 250 cubits on the west. 18What remains of the area, bordering on the sacred portion and running the length of it, will be 10,000 cubits on the east side and 10,000 cubits on the west side. Its produce will supply food for the workers of the city. 19The workers from the city who farm it will come from all the tribes of Israel. 20The entire portion will be a square, 25,000 cubits on each side. As a special gift you will set aside the sacred portion, along with the property of the city

21"What remains on both sides of the area formed by the sacred portion and the city property will belong to the prince. It will extend eastward from the 25,000 cubits of the sacred portion to the eastern border, and westward from the 25,000 cubits to the western border. Both these areas running the length of the tribal portions will belong to the prince, and the sacred portion with the temple sanctuary will be in the center of them. 22So the property of the Levites and the property of the city will lie in the center of the area that belongs to the prince. The area belonging to the prince will lie

between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin.

23"As for the rest of the tribes: Benjamin will have one portion; it will extend from the east side to the west side.

24"Simeon will have one portion; it will border the territory of Benjamin from east to west.

25"Issachar will have one portion; it will border the territory of Simeon from east to west.

26"Zebulun will have one portion; it will border the territory of Issachar from east to west.

27"Gad will have one portion; it will border the territory of Zebulun from east to west.

28"The southern boundary of Gad will run south from Tamar to the waters of Meribah Kadesh, then along the Wadi of Egypt, to the Great Sea.^a

29"This is the land you are to allot as an inheritance to the tribes of Israel, and these will be their portions," declares the Sovereign LORD.

The Gates of the City

30"These will be the exits of the city: Beginning on the north side, which is 4,500 cubits long, 31the gates of the city will be named after the tribes of Israel. The three gates on the north side will be the gate of Reuben, the gate of Judah and the gate of Levi.

32"On the east side, which is 4,500 cubits long, will be three gates: the gate of Joseph, the gate of Benjamin and the gate of Dan.

33"On the south side, which measures 4,500 cubits, will be three gates: the gate of Simeon, the gate of Issachar and the gate of Zebulun.

34"On the west side, which is 4,500 cubits long, will be three gates: the gate of Gad, the gate of Asher and the gate of Naphtali.

35"The distance all around will be 18,000 cubits. "And the name of the city from that time on will be:

THE LORD IS THERE."

^a28 That is, the Mediterranean

DANIEL

INTRODUCTION

“Kidnapped”

Even as prime minister, Daniel remained a lonely outsider

Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. 1:8

As a young man, Daniel could have anticipated an outstanding future in Jerusalem. He came from a prominent family, and he had a first-rate mind (1:4). But, when the Babylonian army dragged him captive to a faraway country, they didn't ask about his plans and dreams.

True, the Babylonians recognized Daniel's potential and put him into a top civil service training program. But even the study material was distasteful to a Jew: it covered sorcery, magic, and a pagan, multigod religion. After graduation Daniel was put to work for the Babylonian king, who continued to war against Daniel's people for nearly 20 more years.

Anyone far from home feels lonely. But Daniel was one of those whose lives get lost in the shuffle of history—refugees, captives. He was destined to spend his life as an alien in Babylon. We have no record that he ever married or had family members nearby.

Great Personal Courage

Through his ability and God's blessing he rose to the post of prime minister of Babylon. Yet he remained an outsider. The higher he rose, the more prominent a target he became. Babylonians resented his foreign background and his political success. Their plots put him under pressure to compromise his faith, to fit in, to bend his principles. His life was often at risk.

Daniel's career near the top lasted at least 66 years, so that by the time he was thrown into the lions' den (chapter 6), he must have been in his 80s. Throughout these years he labored with great effectiveness for Babylon. He was respectful and diligent, even though working for pagan kings. Yet he never compromised his faith. He would not bend, even when threatened with death. The Bible offers no better model of how to live with and serve people who do not share or respect your beliefs.

The Shape of the Future

Near the end of Daniel's life God gave him a series of visions, described in chapters 7-12. In graphic images God showed Daniel the pattern of future history. Daniel's people would duplicate his own experience, but on a world stage.

The Jews, Daniel's visions showed, would be caught in a political storm, battered about by a series of world empires. Daniel foresaw nations raging in battle against each other. He foresaw God's people thrown in between these nations, suffering through no fault of their own. They would be helpless until God himself rescued them from their troubles. Daniel foresaw, in the end, all people falling down to worship “one like a son of man.” This was the title Jesus applied to himself when he came, nearly a thousand years after Daniel, to bring the good news of salvation for all people.

Spreading the Word

Daniel's people had thought of God in terms of their own small community, their own capital city and the temple there. Not only were the Jews God's chosen people, but (they tended to think) they held exclusive rights to him.

But God had never intended his blessings to stop with the Jews. He had the world in mind. At the time he called Abraham, he had promised that through Abraham's offspring he would bless the whole earth (Genesis 12:3).

The Jews had found it difficult enough to keep their own faith, let alone spread it to others. Only while captives in Babylon, unwillingly dragged far from home, did they begin to convince others that their God deserved honor. The proclamations Nebuchadnezzar and Darius made

because of Daniel (1:7, 16, 20, 22) honored God more than anything a king of Judah had done in years.

How to Read Daniel

Daniel breaks into two parts, each quite different from the other. The first six chapters tell the "famous" Daniel stories—including the stories of three men thrown into a fiery furnace and Daniel in the lions' den. Any of these chapters would make a script for a thriller. As you read them, reflect on the principles Daniel lived by, far from home and in dangerous circumstances. Ask yourself what Daniel can teach you about faithfulness to God in similarly "alien" circumstances.

Most people find chapters 7–12 far more difficult. They record Daniel's visions about the future of world history. Such symbolism was a familiar mode of expression in the ancient world, but it reads very strangely now—almost like science fiction. Look for broad impressions of how God's people can live, caught in the jaws of brutal world politics. Let the visual symbols engage your emotions and imagination.

If you seek a more detailed understanding of these visions, a commentary on Daniel will be a great help. In some passages, background information on ancient world history is essential. A good commentary can offer this, along with an interpretation of difficult symbols.

You can place Daniel's message in the context of Israelite history by looking at "A Lineup of Rulers," page 330.

PLANS FOR READING DANIEL

PLAN 1: An Overview of Daniel in 4 Days

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to Daniel and chapter 1, which describes Daniel's courage in rejecting compromise. He set a lifelong pattern.
- ☐ Day 2. Read chapter 3, the famous story of three men thrown into a fiery furnace.
- ☐ Day 3. Read chapter 5, the "handwriting on the wall" that announced the destruction of a great empire.
- ☐ Day 4. Read chapter 6, Daniel in the lions' den.

PLAN 2: All of Daniel in 12 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12

Daniel's Training in Babylon

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. **2** And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylon^a and put in the treasure house of his god.

3 Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring in some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility—**4** young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians.^b **5** The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service.

6 Among these were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. **7** The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

8 But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. **9** Now God had caused the official to show favor and sympathy to Daniel, **10** but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you."

11 Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, **12** "Please test your servants for ten days. Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. **13** Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with

^a2 Hebrew *Shinar*

^b4 Or *Chaldeans*

^c10 The Hebrew for *you* and *you* in this verse is plural.

what you see." ¹⁴So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days

¹⁵At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. ¹⁶So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

¹⁷To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds

¹⁸At the end of the time set by the king to bring them in, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. ²⁰In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom

²¹And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

2 In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep. ²So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers^a to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king, ³he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means."^b

⁴Then the astrologers answered the king in Aramaic,^c "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

⁵The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble. ⁶But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me."

⁷Once more they replied, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

⁸Then the king answered, "I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided: ⁹If you do not tell me the dream, there is just one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change.

2:4 A Change in Language

The astrologers spoke in Aramaic, the most common language of the Middle East during this period. From this point through chapter 7, Daniel was written in Aramaic, instead of Hebrew. Only the book of Ezra is similarly split into two languages. Some theorize that these chapters would have been of general interest throughout the Middle East and so were put in a language everyone could understand.

So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me."

¹⁰The astrologers answered the king, "There is not a man on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer. ¹¹What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among men."

¹²This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon. ¹³So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

¹⁴When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact. ¹⁵He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel. ¹⁶At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

¹⁷Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. ¹⁸He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. ¹⁹During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven ²⁰and said:

"Praise be to the name of God for ever and
ever;

wisdom and power are his.

²¹He changes times and seasons;

he sets up kings and deposes them.

He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.

²²He reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what lies in darkness,
and light dwells with him.

²³I thank and praise you, O God of my fathers:
You have given me wisdom and power,
you have made known to me what we asked of
you,

you have made known to us the dream of
the king."

Daniel Interprets the Dream

²⁴Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, "Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him."

²⁵Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means."

²⁶The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?"

²⁷Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, ²⁸but there is a God in

^{a2} Or Chaldeans, also in verses 4, 5 and 10

^{b3} Or was

^{c4} The text from here through chapter 7 is in Aramaic

heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you lay on your bed are these:

28 As you were lying there, O king, your mind was troubled and the thoughts of your heart were shown you what is going to happen. 29 As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than other living men, but so that you, O king, may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

30 "You looked, O king, and there before you stood a large statue—an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance. 31 The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. 32 While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. 33 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.

34 "This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king. 35 You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; 36 in your hands he has placed mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold.

37 "After you, another kingdom will rise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. 38 Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron—for iron breaks and smashes everything—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. 39 Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom, yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. 40 As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. 41 And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay.

42 "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. 43 This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces.

"The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and the interpretation is trustworthy."

44 Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate to

the ground and bowed before Daniel and said, "I am convinced that your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and the giver of life. From now on I will serve him. For you were able to reveal this mystery to me."

45 Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and gave him many gifts of honor. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its soldiers. Moreover, at Daniel's request the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego administrators over the province of Babylon, while Daniel himself remained at the royal court.

The Image of Gold and the Fiery Furnace

3 King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, sixty feet high, nine feet wide and set it up on the plain of Duran in the province of Babylon. He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up. So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it.

4 Then the herald loudly proclaimed: "This is what you are commanded to do, O peoples, nations and men of every language. As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace."

5 Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

6 At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. They said to King Nebuchadnezzar: "O king, live forever! You have issued a decree, O king, that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, harp, pipes and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold—and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace. But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, O king. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up."

7 Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, and King Nebuchadnezzar said to them: "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods nor worship the image of gold I have set up? Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, do you not readily fall down and wor-

the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"

¹⁶Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. ¹⁷If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. ¹⁸But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

¹⁹Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual ²⁰and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. ²¹So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. ²²The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, ²³and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

²⁴Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?"

They replied, "Certainly, O king."

²⁵He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."

²⁶Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!"

So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, ²⁷and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

²⁸Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. ²⁹Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way."

³⁰Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of a Tree

4 King Nebuchadnezzar,

To the peoples, nations and men of every language, who live in all the world:

May you prosper greatly!

²It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me.

³How great are his signs,

how mighty his wonders!

His kingdom is an eternal kingdom;

his dominion endures from generation to generation.

⁴I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous. ⁵I had a dream that made me afraid. As I was lying in my bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me. ⁶So I commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be brought before me to interpret the dream for me. ⁷When the magicians, enchanters, astrologers^a and diviners came, I told them the dream, but they could not interpret it for me. ⁸Finally, Daniel came into my presence and I told him the dream. (He is called Belteshazzar, after the name of my god, and the spirit of the holy gods is in him.)

⁹I said, "Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no mystery is too difficult for you. Here is my dream; interpret it for me. ¹⁰These are the visions I saw while lying in my bed: I looked, and there before me stood a tree in the middle of the land. Its height was enormous.

¹¹The tree grew large and strong and its top touched the sky; it was visible to the ends of the earth. ¹²Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit abundant, and on it was food for all. Under it the beasts of the field found shelter, and the birds of the air lived in its branches; from it every creature was fed.

¹³"In the visions I saw while lying in my bed, I looked, and there before me was a messenger,^b a holy one, coming down from heaven. ¹⁴He called in a loud voice: 'Cut down the tree and trim off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the animals flee from under it and the birds from its branches. ¹⁵But let the stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze, remain in the ground, in the grass of the field.

"Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him live with the animals among the plants of the earth. ¹⁶Let his mind

4:8 The Name of a God

Names were extremely important in biblical times, for they conveyed something of a person's identity. Thus God sometimes gave a person a new name to indicate a changed life. However, the name the Babylonians presented to Daniel, Belteshazzar, was no gift from God. It was taken from "Bel," a title for the Babylonian god Marduk. Daniel was surrounded by an alien culture and could not avoid every aspect of it.

^a7 Or Chaldeans

^b13 Or watchman; also in verses 17 and 23

be changed from that of a man and let him be given the mind of an animal. All seven times pass by for him.

¹⁷ The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men.

¹⁸ This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now Belteshazzar tell me what it means, for none of the wise men in my kingdom can interpret it for me. But you can, because the spirit of the holy gods is in you."

Daniel Interprets the Dream

¹⁹ Then Daniel (also called Belteshazzar) was greatly perplexed for a time, and his thoughts terrified him. So the king said, "Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its meaning alarm you.

Belteshazzar answered, "My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries!" ²⁰The tree you saw, which grew large and strong, with its top touching the sky, visible to the whole earth, ²¹with beautiful leaves and abundant fruit, providing food for all, giving shelter to the beasts of the field, and having nesting places in its branches for the birds of the air— ²²you, O king, are that tree! You have become great and strong; your greatness has grown until it reaches the sky, and your dominion extends to distant parts of the earth.

²³ "You, O king, saw a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, 'Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump, bound with iron and bronze, in the grass of the field, while its roots remain in the ground. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven; let him live like the wild animals, until seven times pass by for him.'

²⁴ This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king: ²⁵You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes. ²⁶The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules. ²⁷Therefore, O king, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue."

The Dream Is Fulfilled

²⁸ All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. ²⁹Twelve months later, as the king was

walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, ³⁰he said, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?"

³¹ The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven, "This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. ³²You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes."

³³ Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like cattle. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird.

³⁴ At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven; and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever.

His dominion is an eternal dominion;
his kingdom endures from generation to generation.

³⁵ All the peoples of the earth
are regarded as nothing.

He does as he pleases
with the powers of heaven
and the peoples of the earth.

No one can hold back his hand
or say to him: "What have you done?"

³⁶ At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honor and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before. ³⁷Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

The Writing on the Wall

5 King Belshazzar gave a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine with them. ²While Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver gob-

5:1 The Throne Room

Modern archaeological excavation has found, in the Babylonian palace, a large room (about 150 feet by 50 feet) that has become known as the Throne Room. One wall had a design of blue enameled bricks, but the other three were covered in white plaster (see 5:5).

lets that Nebuchadnezzar his father^a had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. ³So they brought in the gold goblets that had been taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. ⁴As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.

⁵Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote. ⁶His face turned pale and he was so frightened that his knees knocked together and his legs gave way.

⁷The king called out for the enchanters, astrologers^b and diviners to be brought and said to these wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing and tells me what it means will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around his neck, and he will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom."

⁸Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or tell the king what it meant. ⁹So King Belshazzar became even more terrified and his face grew more pale. His nobles were baffled.

¹⁰The queen,^c hearing the voices of the king and his nobles, came into the banquet hall. "O king, live forever!" she said. "Don't be alarmed! Don't look so pale!" ¹¹There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the time of your father he was found to have insight and intelligence and wisdom like that of the gods. King Nebuchadnezzar your father—your father the king, I say—appointed him chief of the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners. ¹²This man Daniel, whom the king called Belshazzar, was found to have a keen mind and knowledge and understanding, and also the ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve difficult problems. Call for Daniel, and he will tell you what the writing means."

¹³So Daniel was brought before the king, and the king said to him, "Are you Daniel, one of the exiles my father the king brought from Judah? ¹⁴I have heard that the spirit of the gods is in you and that you have insight, intelligence and outstanding wisdom. ¹⁵The wise men and enchanters were brought before me to read this writing and tell me what it means, but they could not explain it. ¹⁶Now I have heard that you are able to give interpretations and to solve difficult problems. If you can read this writing and tell me what it means, you will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around your neck, and you will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom."

¹⁷Then Daniel answered the king, "You may keep your gifts for yourself and give your rewards to someone else. Nevertheless, I will read the writing for the king and tell him what it means.

¹⁸"O king, the Most High God gave your father

Nebuchadnezzar sovereignty and greatness and glory and splendor. ¹⁹Because of the high position he gave him, all the peoples and nations and men of every language dreaded and feared him. Those the king wanted to put to death, he put to death; those he wanted to spare, he spared; those he wanted to promote, he promoted; and those he wanted to humble, he humbled. ²⁰But when his heart became arrogant and hardened with pride, he was deposed from his royal throne and stripped of his glory. ²¹He was driven away from people and given the mind of an animal; he lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like cattle; and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and sets over them anyone he wishes.

²²"But you his son,^d O Belshazzar, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this. ²³Instead, you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven. You had the goblets from his temple brought to you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or understand. But you did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways. ²⁴Therefore he sent the hand that wrote the inscription.

²⁵"This is the inscription that was written:

MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN^e

²⁶"This is what these words mean:

Mene: God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end.

²⁷*Tekel*: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting.

²⁸*Peresh*: Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

²⁹Then at Belshazzar's command, Daniel was clothed in purple, a gold chain was placed around his neck, and he was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom.

³⁰That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians,^f was slain, ³¹and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two.

Daniel in the Den of Lions

6 It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, ²with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. ³Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. ⁴At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt

^a2 Or ancestor, or predecessor; also in verses 11, 13 and 18
descendant, or successor

²⁵ Aramaic UPARSIN (that is, AND PARSIN)

²⁷ Tekel can mean weighed or shekel

³⁰ Or Chaldeans

^b7 Or Chaldeans; also in verse 11

²⁸ Peres (the singular of Parsin) can mean divided or Persia or a half mine or a half shekel

¹⁰ Or queen mother

²⁶ Mene can mean numbered or mina (a unit of money)

²² Or

nor negligent. ⁹Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God."

¹⁰So the administrators and the satraps went as a group to the king and said: "O King Darius, live forever! ⁷The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or man during the next thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the lions' den. ⁸Now, O king, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered—in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed." ⁹So King Darius put the decree in writing.

¹⁰Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. ¹¹Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. ¹²So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: "Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or man except to you, O king, would be thrown into the lions' den?"

The king answered, "The decree stands—in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed."

¹³Then they said to the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day." ¹⁴When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him.

¹⁵Then the men went as a group to the king and said to him, "Remember, O king, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed."

¹⁶So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"

¹⁷A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed

¹⁸Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.

¹⁹At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. ²⁰When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice. "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?"

²¹Daniel answered, "O king, live forever! ²²My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king."

²³The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

²⁴At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

²⁵Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language throughout the land:

"May you prosper greatly!"

²⁶"I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel.

"For he is the living God
and he endures forever;
his kingdom will not be destroyed,
his dominion will never end.

²⁷He rescues and he saves;
he performs signs and wonders
in the heavens and on the earth.
He has rescued Daniel
from the power of the lions."

²⁸So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus^a the Persian.

Daniel's Dream of Four Beasts

7 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying on his bed. He wrote down the substance of his dream.

²Daniel said: "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. ³Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea.

⁴"The first was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a man, and the heart of a man was given to it.

⁵"And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between

6:10 A Jewish Orientation

Daniel had lost much of his Jewish heritage—even his name had been changed to a Babylonian one (1:7). Certainly he could not worship God in the way God's law commanded, through sacrifices at the temple in Jerusalem. He did, however, point himself toward the promised land three times a day in prayer. Not even the threat of death could make him vary this practice. By this time Daniel had been in Babylon over 60 years; he was probably in his 80s.

^a28 Or Darius; that is, the reign of Cyrus

its teeth. It was told, 'Get up and eat your fill of flesh!'

6"After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a leopard. And on its back it had four wings like those of a bird. This beast had four heads, and it was given authority to rule

7"After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast—terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns

8"While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully

9"As I looked,

"thrones were set in place,
and the Ancient of Days took his seat.
His clothing was as white as snow;
the hair of his head was white like wool.
His throne was flaming with fire,
and its wheels were all ablaze.

10A river of fire was flowing,
coming out from before him.
Thousands upon thousands attended him;
ten thousand times ten thousand stood
before him
The court was seated,
and the books were opened.

11"Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire. 12(The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time.)

13"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

The Interpretation of the Dream

15"I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit, and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me. 16I approached one of those standing there and asked him the true meaning of all this.

"So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things: 17The four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth. 18But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom

7:13 A Son of Man

God's power is given to one "like a man" rather than to those "like beasts." The contrast suggests God's kingdom has power that is humane, not savage or bestial. Jesus adopted this term for himself.

INSIGHT

Symbols of Power

Daniel uses statues as symbols

"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast—terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims." 7:7

It's no surprise that Nebuchadnezzar erected a gold image for people to worship (chapter 3). Kings and rulers love to display statues or gigantic photos as symbols of their power.

It seems reasonable, then, that Daniel's visions depict political realms through statues and symbolic animals. But since each of the visions uses a different set of symbols, you can easily lose track of what the symbols stand for. This chart may help you coordinate Daniel's view of four great empires—and the almighty God who overwhelms their power in the end:

| | Babylon | Medo-Persia | Greece | Rome | Kingdom of God |
|------------|---------|-------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| Chapter 2 | gold | silver | bronze | iron | supernatural rock |
| Chapter 7 | lion | bear | leopard | beast with horns | Ancient of Days, Son of Man |
| Chapter 8 | — | ram | goat | — | — |
| Chapter 11 | — | — | king of North | — | — |

Life Questions: What images "litter the landscape" in our time? Are they symbols of power? If so, how does that power affect you?

and will possess it forever—yes, for ever and ever.¹⁹

¹⁹“Then I wanted to know the true meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws—the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. ²⁰I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell—the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully. ²¹As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, ²²until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.

²³“He gave me this explanation: “The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. ²⁴The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. ²⁵He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.

²⁶“But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. ²⁷Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.”

²⁸“This is the end of the matter. I, Daniel, was deeply troubled by my thoughts, and my face turned pale, but I kept the matter to myself.”

Daniel's Vision of a Ram and a Goat

8 In the third year of King Belshazzar's reign, I, Daniel, had a vision, after the one that had already appeared to me. ²In my vision I saw myself in the citadel of Susa in the province of Elam; in the vision I was beside the Ulai Canal. ³I looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the canal, and the horns were long. One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later. ⁴I watched the ram as he charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against him, and none could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great.

⁵As I was thinking about this, suddenly a goat with a prominent horn between his eyes came from the west, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground. ⁶He came toward the two-horned ram I had seen standing beside the canal and charged at him in great rage. ⁷I saw him attack the ram furiously, striking the ram and shattering his two horns. The ram was powerless to stand against him; the goat knocked him to the ground and trampled on him, and none could rescue the ram from his power. ⁸The goat became very great,

but at the height of his power his large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven.

⁹Out of one of them came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land. ¹⁰It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them. ¹¹It set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host; it took away the daily sacrifice from him, and the place of his sanctuary was brought low. ¹²Because of rebellion, the host of the saints^b and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground.

¹³Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to him, “How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled—the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, and the surrender of the sanctuary and of the host that will be trampled underfoot?”

¹⁴He said to me, “It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated.”

The Interpretation of the Vision

¹⁵While I, Daniel, was watching the vision and trying to understand it, there before me stood one who looked like a man. ¹⁶And I heard a man's voice from the Ulai calling, “Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision.”

¹⁷As he came near the place where I was standing, I was terrified and fell prostrate. “Son of man,” he said to me, “understand that the vision concerns the time of the end.”

¹⁸While he was speaking to me, I was in a deep sleep, with my face to the ground. Then he touched me and raised me to my feet.

¹⁹He said: “I am going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end.”

²⁰The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia. ²¹The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes is the first king. ²²The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power.

²³In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise. ²⁴He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people. ²⁵He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power.

²⁶“The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true, but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future.”

²⁷I, Daniel, was exhausted and lay ill for several

^a Or for a year, two years and half a year.

^b Or rebellion, the armies.

^c Or because the end will be at the appointed time.

days. Then I got up and went about the king's business. I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding.

Daniel's Prayer

9 In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes^a (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian^b kingdom—²in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. ³So I turned to the LORD God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.

⁴I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed:

"O LORD, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands, ⁵we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. ⁶We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our fathers, and to all the people of the land

⁷"LORD, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame—the men of Judah and people of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you. ⁸O LORD, we and our kings, our princes and our fathers are covered with shame because we have sinned against you. ⁹The LORD our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him; ¹⁰we have not obeyed the LORD our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets. ¹¹All Israel has transgressed your law and turned away, refusing to obey you

"Therefore the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against you. ¹²You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing upon us great disaster. Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem. ¹³Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us, yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth. ¹⁴The LORD did not hesitate to bring the disaster upon us, for the LORD our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him.

¹⁵"Now, O LORD our God, who brought your people out of Egypt with a mighty hand and who made for yourself a name that endures to this day, we have sinned, we have done wrong. ¹⁶O LORD, in keeping with all your righteous acts, turn away your anger and

your wrath from Jerusalem, your city, your holy hill. Our sins and the iniquities of our fathers have made Jerusalem and your people an object of scorn to all those around us.

¹⁷"Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, O LORD, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary. ¹⁸Give ear, O God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy. ¹⁹O LORD, listen! O LORD, forgive! O LORD, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name."

The Seventy "Sevens"

²⁰While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the LORD my God for his holy hill—²¹while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. ²²He instructed me and said to me, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. ²³As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision:

²⁴"Seventy 'sevens'^c are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish^d transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.^e

²⁵"Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree^f to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One,^g the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. ²⁶After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing.^h The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood. War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. ²⁷He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.'ⁱ In the middle of the 'seven'^j he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple, he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."^k

Daniel's Vision of a Man

10 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel (who was called Belteshazzar). Its message was true and it concerned a great war.^h The understanding of the message came to him in a vision.

²At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. ³I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over.

^a1 Hebrew Anasuerus
Place, or most holy One
for himself

^b1 Or Chaldean

^c25 Or word

^d27 Or it

^e24 Or weeks also in verses 25 and 26

^f25 Or an anointed one; also in verse 26

^g27 Or And one who causes desolation will come upon the pinnacle of the abominable temple,

^h1 Or true and burdensome

ⁱ24 Or restrain

^j24 Or Most Holy

^k26 Or off and will have no one, or off but not

until the end that is decreed is poured out on the desolated city,

4On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, 5I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist. 6His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multi-tude.

7Daniel was the only one who saw the vision, the men with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. 8So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision. I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. 9Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground.

10A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. 11He said, "Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you." And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling.

12Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. 13But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. 14Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."

15While he was saying this to me, I bowed with my face toward the ground and was speechless. 16Then one who looked like a man^a touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and began to speak. I said to the one standing before me, "I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I am helpless. 17How can I, your servant, talk with you, my lord? My strength is gone and I can hardly breathe."

18Again the one who looked like a man touched me and gave me strength. 19"Do not be afraid, O man highly esteemed," he said. "Peace! Be strong now; be strong."

When he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, "Speak, my lord, since you have given me strength."

20So he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come; 21but first I will tell you what is written in the

Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince. 22And in the first year of Balthazar the Mad, I took my stand to support and protect him.)

The Kings of the South and the North

23"Now then, I tell you the truth. Three more kings will appear in Persia, and then a fourth, who will be far richer than all the others. When he has gained power by his wealth, he will stir up every one against the kingdom of Greece. 24Then a mighty king will appear, who will rule with great power and do as he pleases. 25After he has appeared, his empire will be broken up and parcelled out toward the four winds of heaven. It will not go to his descendants, nor will it have the power he exercised, because his empire will be uprooted and given to others.

26"Then the king of the South will become strong, but one of his commanders will become even stronger than he and will rule his own kingdom with great power. 27After some years, they will become allies. The daughter of the king of the South will go to the king of the North to make an alliance, but she will not retain her power, and he and his power^b will not last. In those days she will be handed over, together with her royal escort and her father, and the one who supported her.

28"Then one from her family line will arise to take her place. He will attack the forces of the king of the North and enter his fortress; he will fight against them and be victorious. 29He will also seize their gods, their metal images and their valuable articles of silver and gold and carry them off to Egypt. For some years he will leave the king of the North alone. 30Then the king of the North will invade the realm of the king of the South but will retreat to his own country. 31His sons will prepare for war and assemble a great army, which will sweep on like an irresistible flood and carry the battle as far as his fortress.

32"Then the king of the South will march out in a rage and fight against the king of the North, who will raise a large army, but it will be defeated. 33When the army is carried off, the king of the South will be filled with pride and will slaughter many thousands, yet he will not remain triumphant. 34For the king of the North will muster another army, larger than the first; and after several years, he will advance with a huge army fully equipped.

35"Then in those times many will rise against the king of the South. The violent men among your own people will rebel in fulfillment of the vision, but without success. 36Then the king of the North will come and build up siege ramps and will capture a fortified city. The forces of the South will be powerless to resist; even their best troops will not have the strength to stand. 37The invader will do as he pleases; no one will be able to stand against him. He will establish himself in the Beautiful Land and will have the power to destroy it. 38He will determine to come with the might of his entire kingdom and will make an alliance with the king of the

10:13 Slow to Answer Prayer

These comments come from what seems to be an angelic messenger. They hint at heavenly warfare human beings know little about. When prayers go unanswered for long periods, more may be involved than we ever dream.

^a16 Most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, one manuscript of the Masoretic Text, Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint have something that looked like a man's hand. ^b16 Or offspring. ^c16 Or child (see Vulgate and Syriac).

South. And he will give him a daughter in marriage in order to overthrow the kingdom, but his plans^a will not succeed or help him. ¹⁸Then he will turn his attention to the coastlands and will take many of them, but a commander will put an end to his insolence and will turn his insolence back upon him. ¹⁹After this, he will turn back toward the fortresses of his own country but will stumble and fall, to be seen no more.

²⁰His successor will send out a tax collector to maintain the royal splendor. In a few years, however, he will be destroyed, yet not in anger or in battle.

^a17 Or but she

²¹He will be succeeded by a contemptible person who has not been given the honor of royalty. He will invade the kingdom when its people feel secure, and he will seize it through intrigue. ²²Then an overwhelming army will be swept away before him; both it and a prince of the covenant will be destroyed. ²³After coming to an agreement with him, he will act deceitfully, and with only a few people he will rise to power. ²⁴When the richest provinces feel secure, he will invade them and will achieve what neither his fathers nor his forefathers did. He will distribute plunder, loot and wealth among his followers. He will plot

INSIGHT

In the Hands of Tyrants

Daniel's visions portray history as one bestial empire after another

"The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods." 11:36

Increasingly, it seems, totalitarian leaders promise everything—and demand everything. They brutally dispose of anyone who opposes them. Daily the list grows longer.

A Single, Cruel King

Daniel's visions predicted such tyrants. History, in these visions, is one terrible empire after another. Each is stronger but more bestial than the last.

The focus narrows (in 8:23-25 and 11:21-45) to a single, cruel king. Most scholars agree the description matches Antiochus IV of Syria. An obscure tyrant who ruled a century and a half before Jesus, he was the Jews' worst enemy in history, until Hitler.

Antiochus, never totally victorious against archenemy Egypt, took out his frustrations on little Jerusalem. He determined to make that city Greek rather than Jewish by rooting out its religion. He sold the high priest's position to an opportunist and transformed the temple into an altar for the Greek god Zeus. This desecration sparked one of history's earliest guerrilla wars, the Maccabean rebellion. Antiochus conquered Jerusalem twice, slaughtering thousands. He outlawed Judaism and proclaimed himself as God incarnate.

The End of the Tyrant

And yet, for all his power and terror, Antiochus died raving from insanity, and his mark on history has virtually disappeared. Ironically, the religion he sought to destroy has endured and touched the whole world. This is just what you could expect from reading Daniel. Terrible rulers rise up one after another, but they disappear just as quickly. We can expect political terror. But we can count on God.

The New Testament suggests that Antiochus's brutal pattern will culminate someday in the antichrist, an arrogant leader who will dominate the world and persecute God's people as never before. Many scholars believe that the last part of Daniel's final vision refers to this character. Yet despite the antichrist's power, he too will fall in the end. God's justice will rule the earth. Those who believe in such an outcome have reason to be as brave as Daniel.

Life Questions: How does Daniel's view of history affect your perspective on world politics? How should a Christian regard the human "powers-that-be"?

the overthrow of fortresses—but only for a time.

24“With a large army he will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South. The king of the South will wage war with a large and very powerful army, but he will not be able to stand because of the plots devised against him.

25Those who eat from the king’s provisions will try to destroy him; his army will be swept away, and many will fall in battle. 26The two kings, with their hearts bent on evil, will sit at the same table and lie to each other, but to no avail, because an end will still come at the appointed time. 27The king of the North will return to his own country with great wealth, but his heart will be set against the holy covenant. He will take action against it and then return to his own country.

28“**At the appointed time he will invade the South again, but this time the outcome will be different from what it was before.** 29Ships of the western coastlands^a will oppose him, and he will lose heart. Then he will turn back and vent his fury against the holy covenant. He will return and show favor to those who forsake the holy covenant.

31“His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation. 32With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.

33“Those who are wise will instruct many, though for a time they will fall by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered. 34When they fall, they will receive a little help, and many who are not sincere will join them. 35Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time.

The King Who Exalts Himself

36“**The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place.**

37He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the one desired by women, nor will he re-

gard any god, but will exalt himself above them all. 38Instead of them, he will honor a god of fortresses—a god unknown to his fathers; he will honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. 39He will attack the mightiest fortresses with the help of a foreign god and will greatly honor those who acknowledge him. He will make them rulers over many people and will distribute the land at a price.^b

40“**At the time of the end the king of the North will engage him in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood.** 41He will also invade the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand. 42He will extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape. 43He will gain control of the treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt with the Libyans and Nubians in submission. 44But reports from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many. 45He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

The End Times

12 “At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. 2Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. 3Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. 4But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge.

5Then I, Daniel, looked, and there before me stood two others, one on this bank of the river and one on the opposite bank. 6One of them said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, “How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?”

7The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by

11:37 Exalted above the Gods

The tyrant Antiochus IV, whom most commentators believe is described here, minted many coins showing his portrait. The early coins were merely stamped, “King Antiochus.” But, as he grew more obsessed with his own importance, he added features to his portrait that made him look like the Greek gods Apollo or Zeus, and to his given name he appended the title “Epiphanes”—“God Manifest.” Such behavior earned him the nickname “Antiochus Epimanes”—“crazy Antiochus.”

12:2 Resurrection

While eternal life is usually portrayed cloudily in the Old Testament, this verse clearly predicts that we will live forever.

^a20 Hebrew of Kittim

^b20 Or land for a reward

^c25 Or the sun and

^d25 Or who impart wisdom

him who lives forever, saying, "It will be for a time, times and half a time ^a When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed."

⁸I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, "My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?"

⁹He replied, "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. ¹⁰Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be

wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.

¹¹"From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. ¹²Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.

¹³"As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."

^a7 Or a year, two years and half a year

HOSEA

INTRODUCTION

Tearing God's Heart

Why would he love such a woman?

"She decked herself with rings and jewelry, and went after her lovers, but me she forgot," declares the LORD. 2:13

Hosea begins with a love story—a painful, personal love story, the prophet's very own. Hosea had married a woman who acted like a prostitute. Yet the more she went out on him, the more Hosea loved her. He gave her everything a good wife deserved: his love, his home, his name, his reputation. She responded by living with other men. He warned her, he pleaded with her, he punished her. She humiliated him until he wanted to cry, yet still he clung to her.

Why did Hosea begin with his personal life? Because God had expressly told him to relate it to another, more tragic love story: the painful love of God for his people. God could have simply declared, "Israel is like a wife to me—an adulterous wife." Instead, he used Hosea to act out the treachery in real life—and to show in living color God's fury, his jealousy, and above all else, his love for his people.

Winding Down to a Bitter End

Virtually every chapter of Hosea talks about the "prostitution" or "adultery" of God's people (1:2; 2:2,4, 3:1; 4:2,10-15,18; 5:3,4; 6:10; 7:4; 8:9, 9:1). Underlying some hard words is a remarkably tender revelation: God doesn't want to be only "master" to his people. He wants to be a husband, giving all of himself in intimate love.

Hosea spoke and acted these messages to the Northern part of God's divided country—Israel or "Ephraim," as Hosea called it. King Jeroboam II's reign was a time of prosperity; the prophet Amos blasted the rich for their greedy injustices toward the poor. But soon after Jeroboam's death the national fabric began to unravel. In just over 20 years six kings took the throne—four of them by murdering the previous king. Hosea probably lived to see the massive Assyrian armies storm the capital and deport all the Israelite citizens to other lands. God's "wife" was carried off, just as he had warned.

God Is a Lover

When most people must have been preoccupied with politics and military matters, Hosea kept his message aimed at idol worship, which he referred to as adultery. He saw that as the root of Israel's problems.

Israel tended to mix religions freely—to think that everybody's religion had a little truth in it, and the more religion you got, the better off you would be. Many prophets attacked Israel's idol worship. Hosea shows that God's concern about idolatry is no fussy, religious matter. It is terribly personal. God, the lover, will not share his bride with anyone else.

God's anger and jealousy, expressed so often throughout the Old Testament, reflect his powerful love. Sin does not merely break God's law, it breaks his heart. He punishes to get his lover's attention. Yet even when she turns her back on him, he sticks with her. He is willing to suffer, in hope that someday she will change. Hosea shows that God longs not to punish, but to love.

How to Read Hosea

Hosea is one of the most emotional books in the Bible, an outpouring of suffering love from God's heart. This shows in the writing, which jumps impulsively from one thought to the next. Read a chapter dramatically aloud, and you will get this sense. It is almost like listening in on a husband-and-wife fight.

The book divides into two parts. In the first three chapters, the prophet Hosea briefly describes

his marriage to an adulterous woman and makes the connection to Israel's unfaithfulness to God. From chapter 4 onward this dramatic, personal beginning is not mentioned again. But it has set the stage. God's deep love, his disappointment and anger, and his determination to persevere with his unfaithful wife pour out in a series of vivid speeches.

For a historical perspective on Hosea's times, read from 2 Kings 14:23 to 17:41, noting that some sections describe Judah, the Southern nation, while the rest relate to the deteriorating Israel Hosea knew. This history is summarized in "A Lineup of Rulers," page 338. The prophet Amos spoke to the North at about the same time as Hosea, but from a noticeably different point of view. Amos concentrated on law and justice, with special concern for the poor, while Hosea concentrated on the broken relationship with God that led to this injustice. Together, these two prophets provide a three-dimensional view of Israel's problems.

Because Hosea is so emotional, he doesn't stop to explain a large number of images or biblical references. A Bible dictionary will help you understand the names and places you aren't familiar with.

PLANS FOR READING HOSEA

PLAN 1: An Overview of Hosea in 2 Days

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to Hosea, and chapters 2 and 3, which compare Hosea's marriage to Israel's relationship with God.
- ☐ Day 2. Read chapter 11, which shows God's powerful, competing emotions as he thinks of Israel.

PLAN 2: All of Hosea in 10 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2-3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6-7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11-12 ☐ 13-14

1 The word of the LORD that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the reign of Jeroboam son of Jehoash^a king of Israel:

Hosea's Wife and Children

²When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, "Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD." ³So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

⁴Then the LORD said to Hosea, "Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. ⁵In that day I will break Israel's bow in the Valley of Jezreel."

⁶Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the LORD said to Hosea, "Call her Lo-Ruhamah,^b for I will no longer show love to the house of Israel, that I should at all forgive them. ⁷Yet I will show love to the house of Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but by the LORD their God."

⁸After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son. ⁹Then the LORD said, "Call him Lo-Ammi,^c for you are not my people, and I am not your God.

¹⁰"Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.' ¹¹The people of Judah and the people of Israel will be reunited, and they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel.

1:4 The Children's Strange Names

At God's direction, Hosea named his three children in a way that symbolized God's anger. Their names show God's increasing judgment against Israel's adultery: first comes punishment, then a loss of love, finally total divorce. The first name, Jezreel, refers to a historical incident from 2 Kings 9-10. Jezreel was the place where King Jehu slaughtered a wicked king and all his associates (2 Kings 10:11). Hosea lived to see his prediction of punishment on Jehu's house fulfilled, when the last king in Jehu's line was murdered (2 Kings 15:8-12).

Punishment, however, was not the last word. *Jezreel* has a double meaning—both to "scatter" and to "sow." In verse 11 and in verses 22-23 of chapter 2, *Jezreel* takes on the hopeful sense of planting new life. Hosea's other two children's names are similarly turned from curses to blessings. God's anger leads to new life.

^a1 Hebrew *Joash*, a variant of *Jehoash*

^b6 Lo-Ruhamah means not loved

^c9 Lo-Ammi means not my people

2 "Say of your brothers, 'My people,' and of your sisters, 'My loved one.'"

Israel Punished and Restored

² "Rebuke your mother, rebuke her,
for she is not my wife,
and I am not her husband

Let her remove the adulterous look from her
face

and the unfaithfulness from between her
breasts

³ Otherwise I will strip her naked
and make her as bare as on the day she was
born

I will make her like a desert,
turn her into a parched land,
and slay her with thirst

⁴ I will not show my love to her children,
because they are the children of adultery.

⁵ Their mother has been unfaithful
and has conceived them in disgrace.

She said, 'I will go after my lovers,
who give me my food and my water,
my wool and my linen, my oil and my
drink'

⁶ Therefore I will block her path with
thornbushes;

I will wall her in so that she cannot find her
way

⁷ She will chase after her lovers but not catch
them,

she will look for them but not find them.

Then she will say,

I will go back to my husband as at first,
for then I was better off than now.'

⁸ She has not acknowledged that I was the one
who gave her the grain, the new wine and
oil,

who lavished on her the silver and gold—
which they used for Baal.

⁹ Therefore I will take away my grain when it
ripens,

and my new wine when it is ready.

I will take back my wool and my linen,
intended to cover her nakedness.

¹⁰ So now I will expose her lewdness
before the eyes of her lovers;
no one will take her out of my hands.

¹¹ I will stop all her celebrations:
her yearly festivals, her New Moons,
her Sabbath days—all her appointed feasts.

¹² I will ruin her vines and her fig trees,
which she said were her pay from her lovers;
I will make them a thicket,
and wild animals will devour them.

¹³ I will punish her for the days
she burned incense to the Baals;
she decked herself with rings and jewelry,
and went after her lovers,
but me she forgot,"

declares the LORD.

¹⁴ Therefore I am now going to allure her;
I will lead her into the desert
and speak tenderly to her.

¹⁵ There I will give her back her vineyards,
and will make the Valley of Achor^a a door of
hope.

There she will sing^b as in the days of her
youth,
as in the day she came up out of Egypt.

¹⁶ "In that day," declares the LORD,
"you will call me 'my husband';
you will no longer call me 'my master.'"

¹⁷ I will remove the names of the Baals from her
lips;

no longer will their names be invoked.

¹⁸ In that day I will make a covenant for them
with the beasts of the field and the birds of
the air

and the creatures that move along the
ground.

Bow and sword and battle

I will abolish from the land,
so that all may lie down in safety.

¹⁹ I will betroth you to me forever;

I will betroth you in^d righteousness and
justice,

in^e love and compassion.

²⁰ I will betroth you in faithfulness,
and you will acknowledge the LORD.

²¹ "In that day I will respond,"
declares the LORD—

"I will respond to the skies,
and they will respond to the earth;

²² and the earth will respond to the grain,
the new wine and oil,
and they will respond to Jezreel.^f

²³ I will plant her for myself in the land;

I will show my love to the one I called 'Not
my loved one.'^g

I will say to those called 'Not my people,'^h
'You are my people';

and they will say, 'You are my God.'"

Hosea's Reconciliation With His Wife

3 The LORD said to me, "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes."

² So I bought her for fifteen shekelsⁱ of silver and about a homer and a lethek^j of barley. ³ Then I told her, "You are to live with^k me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will live with^k you."

⁴ For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or idol. ⁵ Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the LORD and to his blessings in the last days.

^a15 Achor means trouble

²² Jezreel means God plants.

^b15 Or respond

²³ Hebrew Lo-Ruhamah

² That is, probably about 10 bushels (about 330 liters)

^f16 Hebrew baal

^g23 Hebrew Lo-Ammi

^h3 Or wait for

ⁱ19 Or with; also in verse 20

^j19 Or with

^k2 That is, about 6 ounces (about 170

The Charge Against Israel

- 4** Hear the word of the LORD, you Israelites,
because the LORD has a charge to bring
against you who live in the land
"There is no faithfulness, no love,
no acknowledgment of God in the land.
2 There is only cursing,^a lying and murder,
stealing and adultery;
they break all bounds,
and bloodshed follows bloodshed.
3 Because of this the land mourns,^b
and all who live in it waste away;
the beasts of the field and the birds of the air
and the fish of the sea are dying.
4 "But let no man bring a charge,
let no man accuse another,
for your people are like those
who bring charges against a priest.
5 You stumble day and night,
and the prophets stumble with you.
So I will destroy your mother—
6 my people are destroyed from lack of
knowledge
"Because you have rejected knowledge,
I also reject you as my priests;
because you have ignored the law of your God,
I also will ignore your children.
7 The more the priests increased,
the more they sinned against me;
they exchanged^c their^d Glory for something
disgraceful
8 They feed on the sins of my people
and relish their wickedness.
9 And it will be: Like people, like priests.
I will punish both of them for their ways
and repay them for their deeds.
10 "They will eat but not have enough;
they will engage in prostitution but not
increase,
because they have deserted the LORD
to give themselves ¹¹to prostitution,
to old wine and new,
which take away the understanding ¹²of my
people.
They consult a wooden idol
and are answered by a stick of wood.
A spirit of prostitution leads them astray;
they are unfaithful to their God.
13 They sacrifice on the mountaintops
and burn offerings on the hills,
under oak, poplar and terebinth,
where the shade is pleasant.
Therefore your daughters turn to prostitution
and your daughters-in-law to adultery.
14 "I will not punish your daughters
when they turn to prostitution,
nor your daughters-in-law
when they commit adultery,
because the men themselves consort with
harlots

and sacrifice with shrine prostitutes—
a people without understanding will come to
ruin!

15 "Though you commit adultery, O Israel,
let not Judah become guilty.

"Do not go to Gilgal;
do not go up to Beth Aven.^e
And do not swear, "As surely as the LORD
lives!"

16 The Israelites are stubborn,
like a stubborn heifer.
How then can the LORD pasture them
like lambs in a meadow?

17 Ephraim is joined to idols;
leave him alone!

18 Even when their drinks are gone,
they continue their prostitution;
their rulers dearly love shameful ways.

19 A whirlwind will sweep them away,
and their sacrifices will bring them shame.

Judgment Against Israel

- 5** "Hear this, you priests!
Pay attention, you Israelites!
Listen, O royal house!
This judgment is against you:
You have been a snare at Mizpah,
a net spread out on Tabor.
2 The rebels are deep in slaughter.
I will discipline all of them.
3 I know all about Ephraim;
Israel is not hidden from me.
Ephraim, you have now turned to prostitution;
Israel is corrupt.
4 "Their deeds do not permit them
to return to their God.
A spirit of prostitution is in their heart;
they do not acknowledge the LORD.
5 Israel's arrogance testifies against them;
the Israelites, even Ephraim, stumble in their
sin;
Judah also stumbles with them.
6 When they go with their flocks and herds
to seek the LORD,
they will not find him;

4:13 Real Prostitution

In each of the first nine chapters of his book, Hosea describes Israel's sin as prostitution or adultery. This is primarily symbolism meant to emphasize God's deep, personal love for Israel and his pain when the Israelites desert him to "go after other gods."

But *prostitution* has a literal meaning also. The religions Israel pursued taught that human sexuality was tied to agricultural fertility. To encourage good crops, believers in these religions practiced their human fertility. This meant organized prostitution, done as part of their worship experience.

^{a2} That is, to pronounce a curse upon
exchange

^{b3} Or *dries up*

^{c7} Syriac and an ancient Hebrew scribal tradition. Masoretic Text *I will*

^{d47} Masoretic Text, an ancient Hebrew scribal tradition *my*
Bethel, which means *house of God*.

^{e15} Beth Aven means *house of wickedness* (a name for

he has withdrawn himself from them
 They are unfaithful to the Lord
 they give birth to illegitimate children
 Now their New Moon festivals
 will devour them and their fields

8^a Sound the trumpet in Gilbeah
 the horn in Ramah

Raise the battle cry in Beth Aven,^b
 lead on, O Benjamin

9 Ephraim will be laid waste
 on the day of reckoning
 Among the tribes of Israel
 I proclaim what is certain

10 Judah's leaders are like those
 who move boundary stones
 I will pour out my wrath on them
 like a flood of water

11 Ephraim is oppressed,
 trampled in judgment,
 intent on pursuing idols.^c

12 I am like a moth to Ephraim,
 like rot to the people of Judah

13 When Ephraim saw his sickness,
 and Judah his sores,
 then Ephraim turned to Assyria,
 and sent to the great king for help.
 But he is not able to cure you,
 not able to heal your sores.

14 For I will be like a lion to Ephraim,
 like a great lion to Judah
 I will tear them to pieces and go away;
 I will carry them off, with no one to rescue
 them

15 Then I will go back to my place
 until they admit their guilt.
 And they will seek my face;
 in their misery they will earnestly seek me."

Israel Unrepentant

6^a Come, let us return to the LORD
 He has torn us to pieces
 but he will heal us,
 he has injured us
 but he will bind up our wounds
 2 After two days he will revive us,
 on the third day he will restore us,
 that we may live in his presence
 3 Let us acknowledge the LORD;
 let us press on to acknowledge him.
 As surely as the sun rises,
 he will appear;
 he will come to us like the winter rains,
 like the spring rains that water the earth."

4 "What can I do with you, Ephraim?
 What can I do with you, Judah?
 Your love is like the morning mist,
 like the early dew that disappears.
 5 Therefore I cut you in pieces with my
 prophets,
 I killed you with the words of my mouth;
 my judgments flashed like lightning upon
 you.

^a But I desire mercy, not sacrifice
 and I have preferred to feed rather than
 to accept offerings.

^b Like Adam, they have broken the covenant
 they were unfaithful to me there

^c Aloud in a city of wickedness,
 staffed with treacherous leaders

9 As murderers lie in ambush for a man,
 so do bands of priests;
 they murder on the road to Shechem,
 committing shameful crimes

10 I have seen a horrible thing
 in the house of Israel
 There Ephraim is given to prostitution
 and Israel is defiled

11 Also for you, Judah,
 a harvest is appointed

"Whenever I would restore the fortunes of
 my people

7^a Whenever I would heal Israel,
 the sins of Ephraim are exposed
 and the crimes of Samaria revealed

They practice deceit,
 thieves break into houses,
 bandits rob in the streets,

2 but they do not realize
 that I remember all their evil deeds
 Their sins engulf them;
 they are always before me.

3 They delight the king with their wickedness,
 the princes with their lies.

4 They are all adulterers,
 burning like an oven
 whose fire the baker need not stir
 from the kneading of the dough till it rises

5 On the day of the festival of our king
 the princes become inflamed with wine,
 and he joins hands with the mockers

6 Their hearts are like an oven,
 they approach him with intrigue.
 Their passion smolders all night;
 in the morning it blazes like a flaming fire

7 All of them are hot as an oven;
 they devour their rulers.
 All their kings fall,
 and none of them calls on me.

8 Ephraim mixes with the nations;
 Ephraim is a flat cake not turned over

9 Foreigners sap his strength
 but he does not realize it
 His hair is sprinkled with gray,
 but he does not notice

10 Israel's arrogance testifies against him,
 but despite all this
 he does not return to the LORD his God
 or search for him.

11 Ephraim is like a dove,
 easily deceived and senseless—
 now calling to Egypt,
 now turning to Assyria.

12 When they go, I will throw my net over them.

^a Beth Aven means house of wickedness (a name for Bethel which means house of God)
 word is uncertain

^b Or As at Adam, or Like men

^c 11 The meaning of the Hebrew for this

I will pull them down like birds of the air.
 When I hear them flocking together,
 I will catch them
 13 Woe to them,
 because they have strayed from me!
 Destruction to them,
 because they have rebelled against me!
 I long to redeem them
 but they speak lies against me.
 14 They do not cry out to me from their hearts
 but wail upon their beds
 They gather together* for grain and new wine
 but turn away from me
 15 I trained them and strengthened them,
 but they plot evil against me
 16 They do not turn to the Most High;
 they are like a faulty bow
 Their leaders will fall by the sword
 because of their insolent words
 For this they will be ridiculed
 in the land of Egypt.

Israel to Reap the Whirlwind

8 Put the trumpet to your lips!
 An eagle is over the house of the LORD
 because the people have broken my covenant
 and rebelled against my law
 2 Israel cries out to me,
 O our God, we acknowledge you!
 3 But Israel has rejected what is good;
 an enemy will pursue him.
 4 They set up kings without my consent;
 they choose princes without my approval.
 With their silver and gold
 they make idols for themselves
 to their own destruction
 5 Throw out your calf-idol, O Samaria!
 My anger burns against them
 How long will they be incapable of punty?
 6 They are from Israel!
 This calf—a craftsman has made it;
 it is not God
 It will be broken in pieces,
 that calf of Samaria
 7 They sow the wind
 and reap the whirlwind
 The stalk has no head;
 it will produce no flour.
 Were it to yield grain,
 foreigners would swallow it up.
 8 Israel is swallowed up;
 now she is among the nations
 like a worthless thing.
 9 For they have gone up to Assyria
 like a wild donkey wandering alone.
 Ephraim has sold herself to lovers.
 10 Although they have sold themselves among
 the nations,
 I will now gather them together.
 They will begin to waste away
 under the oppression of the mighty king.
 11 Though Ephraim built many altars for sin
 offerings,

these have become altars for sinning
 12 I wrote for them the many things of my law,
 but they regarded them as something alien.
 13 They offer sacrifices given to me
 and they eat the meat,
 but the LORD is not pleased with them.
 Now he will remember their wickedness
 and punish their sins:
 They will return to Egypt.
 14 Israel has forgotten his Maker
 and built palaces;
 Judah has fortified many towns.
 But I will send fire upon their cities
 that will consume their fortresses."

Punishment for Israel

9 Do not rejoice, O Israel;
 do not be jubilant like the other nations.
 For you have been unfaithful to your God;
 you love the wages of a prostitute
 at every threshing floor.
 2 Threshing floors and winepresses will not feed
 the people;
 the new wine will fail them.
 3 They will not remain in the LORD's land;
 Ephraim will return to Egypt
 and eat unclean^b food in Assyria.
 4 They will not pour out wine offerings to the
 LORD,
 nor will their sacrifices please him.
 Such sacrifices will be to them like the bread of
 mourners,
 all who eat them will be unclean.
 This food will be for themselves;
 it will not come into the temple of the LORD.
 5 What will you do on the day of your appointed
 feasts,
 on the festival days of the LORD?
 6 Even if they escape from destruction,
 Egypt will gather them,
 and Memphis will bury them.
 Their treasures of silver will be taken over by
 briers,
 and thorns will overrun their tents.
 7 The days of punishment are coming,
 the days of reckoning are at hand.
 Let Israel know this.
 Because your sins are so many
 and your hostility so great,
 the prophet is considered a fool,
 the inspired man a maniac.

8:11 How to Be Religious Without Pleasing God

The Israelites didn't think they were rejecting God. In fact, they became increasingly pious. (See 8:2, 11, 13; 10:1; and, probably, 6:1-3 for their expressions of faith.) But they wanted to worship on their terms, not God's. While their sacrifices to God increased, they kept on worshipping idols as well.

*14 Most Hebrew manuscripts, some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint They slash themselves

^b3 That is, ceremonially unclean

¹The prophet, along with my God,
is the watchman over Ephraim,^a
yet snares await him on all his paths,
and hostility in the house of his God.
²They have sunk deep into corruption,
as in the days of Gibeah
God will remember their wickedness
and punish them for their sins
When I found Israel,
it was like finding grapes in the desert;
when I saw your fathers,
it was like seeing the early fruit on the fig
tree
But when they came to Baal Peor,
they consecrated themselves to that
shameful idol
and became as vile as the thing they loved.
Ephraim's glory will fly away like a bird—
no birth, no pregnancy, no conception.
³Even if they rear children,
I will bereave them of every one
Woe to them
when I turn away from them!
I have seen Ephraim, like Tyre,
planted in a pleasant place
But Ephraim will bring out
their children to the slayer."
⁴Give them, O LORD—
what will you give them?
Give them wombs that miscarry
and breasts that are dry.
⁵"Because of all their wickedness in Gilgal,
I hated them there
Because of their sinful deeds,
I will drive them out of my house.
I will no longer love them,
all their leaders are rebellious.
⁶Ephraim is blighted,
their root is withered,
they yield no fruit
Even if they bear children,
I will slay their cherished offspring."
My God will reject them
because they have not obeyed him;
they will be wanderers among the nations.

10 Israel was a spreading vine
he brought forth fruit for himself

9:9 Two Instances of Evil

The "days of Gibeah" evidently refers to the vicious murder of a woman, told in Judges 19-21. This horrifying incident was a version of Sodom and Gomorrah right in Israel. Another incident (verse 10), equally bad in its own way, occurred at Baal Peor (see Numbers 25:1-3). Israelite men en route to the promised land slept with Moabite women and worshiped their gods. From both these incidents, Hosea proves that sin is nothing new to Israel.

As his fruit increased,
he built more altars,
as his land prospered,
he adorned his sacred stones
²Their heart is deceitful,
and now they must bear their guilt
The LORD will demolish their altars
and destroy their sacred stones
³Then they will say, "We have no king
because we did not revere the LORD.
But even if we had a king,
what could he do for us?"
⁴They make many promises,
take false oaths
and make agreements;
therefore lawsuits spring up
like poisonous weeds in a plowed field.
⁵The people who live in Samaria fear
for the calf-idol of Beth Aven.^b
Its people will mourn over it,
and so will its idolatrous priests,
those who had rejoiced over its splendor,
because it is taken from them into exile.
⁶It will be carried to Assyria
as tribute for the great king.
Ephraim will be disgraced;
Israel will be ashamed of its wooden idols.^c
⁷Samaria and its king will float away
like a twig on the surface of the waters
⁸The high places of wickedness^d will be
destroyed—
it is the sin of Israel
Thorns and thistles will grow up
and cover their altars
Then they will say to the mountains, "Cover
us!"
and to the hills, "Fall on us!"
⁹"Since the days of Gibeah, you have sinned,
O Israel,
and there you have remained.^e
Did not war overtake
the evildoers in Gibeah?^f
¹⁰When I please, I will punish them;
nations will be gathered against them
to put them in bonds for their double sin.
¹¹Ephraim is a trained heifer
that loves to thresh;

10:5 The New Golden Calf

Beth Aven ("house of wickedness") is a sarcastic reference to Bethel ("house of God"), which is mentioned more times in the Bible than any other city except Jerusalem. When Israel split into North and South the Northern king, Jeroboam I, made Bethel the chief religious sanctuary, to replace Jerusalem. There he put up a golden calf for people to worship (1 Kings 12:26-30). Mixing worship of the one true God with the idol worship of Baal was, according to Hosea, the root of Israel's trouble.

^a8. Or The prophet is the watchman over Ephraim, i. the people of my God
which threatens Israel's end. ^b9. Or its sinners. ^c10. Hebrew from
a reference to Beth Aven (a derogatory name for Bethel)

^b5. Beth Aven means house of wickedness (a name for Bethel,
which threatens Israel's end).

so I will put a yoke
on her fair neck
I will drive Ephraim,
Judah must plow,
and Jacob must break up the ground.
¹²Sow for yourselves righteousness,
reap the fruit of unfailing love,
and break up your unplowed ground;
for it is time to seek the LORD,
until he comes
and showers righteousness on you.
¹³But you have planted wickedness,
you have reaped evil,
you have eaten the fruit of deception.
Because you have depended on your own
strength
and on your many warriors,
¹⁴the roar of battle will rise against your people,
so that all your fortresses will be
devastated—
as Shalman devastated Beth Arbel on the day
of battle,
when mothers were dashed to the ground
with their children
¹⁵Thus will it happen to you, O Bethel,
because your wickedness is great.
When that day dawns,
the king of Israel will be completely
destroyed.

God's Love for Israel

11 When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.
²But the more I^a called Israel,
the further they went from me.^b
They sacrificed to the Baals
and they burned incense to images.
³It was I who taught Ephraim to walk,
taking them by the arms;
but they did not realize
it was I who healed them.
⁴I led them with cords of human kindness,
with ties of love;
I lifted the yoke from their neck
and bent down to feed them.
⁵"Will they not return to Egypt
and will not Assyria rule over them
because they refuse to repent?
⁶Swords will flash in their cities,
will destroy the bars of their gates
and put an end to their plans.
⁷My people are determined to turn from me.
Even if they call to the Most High,
he will by no means exalt them.
⁸"How can I give you up, Ephraim?
How can I hand you over, Israel?
How can I treat you like Admah?
How can I make you like Zeboiim?
My heart is changed within me;
all my compassion is aroused.
⁹I will not carry out my fierce anger,
nor will I turn and devastate Ephraim.
For I am God, and not man—

the Holy One among you.
I will not come in wrath.^c
¹⁰They will follow the LORD;
he will roar like a lion.
When he roars,
his children will come trembling from the
west.
¹¹They will come trembling
like birds from Egypt,
like doves from Assyria.
I will settle them in their homes,"
declares the LORD.

Israel's Sin

¹²Ephraim has surrounded me with lies,
the house of Israel with deceit.
And Judah is unruly against God,
even against the faithful Holy One.
12 ¹Ephraim feeds on the wind;
he pursues the east wind all day
and multiplies lies and violence.
He makes a treaty with Assyria
and sends olive oil to Egypt.
²The LORD has a charge to bring against Judah;
he will punish Jacob^d according to his ways
and repay him according to his deeds.
³In the womb he grasped his brother's heel;
as a man he struggled with God.
⁴He struggled with the angel and overcame
him;
he wept and begged for his favor.
He found him at Bethel
and talked with him there—
⁵the LORD God Almighty,
the LORD is his name of renown!
⁶But you must return to your God;
maintain love and justice,
and wait for your God always.

⁷The merchant uses dishonest scales;
he loves to defraud.
⁸Ephraim boasts,
"I am very rich; I have become wealthy
With all my wealth they will not find in me
any iniquity or sin."

⁹"I am the LORD your God,
[who brought you] out of Egypt;
I will make you live in tents again,
as in the days of your appointed feasts
¹⁰I spoke to the prophets,

12:2 Jacob, a Man and a Country

"Israel" was a nation named after a man—a man also known as Jacob, whose story is told principally in Genesis 25-35. He was greedy and grasping, and he went into exile for it. Yet he had another side: an eagerness to meet God and be blessed by him, culminating in his nighttime "wrestling with God" (Genesis 32). Though Jacob went into exile, as would Israel, he came back with God's blessing on his future. So, Hosea suggests, could the nation that carried his name.

^{a2} Some Septuagint manuscripts, Hebrew *they*
he grasps the heel (figuratively, he deceives)

^{b2} Septuagint, Hebrew *them*
^{c9} Or God / ever since you were in

^{c9} Or come against any city

^{d2} Jacob means

"You are destroyed, O Israel,
because you are against me, against your
counseler

"Where is your king, that he may save you?
Where are your rulers in all your towns,
of whom you said
'Give me a king and princes?'

So, in my anger, I gave you a king,
and in my wrath I took him away

The guilt of Ephraim is stored up,
his sins are kept on record

Pains as of a woman in childbirth come to him,
but he is a child without wisdom,
when the time arrives,
he does not come to the opening of the
womb

"I will ransom them from the power of the
graved,
I will redeem them from death.

Where, O death, are your plagues?
Where, O grave, is your destruction?

"I will have no compassion,
even though he thrives among his brothers.
An east wind from the Lord will come,
blowing in from the desert;
his spring will fail
and his well dry up.
His storehouse will be plundered
of all its treasures.

"The people of Samaria must bear their guilt,
because they have rebelled against their
God

They will fall by the sword;
their little ones will be dashed to the ground,
their pregnant women ripped open."

Repentance to Bring Blessing

14 Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God.
Your sins have been your downfall!

"Take words with you
and return to the Lord.

Say to him:

"Forgive all our sins
and receive us graciously,
that we may offer the fruit of our lips."

"Assyria cannot save us;
we will not mount war-horses.

We will never again say 'Our gods'
to what our own hands have made,
for in you the fatherless find compassion."

"I will heal their waywardness
and love them freely,
for my anger has turned away from them.

"I will be like the dew to Israel;
he will blossom like a lily.

Like a cedar of Lebanon
he will send down his roots;
his young shoots will grow.

His splendor will be like an olive tree,
his fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon.

"Men will dwell again in his shade.
He will flourish like the grain.

The Lord's Anger Against Israel

13 I will be like a whirlwind to you,
destroying the tower of the stronghold and
the wall of the fortress.

I will bring down the tower of the stronghold
and the wall of the fortress
and I will bring down the tower of the stronghold
and the wall of the fortress

I will bring down the tower of the stronghold
and the wall of the fortress

I will bring down the tower of the stronghold
and the wall of the fortress

I will bring down the tower of the stronghold
and the wall of the fortress

I will bring down the tower of the stronghold
and the wall of the fortress

I will bring down the tower of the stronghold
and the wall of the fortress

I will bring down the tower of the stronghold
and the wall of the fortress

I will bring down the tower of the stronghold
and the wall of the fortress

I will bring down the tower of the stronghold
and the wall of the fortress

I will bring down the tower of the stronghold
and the wall of the fortress

I will bring down the tower of the stronghold
and the wall of the fortress

I will bring down the tower of the stronghold
and the wall of the fortress

I will bring down the tower of the stronghold
and the wall of the fortress

I will bring down the tower of the stronghold
and the wall of the fortress

I will bring down the tower of the stronghold
and the wall of the fortress

14:4 As Reliable as the Wind

The fruitlessness of Israel's deeds is beautifully expressed in the metaphor of wind: they feed on it, they pursue it all day (12:1), they sow it, and they reap the whirlwind (8:7). Their love is like the morning mist, or dew (6:4), and their lives will be as lasting as the early dew or as chaff or as smoke escaping out a window (13:3).

¹ That is, Northwest Mesopotamia.
² Or, offer our lives as sacrifices of bulls.

³ Or, Men who are like lions.

⁴ Or, God, ever since you were in

⁵ Hebrew: Shall

He will blossom like a vine,
and his fame will be like the wine from
Lebanon

^aO Ephraim, what more have I^b to do with
idols?

I will answer him and care for him.
I am like a green pine tree;

your fruitfulness comes from me.
"Who is wise? He will realize these things.
Who is discerning? He will understand
them.

The ways of the Lord are right,
the righteous walk in them,
but the rebellious stumble in them.

JOEL

INTRODUCTION

The Meaning of a Natural Disaster

What's behind a devastating locust plague?

Before them the earth shakes, the sky trembles, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine. 2:10

Their number was astounding; the whole face of the mountain was black with them. (Joel 1:4) They came like a living deluge. We dug trenches, and kindled fires, and beat and burned to death heaps upon heaps; but the effort was utterly useless. Wave after wave rolled up the mountainside and poured over rocks, walls, ditches and hedges—those behind covering up and bridging over the masses already killed. It was perfectly appalling to watch this animated river as it flowed up the road, and ascended the hill above my house. For four days they continued to pass on toward the east. . . .”

W. M. Thomson is describing a locust plague. Descriptions of the aftermath sound just as awful. When locusts have passed, the terrain looks as though it has been swept by a scorching fire.

Why Have I Lived?

Many awestruck observers have written accounts of locust swarms, but none more graphically than the prophet Joel. In striking, polished imagery he described the devastation. His people faced starvation. Joel drew a verbal portrait of grief and fear.

Natural disasters provoke questions. Why did God allow this disaster to happen? Why have I lived and others died? Is there a lesson here? For Joel, a plague of locusts led to deep insights into God's universal plan.

Joel had no doubt that God was behind the plague. In fact, he pictured God leading the locusts like an army into battle (2:11). They represented “the day of the Lord,” a judgment on Israel. Unlike many of the other prophets, Joel did not devote time to an analysis of Israel's failings. He concentrated, instead, on a cure.

Joel urged the priests to call a nationwide day of prayer and fasting to lead the people back to God. Then God would roll back the damage done by the locusts, and more: “You will have plenty to eat, until you are full, and you will praise the name of the Lord your God, who has worked wonders for you” (2:26). They would emerge from the experience with new, durable confidence in God's love. So it has often proved for God's people: a disaster has pressed them to a deeper relationship with him.

God's Bigger Plans

Though the locust plague was by far the worst Joel had ever heard of (1:2-3), no historical record of this particular invasion has endured, other than the one Joel left us. The truth is, even the worst natural disasters fade from memory. Joel wanted the disaster to turn people's attention toward something more lasting—to an eternal God.

Joel wanted God's people to believe that God controlled the locusts, and even more importantly, that God shaped the entire course of history to his plan. As terribly as the locusts had destroyed, and as wonderfully as God had rolled back their destruction, these events only foreshadowed far more terrible and wonderful things. Joel saw that God's Spirit would transform his people into those who love him constantly, not just when a disaster catches their attention. After a time of terrible judgment, God would create a renewed, secure city for his people in which he himself would live.

How to Read Joel

Joel breaks naturally into two parts. Up to 2:28, it talks about a locust invasion and the response of God's people to such a natural disaster. From that verse on, however, Joel's view rises above the local situation and deals with the far-off future.

Joel rarely refers to unfamiliar people, places, or events, so you can read it fairly easily without using any outside reference like a Bible dictionary. The challenge is to connect his understanding of a natural disaster—a locust plague—with his vision of the future.

The Bible often refers to “the day of the LORD” as the time when God will completely take charge of our world. But Joel seems to see “the day of the LORD” partly revealed in the disasters of his day. As you read, try to see the similarities Joel draws between the locust invasion and the final consummation of history. Ask yourself: how do I respond to disaster? How would Joel want me to respond?

PLANS FOR READING JOEL

PLAN 1: An Overview of Joel in 1 Day

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to Joel, and chapter 2, which describes the locust plague and its effect on the people’s relationship with God.

PLAN 2: All of Joel in 3 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

1 The word of the LORD that came to Joel son of Pethuel

An Invasion of Locusts

²Hear this, you elders;
listen, all who live in the land.
Has anything like this ever happened in your
days

or in the days of your forefathers?
³Tell it to your children,
and let your children tell it to their children,
and their children to the next generation.

⁴What the locust swarm has left
the great locusts have eaten;
what the great locusts have left
the young locusts have eaten;
what the young locusts have left
other locusts^a have eaten.

⁵Wake up, you drunkards, and weep!
Wail, all you drinkers of wine;
wail because of the new wine,
for it has been snatched from your lips.

⁶A nation has invaded my land,
powerful and without number;
it has the teeth of a lion,
the fangs of a lioness.

⁷It has laid waste my vines
and ruined my fig trees.
It has stripped off their bark
and thrown it away,
leaving their branches white.

⁸Mourn like a virgin^b in sackcloth
grieving for the husband^c of her youth.

⁹Grain offerings and drink offerings
are cut off from the house of the LORD.

The priests are in mourning,
those who minister before the LORD.

¹⁰The fields are ruined,
the ground is dried up^d;
the grain is destroyed,
the new wine is dried up,
the oil fails.

¹¹Despair, you farmers,
wail, you vine growers;
grieve for the wheat and the barley,
because the harvest of the field is destroyed.

¹²The vine is dried up
and the fig tree is withered;
the pomegranate, the palm and the apple
tree—

all the trees of the field—are dried up.
Surely the joy of mankind
is withered away.

A Call to Repentance

¹³Put on sackcloth, O priests, and mourn;
wail, you who minister before the altar.
Come, spend the night in sackcloth,
you who minister before my God;
for the grain offerings and drink offerings
are withheld from the house of your God.

¹⁴Declare a holy fast;
call a sacred assembly.

Summon the elders
and all who live in the land
to the house of the LORD your God,
and cry out to the LORD.

¹⁵Alas for that day!
For the day of the LORD is near;
it will come like destruction from the
Almighty.^e

^a4 The precise meaning of the four Hebrew words used here for locusts is uncertain.

^b10 Or ground mourns

^c15 Hebrew Shaddai

^d8 Or young woman

^e8 Or betrothed

¹⁸Has not the food been cut off
before our very eyes—

joy and gladness
from the house of our God?

¹⁹The seeds are shriveled
beneath the clods.^a

The storehouses are in ruins,
the granaries have been broken down,
for the grain has dried up

²⁰How the cattle moan!

The herds mill about
because they have no pasture,
even the flocks of sheep are suffering.

²¹To you, O LORD, I call,

for fire has devoured the open pastures
and flames have burned up all the trees of
the field

²²Even the wild animals pant for you;
the streams of water have dried up
and fire has devoured the open pastures.

An Army of Locusts

2 Blow the trumpet in Zion,
sound the alarm on my holy hill
Let all who live in the land tremble,
for the day of the LORD is coming
It is close at hand—

² a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and blackness.
Like dawn spreading across the mountains
a large and mighty army comes,
such as never was of old
nor ever will be in ages to come.

³Before them fire devours,
behind them a flame blazes.
Before them the land is like the garden of
Eden,
behind them, a desert waste—
nothing escapes them.

⁴They have the appearance of horses;
they gallop along like cavalry
⁵With a noise like that of chariots
they leap over the mountaintops,
like a crackling fire consuming stubble,
like a mighty army drawn up for battle.

⁶At the sight of them, nations are in anguish;
every face turns pale.

They charge like warriors;
they scale walls like soldiers.
They all march in line,
not swerving from their course.

⁸They do not jostle each other;
each marches straight ahead.
They plunge through defenses
without breaking ranks.

⁹They rush upon the city;
they run along the wall.

They climb into the houses;
like thieves they enter through the windows

¹⁰Before them the earth shakes,
the sky trembles,
the sun and moon are darkened

and the stars no longer shine

¹¹The LORD thunders

at the head of his army;

his voice is like the roar of many waters,
and his might, like the crashing of a great
cannon.

¹²The day of the LORD is great,

it is dreadful—

who can endure it?

Rend Your Heart

¹Yes, now " declares the LORD,
return to me with all your heart
with fasting and weeping and mourning."

²Rend your heart

and not your garments

Return to the LORD your God

for he is gracious and compassionate,

slow to anger and abounding in love

and he relents from sending calamity

³Who knows? He may turn and have pity
and leave behind a blessing—

grain offerings and drink offerings
for the LORD your God

⁴Blow the trumpet in Zion,

declare a holy fast,

call a sacred assembly

⁵Gather the people,

consecrate the assembly,

bring together the elders,

gather the children,

those nursing at the breast—

Let the bridegroom leave his room

and the bride her chamber

⁷Let the priests, who minister before the LORD,
weep between the temple porch and the
altar.

Let them say, "Spare your people, O LORD
Do not make your inheritance an object of
scorn

a byword among the nations

Why should they say among the peoples,

"Where is their God?"

The LORD's Answer

¹⁸Then the LORD will be jealous for his land
and take pity on his people.

¹⁹The LORD will reply^b to them

"I am sending you grain, new wine and oil,
enough to satisfy you fully;
never again will I make you
an object of scorn to the nations

²⁰"I will drive the northern army far from you
pushing it into a parched and barren land,
with its front columns going into the eastern
sea

and those in the rear into the western sea.^c

And its stench will go up,
its smell will rise

Surely he has done great things^d

²¹Be not afraid, O land.

^a meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain

²⁰ That is, the Dead Sea

²⁰ That is, the Mediterranean

¹⁸ 19 Or I shall relent

and have pity

¹⁹ The LORD replied

²⁰ Or rise Surely it has done great things

be glad and rejoice

Surely the LORD has done great things

²² Be not afraid, O wild animals,
for the open pastures are becoming green.

The trees are bearing their fruit,
the fig tree and the vine yield their riches.

²³ Be glad, O people of Zion,
rejoice in the LORD your God,
for he has given you
the autumn rains in righteousness.^a

He sends you abundant showers,
both autumn and spring rains, as before.

²⁴ The threshing floors will be filled with grain;
the vats will overflow with new wine and
oil

²⁵ "I will repay you for the years the locusts have
eaten—

the great locust and the young locust,
the other locusts and the locust swarm^b—
my great army that I sent among you.

²⁶ You will have plenty to eat, until you are full,
and you will praise the name of the LORD
your God,

who has worked wonders for you;

never again will my people be shamed.

²⁷ Then you will know that I am in Israel,
that I am the LORD your God,
and that there is no other;
never again will my people be shamed.

The Day of the LORD

²⁸ "And afterward,

I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your old men will dream dreams,
your young men will see visions.

²⁹ Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

³⁰ I will show wonders in the heavens
and on the earth,
blood and fire and billows of smoke.

³¹ The sun will be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood
before the coming of the great and dreadful
day of the LORD.

³² And everyone who calls
on the name of the LORD will be saved;
for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem
there will be deliverance,
as the LORD has said,
among the survivors
whom the LORD calls.

2:29 The Spirit Poured Out

This prophecy was quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17-21). He said it had been fulfilled when the Holy Spirit came on Jesus' disciples. Paul also quoted verse 32 in Romans 10:12-13, making the point that God would respond to Jews and non-Jews without distinction.

The Nations Judged

³ "In those days and at that time,
when I restore the fortunes of Judah and
Jerusalem,

² I will gather all nations
and bring them down to the Valley of
Jehoshaphat.^c

There I will enter into judgment against them
concerning my inheritance, my people Israel,
for they scattered my people among the
nations

and divided up my land.

³ They cast lots for my people
and traded boys for prostitutes;
they sold girls for wine
that they might drink.

⁴ "Now what have you against me, O Tyre and
Sidon and all you regions of Philistia? Are you
repaying me for something I have done? If you are
paying me back, I will swiftly and speedily return
on your own heads what you have done. ⁵ For you
took my silver and my gold and carried off my
finest treasures to your temples. ⁶ You sold the
people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks, that
you might send them far from their homeland.

⁷ "See, I am going to rouse them out of the places
to which you sold them, and I will return on your
own heads what you have done. ⁸ I will sell your
sons and daughters to the people of Judah, and
they will sell them to the Sabeans, a nation far
away." The LORD has spoken.

⁹ Proclaim this among the nations:
Prepare for war!

Rouse the warriors!

Let all the fighting men draw near and
attack.

¹⁰ Beat your plowshares into swords
and your pruning hooks into spears.

Let the weakling say,
"I am strong!"

¹¹ Come quickly, all you nations from every side,
and assemble there.

Bring down your warriors, O LORD!

¹² "Let the nations be roused;
let them advance into the Valley of
Jehoshaphat,
for there I will sit
to judge all the nations on every side.

¹³ Swing the sickle,
for the harvest is ripe.
Come, trample the grapes,
for the winepress is full
and the vats overflow—
so great is their wickedness!"

¹⁴ Multitudes, multitudes
in the valley of decision!
For the day of the LORD is near
in the valley of decision.

¹⁵ The sun and moon will be darkened,
and the stars no longer shine.

¹⁶ The LORD will roar from Zion

^a23 Or: the teacher for righteousness

^b25 The precise meaning of the four Hebrew words used here for locusts is uncertain

^c2 Jehoshaphat means the LORD judges, also in verse 12

and thunder from Jerusalem;
the earth and the sky will tremble.
But the LORD will be a refuge for his people,
a stronghold for the people of Israel.

Blessings for God's People

¹⁷"Then you will know that I, the LORD your
God,
dwell in Zion, my holy hill.
Jerusalem will be holy;
never again will foreigners invade her.

¹⁸"In that day the mountains will drip new wine,
and the hills will flow with milk;

all the ravines of Judah will run with water
A fountain will flow out of the LORD's house
and will water the valley of acacias."

¹⁹But Egypt will be desolate,
Edom a desert waste,
because of violence done to the people of
Judah,

in whose land they shed innocent blood
²⁰Judah will be inhabited forever
and Jerusalem through all generations

²¹Their bloodguilt, which I have not pardoned,
I will pardon."

The LORD dwells in Zion!

AMOS

INTRODUCTION

Justice!

A simple farmer takes on a materialistic nation

Let justice roll on like a river—righteousness like a never-failing stream!” 5:24

Business had never been better. For the first time in generations, Israel faced no military threat. Since they controlled the crucial trade routes, merchants piled up big profits. Luxuries became readily available—new stone houses, ivory-inlaid furniture, good food and fine wine, the best body oils.

Amid such peace and prosperity, one lone voice scraped like fingernails on a blackboard. Amos spoke bluntly with a farmer’s vocabulary, calling the city socialites “cows” (4:1). A mere shepherd—among the poorest of all professions—he treated luxury with scorn. Worst of all, Amos was a foreigner from the South—from Tekoa, a small town in Judah. Since Israel had split from the South about 170 years before, Israelite leaders did not take kindly to criticism from a Southerner.

But to Amos, social acceptance didn’t matter. He was no professional prophet, making his living talking smoothly about God (7:14). God had called him to leave his job and carry a message. God had said go, and Amos had obeyed.

God’s View of “Religion”

The people Amos addressed had plenty of “religion.” They went regularly to shrines for worship. They looked forward to “the day of the Lord,” when God would fulfill all their expectations for their country. But Amos brought unexpected bad news from God: “I hate, I despise your religious feasts . . .” (5:21). God didn’t want sacrifice or singing. He demanded justice.

Amos listed all Israel’s neighbors, announcing God’s judgment for their crimes against humanity. Israelites liked this kind of talk; they felt superior to all these nations. But having caught the Israelites’ attention, Amos circled dramatically home. God would judge Israel too. The people, their beautiful homes, their sacred altars—all would be destroyed.

The Character of God

More than any other book in the Bible, Amos concentrates on injustice. Israel had plenty of other faults he might have blasted. Their religious system, for instance, centered on two calf-idols. But Amos wasted little breath on that. He focused on the facts that met his eyes and ears in every marketplace: oppression of the poor, dishonest business, bribery in court, privilege bought with money.

The wealthy Israelites were getting their luxuries at the expense of the poor. They congratulated themselves on their devotion to God with no sense that they had cut the heart out of their relationship to him. They wanted God to fit conveniently into life as an additive. God showed himself through Amos as lordly, absolute, inescapable. He must be master over all of life, including business affairs.

How to Read Amos

Perhaps because he was a farmer, Amos used a plain writing style, filled with strong country language. The organization of his book is clear too: chapters 1-2 line up the Middle Eastern nations for trial, chapters 3-6 give a series of messages from God (usually beginning with “Hear this word”), and the last three chapters convey God’s judgment through five graphic visions.

Throughout, Amos sticks close to his main concern: cruelty and inhumanity between people. The injustices Amos condemns often sound familiar today. As you read, ask yourself, “What would Amos say about me and about my people?”

It is a good idea to read Amos and Hosea together, for they give two views of the same situation. As a prophet from the South, Amos was shocked by the injustice he saw in every direction. He emphasized the inner dimension—an abused relationship to a loving God. Amos predicted that Israel would be punished, and his prediction proved right. After King Jeroboam, the government deteriorated. Five kings took the throne in the next 13 years—four were assassinated. In 30 years Israel was permanently dismantled by Assyrian armies. For historical background, read 2 Kings 14:23–17:41, noting that the kings of both Israel and Judah are mentioned. For a briefer account, read the summaries of their reigns in “A Lineup of Rulers,” page 118.

PLANS FOR READING AMOS

PLAN 1: An Overview of Amos in 1 Day

Day 1: Read the Introduction to Amos, and chapter 4, which sums up God's majestic anger against his people.

PLAN 2: All of Amos in 9 Days

[] 1 [] 2 [] 3 [] 4 [] 5 [] 6 [] 7 [] 8 [] 9

1 The words of Amos, one of the shepherds of Tekoa—what he saw concerning Israel two years before the earthquake, when Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam^a son of Jehoash^b was king of Israel.

²He said

“The LORD roars from Zion
and thunders from Jerusalem,
the pastures of the shepherds dry up,^c
and the top of Carmel withers.”

Judgment on Israel's Neighbors

³This is what the LORD says:

“For three sins of Damascus,
even for four, I will not turn back my wrath.
Because she threshed Gilead
with sledges having iron teeth,

⁴I will send fire upon the house of Hazael
that will consume the fortresses of Ben-Hadad.

⁵I will break down the gate of Damascus;
I will destroy the king who is in^d the Valley
of Aven^d

and the one who holds the scepter in Beth
Eden.

The people of Aram will go into exile to Kir,”
says the LORD.

⁶This is what the LORD says:

“For three sins of Gaza,
even for four, I will not turn back my wrath.
Because she took captive whole communities
and sold them to Edom,

⁷I will send fire upon the walls of Gaza
that will consume her fortresses.

⁸I will destroy the king^e of Ashdod

and the one who holds the scepter in
Ashkelon.

I will turn my hand against Ekron,

till the last of the Philistines is dead.”

says the Sovereign LORD

⁹This is what the LORD says:

“For three sins of Tyre

even for four, I will not turn back my wrath.
Because she sold whole communities as
captives to Edom,

disregarding a treaty of brotherhood,
¹⁰I will send fire upon the walls of Tyre
that will consume her fortresses.

¹¹This is what the LORD says:

“For three sins of Edom,

even for four, I will not turn back my wrath.
Because he pursued his brother with a sword,
stifling all compassion,”

because his anger raged continually
and his fury flamed unchecked,

¹²I will send fire upon Teman
that will consume the fortresses of Bozrah.”

¹³This is what the LORD says:

“For three sins of Ammon,

even for four, I will not turn back my wrath.
Because he ripped open the pregnant women
of Gilead

in order to extend his borders,

¹⁴I will set fire to the walls of Rabbah
that will consume her fortresses

amid war cries on the day of battle,
amid violent winds on a stormy day

¹⁵Her kings will go into exile,

^{a1} Hebrew *Joash*, a variant of *Jehoash* ^{b2} Or *shepherds mourn*

^{c8} Or *inhabitants*

^{d11} Or *sword / and destroyed his allies*

^{e15} Or *Mo'ab*; Hebrew *malham*

⁵ Or *the inhabitant of*

^{d5} Aven means *wickedness*

he and his officials together,"
says the LORD.

2 This is what the LORD says:

"For three sins of Moab,
even for four, I will not turn back my wrath.
Because he burned, as if to lime,
the bones of Edom's king,
I will send fire upon Moab
that will consume the fortresses of Kenoth.^a
Moab will go down in great tumult
amid war cries and the blast of the trumpet.
I will destroy her ruler
and kill all her officials with him,"

says the LORD.

"This is what the LORD says:

"For three sins of Judah,
even for four, I will not turn back my wrath.
Because they have rejected the law of the LORD
and have not kept his decrees,
because they have been led astray by false
gods,^b
the gods their ancestors followed,
I will send fire upon Judah
that will consume the fortresses of
Jerusalem."

Judgment on Israel

"This is what the LORD says:

"For three sins of Israel
even for four, I will not turn back my wrath.
They sell the righteous for silver,
and the needy for a pair of sandals.
They trample on the heads of the poor
as upon the dust of the ground
and deny justice to the oppressed.
Father and son use the same girl
and so profane my holy name.
They lie down beside every altar
in garments taken in pledge.
In the house of their god
they drink wine taken as fines.
I destroyed the Amorite before them,
though he was tall as the cedars
and strong as the oaks.
I destroyed his fruit above
and his roots below.
I brought you up out of Egypt,
and I led you forty years in the desert
to give you the land of the Amorites.

2:8 Ruthless Bill Collectors

Bankers making loans usually want collateral to back up the promise to repay. In Amos's day poor people resorted to pledging the very clothes on their backs as collateral. Bill collectors who took a debtor's garments flagrantly violated God's law (Exodus 22:25-27). Worse, they were using the clothes as bedding when they went to their shrines to worship God.

"I also raised up prophets from among your
sons
and Nazirites from among your young men.
Is this not true, people of Israel?"

declares the LORD.

12 "But you made the Nazirites drink wine
and commanded the prophets not to
prophesy.

13 "Now then, I will crush you
as a cart crushes when loaded with grain.

14 The swift will not escape,
the strong will not muster their strength,
and the warrior will not save his life.

15 The archer will not stand his ground,
the fleet-footed soldier will not get away,
and the horseman will not save his life.

16 Even the bravest warriors
will flee naked on that day."

declares the LORD.

Witnesses Summoned Against Israel

3 Hear this word the LORD has spoken against
you, O people of Israel—against the whole
family I brought up out of Egypt.

2 "You only have I chosen
of all the families of the earth,
therefore I will punish you
for all your sins."

3 Do two walk together
unless they have agreed to do so?

4 Does a lion roar in the thicket
when he has no prey?

Does he growl in his den
when he has caught nothing?

5 Does a bird fall into a trap on the ground
where no snare has been set?

Does a trap spring up from the earth
when there is nothing to catch?

6 When a trumpet sounds in a city,
do not the people tremble?

When disaster comes to a city,
has not the LORD caused it?

"Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing
without revealing his plan
to his servants the prophets.

7 The lion has roared—
who will not fear?

The Sovereign LORD has spoken—
who can but prophesy?

9 Proclaim to the fortresses of Ashdod
and to the fortresses of Egypt:

"Assemble yourselves on the mountains of
Samana,

see the great unrest within her
and the oppression among her people."

10 "They do not know how to do right," declares
the LORD,

"who hoard plunder and loot in their
fortresses."

11 Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD
says.

^a Or of her cities

^b Or by her

^c Or him

An enemy will overrun the land
he will pull down your strongholds
and your towers will be destroyed.

The Sovereign Lord says:

“I will send rain on the house of Bethel
only two or three times in a year or at all
and the Israelites be saved
on the edge of their beds
and in their houses on their couches.”

“Hear this and testify against the house of
Israel,” declares the Lord, the Lord God Almighty.

“On the day I punish Israel for her sin,
I will destroy the altar of Bethel
the horns of the altar will be cut off
and fall to the ground.”

“I will tear down the winter house
along with the summer house
the houses adorned with ivory will be
destroyed
and the mansions will be demolished,”
declares the Lord.

Israel Has Not Returned to God

“Hear this word, you cows of Bashan on
Mount Samaria
you women who oppress the poor and crush
the needy
and say to your husbands, “Bring us some
drink!”

The Sovereign Lord has sworn by his holiness.
The time will surely come
when you will be taken away with hooks,
the last of you with fishhooks.

“You will each go straight out
through breaks in the wall,
and you will be cast out toward Harmon,”
declares the Lord.

“Go to Bethel and sin,
go to Gilgal and sin yet more
Bring your sacrifices every morning,
your tithes every three years.”

“Burn leavened bread as a thank offering
and brag about your freewill offerings—
boast about them, you Israelites,
for this is what you love to do,”
declares the Sovereign Lord.

4:1 Sinful Luxury

With searing scornfulness, Amos paints a picture of women living in sheer luxury. These “cows” thought only of their pleasure, not of the oppressed poor who made it possible. Amos paints their punishment just as vividly. The brutal Assyrian armies, who later captured Israel and took its people into exile, left monuments portraying their captives being dragged off with hooks in their mouths.

“I have your empty stomachs^a in every city
and lack of food in every town,
yet you have not returned to me,”
declares the Lord.

“I also withheld rain from you
when the harvest was still three months
away.

I sent rain on one town,
but withheld it from another
(the field had rain,
another had none and dried up.

“People staggered from town to town for water
but did not get enough to drink,
yet you have not returned to me,”
declares the Lord.

“Many times I struck your gardens and
vineyards,
I struck them with blight and mildew
Locusts devoured your fig and olive trees,
yet you have not returned to me,”
declares the Lord.

“I sent plagues among you
as I did to Egypt.
I killed your young men with the sword,
along with your captured horses.
I filled your nostrils with the stench of your
camps,
yet you have not returned to me,”
declares the Lord.

“I overthrew some of you
as I overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.
You were like a burning stick snatched from
the fire,
yet you have not returned to me,”
declares the Lord.

“Therefore this is what I will do to you, Israel,
and because I will do this to you,
prepare to meet your God, O Israel.”

“He who forms the mountains,
creates the wind,
and reveals his thoughts to man,
he who turns dawn to darkness,
and treads the high places of the earth—
the Lord God Almighty is his name.”

A Lament and Call to Repentance

5 Hear this word, O house of Israel, this lament I
take up concerning you:

2“Fallen is Virgin Israel,
never to rise again,
deserted in her own land,
with no one to lift her up.”

3This is what the Sovereign Lord says:

“The city that marches out a thousand strong
for Israel
will have only a hundred left;
the town that marches out a hundred strong
will have only ten left.”

^a12 The meaning of the Hebrew for this line is uncertain.
(Septuagint) out. O mountain of oppression

⁴ Or tithes on the third day

¹³ Masoretic Text; with a different word division of the Hebrew (see
⁴⁶ Hebrew you cleanliness of teeth ¹¹ Hebrew God

⁴This is what the LORD says to the house of Israel:

⁵“Seek me and live;
do not seek Bethel,
do not go to Gilgal,
do not journey to Beersheba
For Gilgal will surely go into exile,
and Bethel will be reduced to nothing.”
⁶Seek the LORD and live,
or he will sweep through the house of
Joseph like a fire,
it will devour,
and Bethel will have no one to quench it

⁷You who turn justice into bitterness
and cast righteousness to the ground
⁸(he who made the Pleiades and Orion,
who turns blackness into dawn
and darkens day into night,
who calls for the waters of the sea
and pours them out over the face of the
land—
the LORD is his name—

⁹he flashes destruction on the stronghold
and brings the fortified city to ruin),
¹⁰you hate the one who reproves in court
and despise him who tells the truth

¹¹You trample on the poor
and force him to give you grain.
Therefore, though you have built stone
mansions,
you will not live in them;
though you have planted lush vineyards,
you will not drink their wine.
¹²For I know how many are your offenses
and how great your sins.

You oppress the righteous and take bribes
and you deprive the poor of justice in the
courts.

¹³Therefore the prudent man keeps quiet in such
times,
for the times are evil.

¹⁴Seek good, not evil,
that you may live.
Then the LORD God Almighty will be with you,
just as you say he is.
¹⁵Hate evil, love good;
maintain justice in the courts.
Perhaps the LORD God Almighty will have
mercy
on the remnant of Joseph.

¹⁶Therefore this is what the Lord, the LORD God
Almighty, says

“There will be wailing in all the streets
and cries of anguish in every public square.
The farmers will be summoned to weep
and the mourners to wail
¹⁷There will be wailing in all the vineyards,
for I will pass through your midst,”
says the LORD.

The Day of the Lord

¹⁸Woe to you who long
for the day of the LORD!
Why do you long for the day of the LORD?
That day will be darkness, not light
¹⁹It will be as though a man fled from a lion
only to meet a bear,
as though he entered his house
and rested his hand on the wall
only to have a snake bite him.
²⁰Will not the day of the LORD be darkness, not
light—
pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness?
²¹“I hate, I despise your religious feasts;
I cannot stand your assemblies.
²²Even though you bring me burnt offerings and
grain offerings,
I will not accept them.
Though you bring choice fellowship
offerings,^b
I will have no regard for them.
²³Away with the noise of your songs!
I will not listen to the music of your harps.
²⁴But let justice roll on like a river,
righteousness like a never-failing stream!”
²⁵“Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings
forty years in the desert, O house of Israel?
²⁶You have lifted up the shrine of your king,
the pedestal of your idols,
the star of your god—
which you made for yourselves.
²⁷Therefore I will send you into exile beyond
Damascus,”
says the LORD, whose name is God
Almighty.

Woe to the Complacent

6 Woe to you who are complacent in Zion,
and to you who feel secure on Mount
Samaria,
you notable men of the foremost nation,
to whom the people of Israel come!
²Go to Calneh and look at it;
go from there to great Hamath,
and then go down to Gath in Philistia.
Are they better off than your two kingdoms?
Is their land larger than yours?
³You put off the evil day
and bring near a reign of terror.
⁴You lie on beds inlaid with ivory

5:20 The Day of the Lord

In Amos's day as today, some religious people
looked forward to “the day of the LORD,” when
God will intervene personally in history and save
his people. Israelites, assuming that “God is on our
side,” thought it would be a great day for them.
But Amos contradicted their expectations. In a few
words he depicted “the day of the LORD” as a
nightmare.

²⁵ Or grief or wickedness. Hebrew *aven* a reference to Beth Aven (a derogatory name for Bethel)

²² Traditionally *peace offerings*

²⁶ Or *lifted up Sikkuth your king and Kariain your idols your star gods*. Septuagint *lifted up the shrine of Molech and the star of your god Kephah their idols*

and lounge on your couches.
 You dine on choice lambs
 and fattened calves
 You strum away on your harps like David
 and improvise on musical instruments.
 You drink wine by the bowlful
 and use the finest lotions,
 but you do not grieve over the ruin of
 Joseph
 Therefore you will be among the first to go into
 exile.
 your feasting and lounging will end.

The Lord Abhors the Pride of Israel

The Sovereign Lord has sworn by himself—the
 Lord God Almighty declares

I abhor the pride of Jacob
 and detest his fortresses,
 I will deliver up the city
 and everything in it."

"If ten men are left in one house, they too will
 die. ¹⁰And if a relative who is to burn the bodies
 comes to carry them out of the house and asks
 of you, 'Is anyone still hiding there, "Is anyone with you?"
 and he says, "No," then he will say, "Hush! We
 must not mention the name of the Lord."

For the Lord has given the command,
 and he will smash the great house into
 pieces
 and the small house into bits.

²Do horses run on the rocky crags?
 Does one plow there with oxen?
 But you have turned justice into poison
 and the fruit of righteousness into
 bitterness—

you who rejoice in the conquest of Lo Debar^a
 and say, "Did we not take Karnaim^b by our
 own strength?"

⁴For the Lord God Almighty declares,
 'I will stir up a nation against you, O house
 of Israel,
 that will oppress you all the way
 from Lebo^c Hamath to the valley of the
 Arabah."

Locusts, Fire and a Plumb Line

7 This is what the Sovereign Lord showed me:
 He was preparing swarms of locusts after the
 king's share had been harvested and just as the
 second crop was coming up. ²When they had
 stripped the land clean, I cried out, "Sovereign
 Lord, forgive! How can Jacob survive? He is so
 small!"

³So the Lord relented.
 "This will not happen," the Lord said.

⁴This is what the Sovereign Lord showed me:
 The Sovereign Lord was calling for judgment by
 fire; it dried up the great deep and devoured the
 land. ⁵Then I cried out, "Sovereign Lord, I beg
 you, stop! How can Jacob survive? He is so small!"

⁶So the Lord relented.

"This will not happen either," the Sovereign
 Lord said.

⁷This is what he showed me: The Lord was
 standing by a wall that had been built true to
 plumb, with a plumb line in his hand. ⁸And the
 Lord asked me, "What do you see, Amos?"

"A plumb line," I replied.

Then the Lord said, "Look, I am setting a plumb
 line among my people Israel; I will spare them no
 longer.

⁹"The high places of Isaac will be destroyed
 and the sanctuaries of Israel will be ruined;
 with my sword I will rise against the house
 of Jeroboam."

Amos and Amaziah

¹⁰Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent a mes-
 sage to Jeroboam king of Israel: "Amos is raising a
 conspiracy against you in the very heart of Israel.
 The land cannot bear all his words. ¹¹For this is
 what Amos is saying:

"Jeroboam will die by the sword,
 and Israel will surely go into exile,
 away from their native land."

¹²Then Amaziah said to Amos, "Get out, you
 seer! Go back to the land of Judah. Earn your bread
 there and do your prophesying there. ¹³Don't
 prophesy anymore at Bethel, because this is the
 king's sanctuary and the temple of the kingdom."

¹⁴Amos answered Amaziah, "I was neither a
 prophet nor a prophet's son, but I was a shepherd,
 and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. ¹⁵But the
 Lord took me from tending the flock and said to
 me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.' ¹⁶Now
 then, hear the word of the Lord. You say,

"Do not prophesy against Israel,
 and stop preaching against the house of
 Isaac."

¹⁷"Therefore this is what the Lord says:

"Your wife will become a prostitute in the
 city,
 and your sons and daughters will fall by the
 sword.

Your land will be measured and divided up,
 and you yourself will die in a pagan^d
 country.

And Israel will certainly go into exile,
 away from their native land."

7:8 A Plumb Line

A plumb line is a weight on the end of a string;
 builders use it to make certain that their walls
 stand straight. A wall may look right, but if it
 doesn't match a plumb line, it is not straight.
 Similarly God will use a plumb line to judge
 whether Israel is "straight" by his standards.

^a13 Lo Debar means nothing
^b17 Hebrew an uncleanness

^b13 Karnaim means horns, horn here symbolizes strength

^c14 Or from the entrance to

A Basket of Ripe Fruit

8 This is what the Sovereign LORD showed me: a basket of ripe fruit. ²"What do you see, Amos?" he asked.

A basket of ripe fruit," I answered.

Then the LORD said to me, "The time is ripe for my people Israel; I will spare them no longer.

³In that day," declares the Sovereign LORD, the songs in the temple will turn to wailing. ⁴Many, many bodies—flung everywhere! Silence!"

⁵Hear this, you who trample the needy and do away with the poor of the land,

saying

When will the New Moon be over
that we may sell grain,
and the Sabbath be ended
that we may market wheat?"—

skimping the measure,
boosting the price
and cheating with dishonest scales,
⁶buying the poor with silver
and the needy for a pair of sandals,
selling even the sweepings with the wheat.

The LORD has sworn by the Pride of Jacob: "I will never forget anything they have done.

⁸"Will not the land tremble for this,
and all who live in it mourn?
The whole land will rise like the Nile;
it will be stirred up and then sink
like the river of Egypt

⁹"In that day," declares the Sovereign LORD,

"I will make the sun go down at noon
and darken the earth in broad daylight.
¹⁰I will turn your religious feasts into mourning
and all your singing into weeping.
I will make all of you wear sackcloth
and shave your heads.
I will make that time like mourning for an only
son
and the end of it like a bitter day.

¹¹"The days are coming," declares the Sovereign LORD,

"when I will send a famine through the
land—
not a famine of food or a thirst for water,
but a famine of hearing the words of the
LORD.

¹²Men will stagger from sea to sea
and wander from north to east,
searching for the word of the LORD,
but they will not find it.

¹³"In that day

"the lovely young women and strong young
men
will faint because of thirst.

¹⁴They who swear by the shame^b of Samaria,
or say, 'As surely as your god lives, O Dan,'

or, 'As surely as the god^c of Beersheba
lives'—
they will fall,
never to rise again."

Israel to Be Destroyed

9 I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and he said:

"Strike the tops of the pillars
so that the thresholds shake.
Bring them down on the heads of all the
people;
those who are left I will kill with the sword.
Not one will get away,
none will escape.

²Though they dig down to the depths of the
grave,^d

from there my hand will take them.
Though they climb up to the heavens,
from there I will bring them down.

³Though they hide themselves on the top of
Carmel,
there I will hunt them down and seize them.
Though they hide from me at the bottom of the
sea,
there I will command the serpent to bite
them.

⁴Though they are driven into exile by their
enemies,
there I will command the sword to slay
them.

I will fix my eyes upon them
for evil and not for good."

⁵The Lord, the LORD Almighty,
he who touches the earth and it melts,
and all who live in it mourn—
the whole land rises like the Nile,
then sinks like the river of Egypt—
⁶he who builds his lofty palace^e in the heavens
and sets its foundation^f on the earth,
who calls for the waters of the sea
and pours them out over the face of the
land—
the LORD is his name.

⁷"Are not you Israelites
the same to me as the Cushites?"
declares the LORD.

"Did I not bring Israel up from Egypt,
the Philistines from Caphtor^h
and the Arameans from Kir?

9:4 An Inescapable God

The beautiful verses of Psalm 139:7-12 describe God's inescapable presence as a comfort. Here, in similar poetry, Amos gives the opposite side of that truth. Those whom God opposes can find no refuge. They may hide on top of Mount Carmel, or even at the very bottom of the sea, but God's eye will follow them.

^{a3} Or "the temple singers will wail
of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain
the upper Nile region

^{b14} Or by Ashima, or by the idol

^{c14} Or power ^{d16} The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain

^{e12} Hebrew to Sheol

^{f16} The meaning

^{h17} That is, people from

8 Surely the eyes of the Sovereign Lord
are on the sinful kingdom.
I will destroy it
from the face of the earth—
yet I will not totally destroy
the house of Jacob,"
declares the Lord.

9 For I will give the command,
and I will shake the house of Israel
among all the nations
as grain is shaken in a sieve,
and not a pebble will reach the ground.
10 All the sinners among my people
will die by the sword,
all those who say,
"Disaster will not overtake or meet us."

Israel's Restoration

11 "In that day I will restore
David a fallen tent
I will repair its broken places,
restore its ruins,

and build it as it used to be
12 so that they may possess the remnant of Edom
and all the nations that bear my name,"
declares the Lord, who will
do these things.

13 "The days are coming," declares the Lord,

when the reaper will be overtaken by the
plowman
and the planter by the one treading grapes.
New wine will drip from the mountains
and flow from all the hills.

14 I will bring back my exiled^a people Israel,
they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in
them.

They will plant vineyards and drink their wine,
they will make gardens and eat their fruit.

15 I will plant Israel in their own land,
never again to be uprooted
from the land I have given them."

says the Lord your God.

^aHebrew: Septuagint is that the remnant of men and all the nations that bear my name may with the Lord

12:12-13 or my

^b1:4 Or will restore me

OBADIAH

INTRODUCTION

Poetic Justice

Obadiah gave the final word on a blood feud

"As you have done, it will be done to you." 15

The feud began with twin brothers, Jacob and Esau. Esau, the older by minutes, would have inherited family leadership, but in a moment of hunger he traded it for a meal (Genesis 25:19-34). Jacob went on to become the founding father of the nation of Israel. Esau, a born hunter, moved southeast to desolate mountain country. He founded the nation of Edom.

Their descendants continued the quarrel. Over hundreds of years the two nations battled repeatedly but inconclusively. The Edomites' capital, Sela, sat on a high plateau above a sheer cliff: the only access was by a deep ravine. From that well-protected enclave, the Edomites raided Israel.

Though the Israelites had been commanded, "Do not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother" (Deuteronomy 23:7), they grew to regard the Edomites as cruel and heartless. Repeatedly the prophets predicted Edom's punishment by God. The final straw came when Babylon dismembered Jerusalem and took its citizens into exile. The Edomites encouraged the conquering army, preyed on fleeing Israelites, and helped plunder Jerusalem. Psalm 137, one of the saddest passages in the Bible, records the Israelite bitterness over this. As Esau had cared more for a meal than for the family name, so his descendants cared more for the profit they could get from plunder than for the compassion they owed a brother.

Fair Return for Cruelty

Obadiah predicts poetic justice for proud Edom: their treachery toward Judah (verses 11-12) repaid with treachery from their own allies (7), their robbery (13) repaid with robbery (5-6), their violence (10) with violence (9), their love of destruction (12-14) repaid with utter destruction (10,18). Obadiah predicts that downtrodden Israel will rise again, while Edom will disappear from the face of the earth.

This prediction came precisely true. Edom was destroyed, not by Israel, but by a series of foreign invaders. The last remnant of Edomites were destroyed in the Roman siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Ironically, the nation that had tormented Jews in Jerusalem later died defending that city.

Why does this blood feud earn a place in Scripture? It demonstrates God's ongoing protection of his people from their enemies. It also shows that God's standards extend beyond his chosen people. Every nation will be judged, like Edom, by their own standard: "As you have done, it will be done to you" (15).

How to Read Obadiah

The shortest book in the Old Testament, Obadiah can easily be read and understood in one sitting. Many readers, however, have a hard time seeing the importance of this ongoing border feud between blood relatives.

A Bible dictionary can summarize the centuries of violence. Look under "Edom." Perhaps, though, you can only fully appreciate Israel's feelings by reflecting on your own when a close relative treats you cruelly. A family betrayal is uniquely offensive to God and humanity. Obadiah reminds us that justice will be done.

A PLAN FOR READING OBADIAH

PLAN 1: All of Obadiah in 1 Day

v. 1 Read the Introduction to Obadiah, and all of Obadiah.

The vision of Obadiah

v. 1-4 What the Sovereign LORD says about Edom

We have heard a message from the LORD,
 An envoy was sent to the nations to say,
 Rise, and let us go against her for battle

For I will make you small among the nations;
 you will be utterly despised

The pride of your heart has deceived you,
 you who live in the clefts of the rocks^a
 and make your home on the heights,
 you who say to yourself

Who can bring me down to the ground?

Though you soar like the eagle
 and make your nest among the stars,
 from there I will bring you down,"
 declares the LORD.

If thieves came to you,
 if robbers in the night—
 Oh, what a disaster awaits you—
 would they not steal only as much as they
 wanted?

If grape pickers came to you,
 would they not leave a few grapes?

But how Esau will be ransacked,
 his hidden treasures pillaged!

All your allies will force you to the border;
 your friends will deceive and overpower
 you.

Those who eat your bread will set a trap for
 you,^b
 but you will not detect it.

8 "In that day," declares the LORD,
 "will I not destroy the wise men of Edom,
 men of understanding in the mountains of
 Esau?"

9 Your warriors, O Teman, will be terrified,
 and everyone in Esau's mountains
 will be cut down in the slaughter.

10 Because of the violence against your brother
 Jacob,
 you will be covered with shame;
 you will be destroyed forever.

11 On the day you stood aloof
 while strangers carried off his wealth
 and foreigners entered his gates
 and cast lots for Jerusalem,
 you were like one of them.

12 You should not look down on your brother

in the day of his misfortune,
 nor rejoice over the people of Judah
 in the day of their destruction,
 nor boast so much
 in the day of their trouble.

13 You should not march through the gates of my
 people

in the day of their disaster,
 nor look down on them in their calamity
 in the day of their disaster,
 nor seize their wealth
 in the day of their disaster.

14 You should not wait at the crossroads
 to cut down their fugitives,
 nor hand over their survivors
 in the day of their trouble.

15 "The day of the LORD is near
 for all nations.

As you have done, it will be done to you;
 your deeds will return upon your own head.

16 Just as you drank on my holy hill,
 so all the nations will drink continually;
 they will drink and drink
 and be as if they had never been.

17 But on Mount Zion will be deliverance;
 it will be holy,
 and the house of Jacob
 will possess its inheritance.

18 The house of Jacob will be a fire
 and the house of Joseph a flame;
 the house of Esau will be stubble,
 and they will set it on fire and consume it.
 There will be no survivors
 from the house of Esau."

The LORD has spoken.

19 People from the Negev will occupy
 the mountains of Esau,
 and people from the foothills will possess
 the land of the Philistines.
 They will occupy the fields of Ephraim and
 Samaria,
 and Benjamin will possess Gilead.

20 This company of Israelite exiles who are in
 Canaan
 will possess the land, as far as Zarephath;
 the exiles from Jerusalem who are in Sepharad
 will possess the towns of the Negev.
 21 Deliverers will go up on Mount Zion
 to govern the mountains of Esau.
 And the kingdom will be the LORD's.

^a Or of Sela^b The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain.^c 21 Or from

JONAH

INTRODUCTION

Good News for the Enemy?

Jonah balked at loving the cruel Assyrians

"Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people. . . Should I not be concerned about that great city?" 4:11

Jesus told his followers, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). While everyone talks admiringly about that command, loving your enemies is no easy thing. Many people doubt whether it is even right.

The book of Jonah tells the story of a man whom God instructed to love his enemies in Nineveh. True to life, the prophet Jonah did just the opposite of what God commanded. He refused to go to the people he hated. Instead, he tried to run away from the Lord.

Nineveh was a large, important city in Assyria, situated on the river Tigris. It posed a grave military threat to tiny Israel. God sent Jonah there, and he responded without hesitation: in Joppa he caught a boat going in the opposite direction. Obviously, Jonah didn't want to warn Nineveh's citizens they were about to be destroyed. He suspected they would repent and God would forgive them.

Why Jonah Didn't Want to Go

We can't be sure why Jonah hated Assyria, but another short Old Testament book, Nahum, gives a clue. This book, also completely dedicated to Nineveh, describes a ruthless, bloodthirsty people. The Assyrians themselves left monuments to their cruelty—long, boastful inscriptions describing their torture and slaughter of people who opposed them.

Israelites had reasons to hate and fear Nineveh. But God *loved* Nineveh. He wanted to save the city, not destroy it. He knew Nineveh was ripe for change. When Jonah finally preached there, the entire city believed his message and repented. Though cruel and hardened, Nineveh was ready to believe God. Israel had never responded to a prophet like these Assyrians did.

An Attitude Like God's

Since God repeatedly warned the Jews not to intermarry with people of other religions, and even ordered them to drive other nations out of the promised land, some readers conclude that the Old Testament is racially narrow-minded. They say the New Testament gives the first indication that God cares for non-Jewish people.

The book of Jonah contradicts that view. It shows, instead, that God wanted to use Jews like Jonah as agents of his concern. They would preach doom but always with the hope that the warning would lead to repentance.

Jonah needed to develop an attitude like God's toward his enemies. Insistently, God led Jonah to this understanding of his own mind and heart. The book of Jonah is a story of a miraculous change in Nineveh, but even more a story of miraculous change in Jonah.

How to Read Jonah

Like Esther and Ruth, Jonah is a delightful short narrative by a master writer. Its spiritual implications are powerful and obvious. You can easily read it at one sitting.

As you read Jonah, notice the changes that the city of Nineveh goes through. Try also to trace the changes that occur in Jonah, and observe how God pushes him to make these changes. Then ask yourself: what did this book say to its original Jewish readers? What does it say to me?

You may also be interested in following Nineveh's entire history. Though the Ninevites repented in Jonah's time, they later returned to old patterns. Later prophets (Nahum and Zephaniah) predicted Nineveh's downfall for "endless cruelty" (Nahum 3:19), and in 612 B.C. that city was destroyed, never to be inhabited again. A Bible dictionary can summarize Nineveh's long

history as a world power, look under "Assyria." To place Jonah in Israelite history, see "A Lineup of Rulers," page 338.

Is Jonah a "fish story"? Interpreters differ over whether it should be read as a parable (not necessarily factual) or as historical fact. At least one reliable account exists of a man swallowed by a sperm whale and later found, alive, in the whale's stomach. Jonah's historical basis cannot be dismissed simply because of the "great fish."

More to the point, Jesus compared himself to Jonah, and the people of his time to Nineveh (Matthew 12:39-41, Luke 11:29-32). He predicted that "the men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here." It is hard to see how fictional characters could stand up at an event Jesus evidently believed would be historical.

PLANS FOR READING JONAH

PLAN 1: An Overview of Jonah in 1 Day

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to Jonah, and chapters 3 and 4. These two short chapters tell the less familiar part of the story: how Jonah got to Nineveh and became more bitter than before.

PLAN 2: All of Jonah in 2 Days

- ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-4

Jonah Flees From the LORD

1 The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: ²"Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me."

³But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.

⁴Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. ⁵All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.

But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. ⁶The captain went to him and said, "How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us, and we will not perish."

⁷Then the sailors said to each other, "Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity." They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.

⁸So they asked him, "Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?"

⁹He answered, "I am a Hebrew and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land."

¹⁰This terrified them and they asked, "What have you done?" (They knew he was running away from the LORD, because he had already told them so.)

¹¹The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?"

¹²"Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied, "and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you."

¹³Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. ¹⁴Then they cried to the LORD, "O LORD, please do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, O LORD, have done as you pleased." ¹⁵Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. ¹⁶At this the men greatly feared the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows to him.

¹⁷But the LORD provided a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights.

Jonah's Prayer

2 From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God. ²He said:

"In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me.

From the depths of the grave I called for help, and you listened to my cry.

³You hurled me into the deep, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me, all your waves and breakers swept over me.

⁴I said, 'I have been banished

from your sight,
yet I will look again
toward your holy temple.^c

⁵The engulfing waters threatened me,^d
the deep surrounded me,
seaweed was wrapped around my head
⁶To the roots of the mountains I sank down;
the earth beneath barred me in forever
But you brought my life up from the pit,
O LORD my God

⁷"When my life was ebbing away,
I remembered you, LORD,
and my prayer rose to you,
to your holy temple

⁸"Those who cling to worthless idols
forfeit the grace that could be theirs

⁹But I, with a song of thanksgiving,
will sacrifice to you
What I have vowed I will make good.
Salvation comes from the LORD."

¹⁰And the LORD commanded the fish, and it
vomited Jonah onto dry land

Jonah Goes to Nineveh

3 Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: ²"Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you."

³Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very important city—a visit required three days. ⁴On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed: "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned." ⁵The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth

⁶When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in

the dust. ⁷Then he issued a proclamation in Nineveh:

"By the decree of the king and his nobles:

Do not let any man or beast, herd or flock, taste anything, do not let them eat or drink.

⁸But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. ⁹Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish."

¹⁰When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.

Jonah's Anger at the Lord's Compassion

4 But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. ²He prayed to the LORD, "O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. ³Now, O LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live."

⁴But the LORD replied, "Have you any right to be angry?"

⁵Jonah went out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. ⁶Then the LORD God provided a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the vine. ⁷But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the vine so that it withered. ⁸When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."

⁹But God said to Jonah, "Do you have a right to be angry about the vine?"

"I do," he said. "I am angry enough to die."

¹⁰But the LORD said, "You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. ¹¹But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?"

3:3 How Big a City?

Archaeologists who have dug up Nineveh report that at its peak its walls were 7¼ miles in circumference. Since it would not take three days to go around a city of that size, most probably the "three days" refers to the administrative district of which Nineveh was the capital. This comprised four cities with a circumference of about 60 miles. Another possibility: perhaps it took Jonah three days to go to every neighborhood, marketplace, and city gate with his message.

^a5 Or waters were at my throat

MICAH

INTRODUCTION

Light in a Dark Time

Evil and violence were creeping south toward Jerusalem

And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. 6:8

Village boys often are amazed at the big city. They gawk at the tall buildings, the fancy clothes, and the showy symbols of power. Micah was a boy from Moresheth, a small village in the no-man's land southwest of Jerusalem. While his contemporary, Isaiah, moved in and out of the king's palace, Micah shows no sign of traveling in such circles.

Yet this village boy kept his sense of perspective. The blood and violence of his day did not overwhelm him, nor was he intimidated by powerful and wealthy people. He spoke like a person who had seen the world through God's eyes.

Micah lived in one of the darkest times in Israel's history, a time of brutal warfare. The country had long been split into North and South. Micah saw war break out between these sides, with 120,000 deaths on the Southern side alone (2 Chronicles 28:6). Then Assyria, the brutal chief power of the day, smashed the Northern Kingdom after a three-year siege of its capital, Samaria. Only a miracle kept those same Assyrian armies out of Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 32). But for how long would the South remain free?

The Sin of the South

Micah had no doubt how to interpret these chaotic events. God had punished the Northern nation of Israel for sins summarized in 2 Kings 17:16-17: idolatry, Baal worship, child sacrifice, magic and sorcery. Now these same activities were creeping south into Judah—so much so that Micah referred in disgust to Jerusalem as a "high place," the traditional setting for pagan idol worship (1:5). The same judgment the North had suffered would come to Judah if people continued to disobey God.

Other historical accounts give more details of the South's sins. They describe how King Ahaz set up a foreign altar in God's temple, altering the temple construction "in deference to the king of Assyria" (2 Kings 16:18). He gave his own children in human sacrifice and shut the Lord's temple, substituting altars on every street corner (2 Chronicles 28:3,24-25). Along with this religious corruption came every other kind of sin: dishonesty (Micah 6:10-11), bribery (3:11), injustice (2:2), and distrust that destroyed families (7:5-6).

Beyond the Darkness

Yet Micah saw light ahead. He perceived a majestic God over all events, who punished his people only to purify and restore them. Along with making some of the Bible's frankest predictions of destruction, Micah gave some of the clearest predictions of the Messiah, the leader who would come to save Israel. Micah's perspective encompassed not only the events of his time but events far in the future, when the nations "will beat their swords into plowshares" (4:3).

Micah looked straight at the darkness of his time and at the darkness yet to come. But his perspective—God's perspective—enabled him to see beyond darkness. "Do not gloat over me, my enemy! Though I have fallen, I will rise. Though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be my light" (7:8).

How to Read Micah

Micah had the big view of history, and thus he covered a lot of ground. His book, only seven chapters, is loaded with pronouncements on the events of several thousand years. Because so much is jammed into so short a space, reading Micah can be confusing. A fragment may deal with the Messiah, for instance, and without warning the next few verses shift to the battle against Assyria.

To grasp Micah's message, think of his book as a collection of short speeches. One speech doesn't necessarily lead into the next. Instead of reading quickly from start to finish, pause after each short section to see whether you understand what it says. Try to understand who is speaking. Sometimes God speaks, sometimes Micah, sometimes the rebellious people.

In general, Micah follows this outline: chapters 1-3 indict both Northern and Southern Kingdoms, with their leaders; chapters 4 and 5 turn to the wonderful future God is planning, the last two chapters give the trial, punishment, and hope of the guilty nations.

It's very helpful to understand Micah's historical situation. Micah 1.1 names the kings of Judah he worked under. You can read about these kings, and their Northern counterparts, in 2 Kings 15:27-20:21 and 2 Chronicles 27-32. For a brief summary, see "A Lineup of Rulers," page 338.

PLANS FOR READING MICAH

PLAN 1: An Overview of Micah in 1 Day

- ☐ Day 1 Read the Introduction to Micah, and chapter 6, which includes one of the most succinct statements in the Old Testament of what God wants our lives to be.

PLAN 2: All of Micah in 7 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

1 The word of the LORD that came to Micah of Moresheth during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah—the vision he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

²Hear, O peoples, all of you,
listen, O earth and all who are in it,
that the Sovereign LORD may witness against
you,
the Lord from his holy temple.

Judgment Against Samaria and Jerusalem

³Look! The LORD is coming from his dwelling
place;
he comes down and treads the high places of
the earth.

⁴The mountains melt beneath him
and the valleys split apart,
like wax before the fire,
like water rushing down a slope.

⁵All this is because of Jacob's transgression,
because of the sins of the house of Israel.

What is Jacob's transgression?

Is it not Samaria?

What is Judah's high place?

Is it not Jerusalem?

⁶"Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of
rubble,

a place for planting vineyards.

I will pour her stones into the valley
and lay bare her foundations.

⁷All her idols will be broken to pieces;
all her temple gifts will be burned with fire;
I will destroy all her images.

Since she gathered her gifts from the wages of
prostitutes,

as the wages of prostitutes they will again be
used."

Weeping and Mourning

⁸Because of this I will weep and wail;
I will go about barefoot and naked.
I will howl like a jackal
and moan like an owl.

⁹For her wound is incurable;
it has come to Judah.

It^a has reached the very gate of my
people,
even to Jerusalem itself.

¹⁰Tell it not in Gath^b;
weep not at all.^c

In Beth Ophrah^d
roll in the dust.

¹¹Pass on in nakedness and shame,
you who live in Shaphir.^e

Those who live in Zaanan^f
will not come out.

Beth Ezel is in mourning;
its protection is taken from you.

¹²Those who live in Maroth^g writhe in
pain,

waiting for relief,

because disaster has come from the LORD,
even to the gate of Jerusalem.

¹³You who live in Lachish,^h
harness the team to the chariot.

You were the beginning of sin
to the Daughter of Zion,
for the transgressions of Israel
were found in you.

¹⁴Therefore you will give parting gifts
to Moresheth Gath.

^a9 Or He
sounds like the Hebrew for weep
like the Hebrew for come out

^b10 Gath sounds like the Hebrew for tell.

^d10 Beth Ophrah means house of dust.

^g12 Maroth sounds like the Hebrew for bitter.

^e10 Hebrew Septuagint may suggest not in Acco. The Hebrew for in Acco

^f11 Shaphir means pleasant

^h11 Zaanan sounds

^h13 Lachish sounds like the Hebrew for team

⁹Hear this, you leaders of the house of Jacob,
you rulers of the house of Israel,
who despise justice
and distort all that is right;
¹⁰who build Zion with bloodshed,
and Jerusalem with wickedness
¹¹Her leaders judge for a bribe,
her priests teach for a price,
and her prophets tell fortunes for money.
Yet they lean upon the LORD and say,
"Is not the LORD among us?
No disaster will come upon us."
¹²Therefore because of you,
Zion will be plowed like a field,
Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble,
the temple hill a mound overgrown with
thickets

The Mountain of the LORD

4 In the last days
the mountain of the LORD's temple will be
established
as chief among the mountains;
it will be raised above the hills,
and peoples will stream to it.
²Many nations will come and say,
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the
LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob.
He will teach us his ways,
so that we may walk in his paths."
The law will go out from Zion,
the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
³He will judge between many peoples
and will settle disputes for strong nations far
and wide
They will beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will not take up sword against nation,
nor will they train for war anymore.
⁴Every man will sit under his own vine
and under his own fig tree,
and no one will make them afraid,
for the LORD Almighty has spoken.
⁵All the nations may walk
in the name of their gods;

3:12 A Prophecy That Saved Jeremiah's Life

One hundred years after this clear prophecy of its
destruction, Jerusalem still stood. By that time
Jeremiah was making similar predictions, which led
to his arrest for treason. Some of the city leaders,
however, quoted Micah's "ancient" prophecy,
pointing out that since Micah had not been put to
death, neither should Jeremiah be (Jeremiah
26:18-19). Their memory probably saved
Jeremiah's life.

Within another 20 years, both Micah's and
Jeremiah's predictions came true and Jerusalem
was reduced to rubble.

we will walk in the name of the LORD
our God for ever and ever.

The LORD's Plan

⁶"In that day," declares the LORD,
"I will gather the lame;
I will assemble the exiles
and those I have brought to grief.
⁷I will make the lame a remnant,
those driven away a strong nation.
The LORD will rule over them in Mount Zion
from that day and forever.
⁸As for you, O watchtower of the flock,
O stronghold^a of the Daughter of Zion,
the former dominion will be restored to you;
kingship will come to the Daughter of
Jerusalem."
⁹Why do you now cry aloud—
have you no king?
Has your counselor perished,
that pain seizes you like that of a woman in
labor?
¹⁰Writhe in agony, O Daughter of Zion,
like a woman in labor,
for now you must leave the city
to camp in the open field.
You will go to Babylon;
there you will be rescued.
There the LORD will redeem you
out of the hand of your enemies.
¹¹But now many nations
are gathered against you.
They say, "Let her be defiled,
let our eyes gloat over Zion!"
¹²But they do not know
the thoughts of the LORD;
they do not understand his plan,
he who gathers them like sheaves to the
threshing floor.
¹³"Rise and thresh, O Daughter of Zion,
for I will give you horns of iron;
I will give you hoofs of bronze
and you will break to pieces many nations."
You will devote their ill-gotten gains to the
LORD,
their wealth to the Lord of all the earth.

A Promised Ruler From Bethlehem

5 Marshal your troops, O city of troops,^b
for a siege is laid against us.
They will strike Israel's ruler
on the cheek with a rod.

4:3 Parallel with Isaiah

Micah 4:1-3, which describes the wonderful future
in store for the world, has an almost exact parallel
in Isaiah 2:2-4. Isaiah must have quoted Micah, or
vice versa, or perhaps both quoted a third
unknown prophet. Both prophets spoke in
Jerusalem at about the same time.

^a Or hill

^b Or Strengthen your walls, O walled city

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah
 though you are small among the clans of
 Judah,
 you will come for me
 and will be ruler over Israel,
 whose origins are from of old,
 from ancient times."

"The remnant of Israel will be abandoned
 like a lion when she who is in labor gives
 birth.
 And he will wait for his brothers to return
 and will be their peace."

"The Lord will stand and shepherd his flock
 in the strength of the LORD,
 in the majesty of the name of the LORD his
 God."

And they will live securely, for then his
 greatness
 will reach to the ends of the earth
 and he will be their peace."

Deliverance and Destruction

"When the Assyrian invades our land,
 he will crush our fortresses,
 he will reduce us to seven shepherds,
 and he will scatter the leaders of men.
 Then will I cut off the land of Assyria with the
 sword,
 the land of Nimrod with drawn sword.
 Then will I bring you from the Assyrian
 and you will no longer be invaded,
 and you will dwell in your borders."

2 Or from days of eternity

"The remnant of Jacob will be
 in the midst of many peoples
 like dew from the LORD,
 like showers on the grass,
 which do not wait for man
 or linger for mankind."

"The remnant of Jacob will be among the
 nations,

in the midst of many peoples,
 like a lion among the beasts of the forest,
 like a young lion among flocks of sheep,
 which mauls and mangles as it goes,
 and no one can rescue."

"Your hand will be lifted up in triumph over
 your enemies,
 and all your foes will be destroyed."

10 "In that day," declares the LORD,

"I will destroy your horses from among you
 and demolish your chariots

11 I will destroy the cities of your land
 and tear down all your strongholds.

12 I will destroy your witchcraft
 and you will no longer cast spells.

13 I will destroy your carved images
 and your sacred stones from among you;
 you will no longer bow down
 to the work of your hands

14 I will uproot from among you your Asherah
 poles
 and demolish your cities.

15 I will take vengeance in anger and wrath
 upon the nations that have not obeyed me."

46 Or crush

46 Or Nimrod in its gates

114 That

INSIGHT

Seeing in Two Dimensions

The prophets made little distinction between next week and the next thousand years

They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. 4:3

When you see a mountain range from a distance, it's very difficult to tell which peak is highest. Often a smaller mountain looms largest simply because it is much closer to you than another, higher peak.

Micah and many of the other Old Testament prophets saw the future like that. They made little distinction between events coming next week and events that would come a thousand years later. They seemed to see the future with limited "depth perception."

In the space of one verse, for instance, Micah shifts from a prediction (3:12) that Jerusalem will become a mound of rubble—a prophecy fulfilled about 100 years later—to a prophecy (4:1) that the same mountain will be lifted up "chief among the mountains"—something that has yet to be fulfilled today. In 5:2 comes a prediction that Matthew 2:6 records as fulfilled by Jesus' birth in Bethlehem 700 years later.

In Micah, the thousands of years between these fulfillments are unclear. They all seem to be about the same distance into the future. Almost certainly, Micah himself saw them unclearly. First Peter 1:10-11 comments that "the prophets . . . searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you . . ."

The Lord's Case Against Israel

- 6** Listen to what the LORD says
 Stand up, plead your case before the mountains,
 let the hills hear what you have to say
 Hear, O mountains, the LORD's accusation,
 listen, you everlasting foundations of the earth
 For the LORD has a case against his people,
 he is lodging a charge against Israel
 "My people, what have I done to you?
 How have I burdened you? Answer me
 I brought you up out of Egypt
 and redeemed you from the land of slavery
 I sent Moses to lead you
 also Aaron and Miriam
 "My people, remember
 what Balak king of Moab counseled
 and what Balaam son of Beor answered.
 Remember your journey, from Shittim to
 Gilgal
 that you may know the righteous acts of the LORD
 "With what shall I come before the LORD
 and bow down before the exalted God?
 Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
 with calves a year old?
 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of
 rams,
 with ten thousand rivers of oil?
 Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression,
 the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
 "He has showed you, O man, what is good
 And what does the LORD require of you?
 To act justly and to love mercy

6:5 The Meaning of Strange Names

Speaking to people who knew their own history well, Micah needed only to mention names like Balaam and Balak to recall God's goodness and humankind's disobedience. Numbers 22-24 tells the story of Balaam, in which Balak tried to get Balaam to curse Israel. Balaam gave this famous reply: "How can I curse those whom the LORD has not cursed?" (Numbers 23:8). The trip from Shittim to Gilgal apparently refers to Israel's miraculous crossing of the Jordan River (Joshua 3:1; 4:19-20), the final stage in their journey from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the promised land. These events, which had occurred about 500 years before, were as real to the Israelites as yesterday.

Verse 16 offers a different kind of memory: "the statutes of Omri and all the practices of Ahab's house." Omri and his son Ahab were two of the most notoriously wicked kings in Israelite history. (See 1 Kings 16:21-33.) Ahab went so far as to marry Jezebel, a Phoenician princess, and set up a temple for her god, Baal, in the new capital of Samaria. He sponsored her massacre of genuine prophets.

and to walk humbly with your God.

Israel's Guilt and Punishment

- ^aListen! The LORD is calling to the city—
 and to fear your name is wisdom—
 "Heed the rod and the One who appointed it"
¹⁰Am I still to forget, O wicked house,
 your ill-gotten treasures
 and the short ephah,^b which is accursed?
¹¹Shall I acquit a man with dishonest scales,
 with a bag of false weights?
¹²Her rich men are violent;
 her people are liars
 and their tongues speak deceitfully.
¹³Therefore, I have begun to destroy you,
 to ruin you because of your sins.
¹⁴You will eat but not be satisfied;
 your stomach will still be empty.^c
 You will store up but save nothing,
 because what you save I will give to the sword
¹⁵You will plant but not harvest;
 you will press olives but not use the oil on yourselves,
 you will crush grapes but not drink the wine
¹⁶You have observed the statutes of Omri
 and all the practices of Ahab's house;
 and you have followed their traditions.
 Therefore I will give you over to ruin
 and your people to derision;
 you will bear the scorn of the nations.^d

Israel's Misery

- 7** What misery is mine!
 I am like one who gathers summer fruit
 at the gleaning of the vineyard;
 there is no cluster of grapes to eat,
 none of the early figs that I crave.
²The godly have been swept from the land;
 not one upright man remains.
 All men lie in wait to shed blood;
 each hunts his brother with a net.
³Both hands are skilled in doing evil;
 the ruler demands gifts,
 the judge accepts bribes,
 the powerful dictate what they desire—
 they all conspire together.
⁴The best of them is like a brier,
 the most upright worse than a thorn hedge.
 The day of your watchmen has come,
 the day God visits you.

6:8 What God Wants

Micah's most famous pronouncement summarizes the qualities that matter to God. Jesus spoke in similar terms to the Pharisees about their religious hypocrisy: they gave a tenth of even their spices to God, yet they neglected justice, mercy, and faithfulness (Matthew 23:23).

^a9 The meaning of the Hebrew for this line is uncertain.
 for this word is uncertain

^b10 An ephah was a dry measure.

^c16 Septuagint; Hebrew *scorn due my people*

^d14 The meaning of the Hebrew

Now is the time of their confusion.
 5Do not trust a neighbor;
 put no confidence in a friend.
 Even with her who lies in your embrace
 be careful of your words.
 6For a son dishonors his father,
 a daughter rises up against her mother,
 a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—
 a man's enemies are the members of his own
 household

7But as for me, I watch in hope for the LORD,
 I wait for God my Savior,
 my God will hear me.

Israel Will Rise

8Do not gloat over me, my enemy!
 Though I have fallen, I will rise.
 Though I sit in darkness,
 the LORD will be my light.
 9Because I have sinned against him,
 I will bear the LORD's wrath,
 until he pleads my case
 and establishes my right.
 He will bring me out into the light;
 I will see his righteousness.
 10Then my enemy will see it
 and will be covered with shame,
 she who said to me,
 "Where is the LORD your God?"
 My eyes will see her downfall;
 even now she will be trampled underfoot
 like mire in the streets.
 11The day for building your walls will come,
 the day for extending your boundaries.
 12In that day people will come to you
 from Assyria and the cities of Egypt,
 even from Egypt to the Euphrates
 and from sea to sea

and from mountain to mountain
 13The earth will become desolate because of its
 inhabitants,
 as the result of their deeds

Prayer and Praise

14Shepherd your people with your staff,
 the flock of your inheritance,
 which lives by itself in a forest,
 in fertile pasturelands.
 Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead
 as in days long ago.
 15"As in the days when you came out of Egypt,
 I will show them my wonders."
 16Nations will see and be ashamed,
 deprived of all their power.
 They will lay their hands on their mouths
 and their ears will become deaf.
 17They will lick dust like a snake,
 like creatures that crawl on the ground.
 They will come trembling out of their dens;
 they will turn in fear to the LORD our God
 and will be afraid of you.
 18Who is a God like you,
 who pardons sin and forgives the
 transgression
 of the remnant of his inheritance?
 You do not stay angry forever
 but delight to show mercy.
 19You will again have compassion on us;
 you will tread our sins underfoot
 and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of
 the sea.
 20You will be true to Jacob,
 and show mercy to Abraham,
 as you pledged on oath to our fathers
 in days long ago.

*14 On to the middle of Carmel

NAHUM

INTRODUCTION

God's Answer to Injustice

A power above the powers

Who can withstand his indignation? Who can endure his fierce anger? 1:6

Is life fair? It rarely seems so, especially in international politics. The most vicious dictators thrive, and raw power is the key ingredient in a successful foreign policy. Weak people get trampled.

As a citizen of Judah, the prophet Nahum felt the force of such injustice. His message from God concerned the greatest city of the time, Nineveh. This city, the capital of Assyria, represented raw, brutal power—"endless cruelty," as Nahum put it (3:19). Though Nineveh was hundreds of miles northeast of Judah, her power dominated the Middle East. In contrast, Judah was a small, fragile state barely clinging to independence.

Nahum's Nerve

Judah's sister nation to the north, Israel, had already been defeated by Assyria and carried into exile. Only God's miraculous intervention had saved Judah on that occasion. And now, in Nahum's time, the Assyrians had returned. They dragged off Manasseh, the king, with a hook in his nose (2 Chronicles 33:11). Judah was forced to pay tribute as a vassal state.

Few people can stare into the face of such raw power and come away unimpressed. Nahum did so only because he had seen a far greater power—the power of a God whose wrath could shatter rocks. If God was angry, how could Nineveh stand? Nahum's absolute confidence in God is underlined throughout this book.

It took nerve to stand up and predict the downfall of the most powerful nation in the world. Yet, in this book, Nahum sounds unintimidated, almost lordly. He spoke with confidence because he knew God's character: "The LORD will not leave the guilty unpunished" (1:3).

Decline and Fall of Nineveh

Within a few years, Nahum's predictions came true. Nineveh did fall, never to rise again. The greatest city in the world became a pile of rubble overgrown with grass. Both Alexander the Great and Napoleon camped near it but had no idea a city had ever been there. The site became known as "the mound of many sheep."

The name *Nahum* means "comfort." Though Nahum describes God's anger, his message offers comfort to those who live with injustice and evil. "The LORD is good," said Nahum, "a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him, but with an overwhelming flood . . . he will pursue his foes into darkness" (1:7-8). Nineveh is gone, but Nahum's testimony lives on, reminding us that though God's justice seems slow, nothing can ultimately escape it.

How to Read Nahum

Nahum stands out from the other short prophetic books in two ways. He addressed a foreign city—Nineveh—instead of his own home nation, and he used unusually vivid language.

You can read more background on Judah and its relationship to Nineveh in the following historical accounts: 2 Kings 17–19 and 2 Chronicles 32–33:13. The background will help you understand why God was so angry at Nineveh.

As you read Nahum, pay special attention to the vivid imagery. Some of the best examples are the following:

Descriptions of warfare: 2:3-7; 3:1-3

Nineveh like a pool with its water draining out: 2:8

Nineveh like a lions' den, full of bones: 2:11-12

Nineveh like a prostitute shamed in the streets: 3:5-6

Nineveh's fortresses like fig trees, with fruit shaken into the mouth of their attacker
3:12

Nineveh's numerous citizens like grasshoppers: prolific, voracious, and quickly disappearing: 3:15-17

PLANS FOR READING NAHUM

PLAN 1: An Overview of Nahum in 1 Day

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to Nahum, and chapter 1, which portrays God's anger against Nineveh's injustice.

PLAN 2: All of Nahum in 3 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3

1 An oracle concerning Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.

The LORD's Anger Against Nineveh

²The LORD is a jealous and avenging God;
the LORD takes vengeance and is filled with wrath

The LORD takes vengeance on his foes
and maintains his wrath against his enemies.

³The LORD is slow to anger and great in power;
the LORD will not leave the guilty unpunished.

His way is in the whirlwind and the storm,
and clouds are the dust of his feet.

⁴He rebukes the sea and dries it up;
he makes all the rivers run dry.

Bashan and Carmel wither
and the blossoms of Lebanon fade.

⁵The mountains quake before him
and the hills melt away.

The earth trembles at his presence,
the world and all who live in it.

⁶Who can withstand his indignation?
Who can endure his fierce anger?
His wrath is poured out like fire,
the rocks are shattered before him.

The LORD is good,

a refuge in times of trouble

He cares for those who trust in him,

⁷ but with an overwhelming flood
he will make an end of Nineveh,
he will pursue his foes into darkness

⁸Whatever they plot against the LORD
he will bring to an end,
trouble will not come a second time

⁹They will be entangled among thorns
and drunk from their wine,
they will be consumed like dry stubble.^a

¹⁰From you, O Nineveh, has one come forth
who plots evil against the LORD
and counsels wickedness

¹¹This is what the LORD says

"Although they have allies and are numerous,
they will be cut off and pass away

Although I have afflicted you, O Judah,
I will afflict you no more

¹²Now I will break their yoke from your neck
and tear your shackles away"

¹³The LORD has given a command concerning
you, Nineveh

"You will have no descendants to bear your
name

I will destroy the carved images and cast idols
that are in the temple of your gods

I will prepare your grave,
for you are vile

¹⁴Look there on the mountains
the feet of one who brings good news
who proclaims peace^b

Celebrate your festivals, O Judah,
and fulfill your vows

No more will the wicked invade you.

1:3 God Is Slow to Anger

God's anger against Nineveh had not appeared overnight. Assyria had been the dominant world power for at least 300 years. Once before, Jonah had carried a message of condemnation to its chief city, Nineveh. As was always true with God's prophets, Jonah's condemnation sounded absolute. Actually, it included an escape clause. In Jeremiah 18:7-10, God spelled it out: "If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent . . ." Hearing Jonah, the Ninevites had repented, and God had spared their city.

The repentance had not lasted, however. By Nahum's time, Nineveh had returned to her evil ways. God's anger, while slow to develop, was sure.

^a "What do you mean?"

^b10 The meaning of the Hebrew for this verse is uncertain.

they will be completely destroyed.

Nineveh to Fall

2 An attacker advances against you, Nineveh,
Guard the fortress,
watch the road,
brace yourselves,
marshal all your strength!

²The Lord will restore the splendor of Jacob
like the splendor of Israel,
though destroyers have laid them waste
and have ruined their vines.

³The shields of his soldiers are red;
the warriors are clad in scarlet.

The metal on the chariots flashes
on the day they are made ready;
the spears of pine are brandished.^a

⁴The chariots storm through the streets,
rushing back and forth through the squares.
They look like flaming torches;
they dart about like lightning

⁵He summons his picked troops,
yet they stumble on their way.
They dash to the city wall;
the protective shield is put in place.

⁶The river gates are thrown open
and the palace collapses.

⁷It is decreed^b that the city
be exiled and carried away
Its slave girls moan like doves
and beat upon their breasts.

⁸Nineveh is like a pool,
and its water is draining away
"Stop! Stop!" they cry,
but no one turns back.

⁹Plunder the silver!
Plunder the gold!
The supply is endless,
the wealth from all its treasures!
¹⁰She is pillaged, plundered, stripped!
Hearts melt, knees give way,
bodies tremble, every face grows pale.

¹¹Where now is the lions' den,
the place where they fed their young,
where the lion and lioness went,
and the cubs, with nothing to fear?

¹²The lion killed enough for his cubs
and strangled the prey for his mate,
filling his lairs with the kill
and his dens with the prey.

¹³"I am against you,"
declares the Lord Almighty.
"I will burn up your chariots in smoke,
and the sword will devour your young lions.
I will leave you no prey on the earth.
The voices of your messengers
will no longer be heard."

Woe to Nineveh

3 Woe to the city of blood,
full of lies,

full of plunder,
never without victims!

²The crack of whips,
the clatter of wheels,
galloping horses
and jolting chariots!

³Charging cavalry,
flashing swords
and glittering spears!

Many casualties,
piles of dead,
bodies without number,
people stumbling over the corpses—

⁴all because of the wanton lust of a harlot,
alluring, the mistress of sorceries,
who enslaved nations by her prostitution
and peoples by her witchcraft.

⁵"I am against you," declares the Lord
Almighty.

"I will lift your skirts over your face.
I will show the nations your nakedness
and the kingdoms your shame.

⁶I will pelt you with filth,
I will treat you with contempt
and make you a spectacle.

⁷All who see you will flee from you and say,
'Nineveh is in ruins—who will mourn for
her?'

Where can I find anyone to comfort you?"

⁸Are you better than Thebes,^c
situated on the Nile,
with water around her?
The river was her defense,
the waters her wall.

⁹Cush^d and Egypt were her boundless
strength;
Put and Libya were among her allies.

¹⁰Yet she was taken captive
and went into exile.
Her infants were dashed to pieces
at the head of every street.
Lots were cast for her nobles,
and all her great men were put in chains.
¹¹You too will become drunk;
you will go into hiding
and seek refuge from the enemy.

¹²All your fortresses are like fig trees
with their first ripe fruit;
when they are shaken,

3:8 Another Powerful City

In approximately 663 B.C. Assyria overwhelmed Thebes, the ancient, wealthy capital of Upper Egypt. This victory seemed to symbolize Assyria's absolute power. To Nahum, however, the battle told a different tale. If Thebes was vulnerable, so was proud Nineveh. About 50 years after capturing Thebes, Nineveh fell to the Babylonians. The mention of Thebes' downfall enables us to date Nahum's message within that 50-year period.

^a3 Hebrew; Septuagint and Syriac: the horsemen rush to and fro

^c8 Hebrew No Amon

^d9 That is, the upper Nile region

^b7 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

the figs fall into the mouth of the eater
 13 Look at your troops
 they are all women!
 The gates of your land
 are wide open to your enemies,
 fire has consumed their bars
 14 Draw water for the siege,
 strengthen your defenses!
 Work the clay,
 tread the mortar,
 repair the brickwork!
 15 There the fire will devour you,
 the sword will cut you down
 and, like grasshoppers, consume you.
 Multiply like grasshoppers,
 multiply like locusts!
 16 You have increased the number of your
 merchants

till they are more than the stars of the sky,
 but like locusts they strip the land
 and then fly away
 17 Your guards are like locusts
 your officials like swarms of locusts
 that settle in the walls on a cold day -
 but when the sun appears they fly away,
 and no one knows where
 18 O king of Assyria, your shepherds^a slumber,
 your nobles lie down to rest
 Your people are scattered on the mountains
 with no one to gather them
 19 Nothing can heal your wound;
 your injury is fatal
 Everyone who hears the news about you
 claps his hands at your fall,
 for who has not felt
 your endless cruelty?

HABAKKUK

INTRODUCTION

The Problem of Evil

Habakkuk's question: "Why is God silent while the wicked succeed?"

The righteous will live by his faith." 2:4

The book of Habakkuk begins with a complaint. The prophet saw injustice, violence, and evil in his own country, yet God remained silent and invisible. Why didn't God intervene? Why did he give no answer when Habakkuk called out for help? Habakkuk took these questions directly to God, in prayer.

God answered him, but hardly in the way Habakkuk had anticipated. God said he was sending the Babylonians to punish Judah. God's words described a ruthless, savage army that would tear Israel apart.

So Habakkuk complained again. Could this be justice—punishing Judah through an even more evil nation? Deeply perplexed, Habakkuk waited to see what answer God would give to his second complaint.

How long he had to wait, we do not know. But God did reply, and his answer is perhaps the best explanation we have of God's attitude toward evil. It satisfied Habakkuk, so that his book, which begins with a complaint, ends with one of the most beautiful songs in the Bible.

Two Certainties to Live By

God pointed out two certainties to Habakkuk. First, the violent, proud Babylonians would be paid back with the very weapons they had used on others. Just as they destroyed nations, they would be destroyed. "Has not the LORD Almighty determined . . . that the nations exhaust themselves for nothing?" (2:13). Evil may dominate the earth, but it always wears itself out.

The second certainty was God's character. He may be silent for a time, but not forever. "The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (2:14). In chapter 3, Habakkuk "saw" this powerful glory, and his heart pounded. It changed his attitude from complaining to joy.

Because the future belongs to God, a believer can cling to the truth embodied in 2:4: "The righteous shall live by his faith." Habakkuk beautifully expressed this attitude of faith in the last three verses of his book: no matter how hard life might become, he would rejoice and find strength in the Lord.

Living by Faith

Did Habakkuk explain why God allows evil? Not precisely. He did affirm that God has not lost control. Evil is moving toward its own logical end of self-destruction, and God's glory will someday fill the earth. Habakkuk offers no proof of this, merely the record of God's communication to him. A believer can find hope and joy through faith in God, regardless of circumstances. Habakkuk's capsule of faith was quoted at three crucial points in the New Testament: Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38.

Though Habakkuk probably did not live to see it, the Babylonians were destroyed. Today they are merely a memory. Yet we, like Habakkuk, must still wait in faith to see the earth "filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD."

How to Read Habakkuk

Other prophets carried messages from God to humankind; Habakkuk addressed God alone. He pondered deep riddles of life while wrestling with two terrible realities: the degeneration of his own nation and the certainty that it was about to be overrun by another, worse nation. How can a just God allow, even use, such evil? To fully delve into Habakkuk's questions, you may want to read the book of Job and Psalm 73, which explore related issues.

The first two chapters of Habakkuk tell of two "complaints" and two answers. As you read, try to imagine the emotional changes Habakkuk experienced as he talked with God. Then read the joyful psalm of chapter 3 (set to music, either by Habakkuk or someone else) and ask yourself: where did this joyful confidence come from?

PLANS FOR READING HABAKKUK

PLAN 1: An Overview of Habakkuk in 1 Day

Day 1 Read the Introduction to Habakkuk, and chapter 1, which gives you a flavor of the dialogue between God and the prophet.

PLAN 2 All of Habakkuk in 3 Days

1 □ 2 □ 3

1 The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet received

Habakkuk's Complaint

How long, O Lord, must I call for help,
but you do not listen?
Or cry out to you, "Violence!"
but you do not save?
Why do you make me look at injustice?
Why do you tolerate wrong?
Destruction and violence are before me;
there is strife, and conflict abounds.
Therefore the law is paralyzed,
and justice never prevails.
The wicked hem in the righteous,
so that justice is perverted.

The Lord's Answer

Look at the nations and watch
and be utterly amazed.
For I am going to do something in your days
that you would not believe,
even if you were told.
I am raising up the Babylonians,^a
that ruthless and impetuous people,
who sweep across the whole earth
to seize dwelling places not their own.
They are a feared and dreaded people;
they are a law to themselves
and promote their own honor.
Their horses are swifter than leopards,
faster than wolves at dusk;
their cavalry gallops headlong;
their horsemen come from afar.
They fly like a vulture swooping to devour;
they all come bent on violence.
Their hordes advance like a desert wind
and gather prisoners like sand.
They deride kings
and scoff at rulers.
They laugh at all fortified cities;
they build earthen ramps and capture them.

Then they sweep past like the wind and go
on—
guilty men, whose own strength is their
god."

Habakkuk's Second Complaint

O Lord, are you not from everlasting?
My God, my Holy One, we will not die.
O Lord, you have appointed them to execute
judgment;
O Rock, you have ordained them to punish.
Your eyes are too pure to look on evil;
you cannot tolerate wrong.
Why then do you tolerate the treacherous?
Why are you silent while the wicked
swallow up those more righteous than
themselves?
You have made men like fish in the sea,
like sea creatures that have no ruler.
The wicked foe pulls all of them up with
hooks,
he catches them in his net,
he gathers them up in his dragnet;
and so he rejoices and is glad.
Therefore he sacrifices to his net,
and burns incense to his dragnet,
for by his net he lives in luxury
and enjoys the choicest food.
Is he to keep on emptying his net,
destroying nations without mercy?

2 I will stand at my watch
and station myself on the ramparts;
I will look to see what he will say to me.

1:16 Worshiping the Military

The Babylonians had their own gods, but Habakkuk claimed that they really worshiped their "net," that is, their military might. In 1:11, God described them as "guilty men, whose own strength is their god."

^a The Chaldeans

^b The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain

and what answer I am to give to this complaint.⁴

The Lord's Answer

²Then the LORD replied:

"Write down the revelation
and make it plain on tablets
so that a herald¹ may run with it.

³For the revelation awaits an appointed time;
it speaks of the end
and will not prove false.

Though it linger, wait for it;
it² will certainly come and will not delay.

⁴"See, he is puffed up;
his desires are not upright—
but the righteous will live by his faith⁴—

⁵Indeed, wine betrays him;
he is arrogant and never at rest.
Because he is as greedy as the grave⁵
and like death is never satisfied,
he gathers to himself all the nations
and takes captive all the peoples.

⁶"Will not all of them taunt him with ridicule
and scorn, saying,

"Woe to him who piles up stolen goods
and makes himself wealthy by extortion!
How long must this go on?"

⁷Will not your debtors⁷ suddenly arise?
Will they not wake up and make you
tremble?

Then you will become their victim.

⁸Because you have plundered many nations,
the peoples who are left will plunder you.
For you have shed man's blood;
you have destroyed lands and cities and
everyone in them.

⁹"Woe to him who builds his realm by unjust
gain
to set his nest on high,
to escape the clutches of ruin!

¹⁰You have plotted the ruin of many peoples,
shaming your own house and forfeiting your
life.

¹¹The stones of the wall will cry out,
and the beams of the woodwork will echo it.

¹²"Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed
and establishes a town by crime!

¹³Has not the LORD Almighty determined
that the people's labor is only fuel for the
fire,

that the nations exhaust themselves for
nothing?

¹⁴For the earth will be filled with the knowledge
of the glory of the LORD,
as the waters cover the sea.

¹⁵"Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors,
pouring it from the wineskin till they are
drunk,

so that he can gaze on their naked bodies
¹⁶You will be filled with shame instead of glory
Now it is your turn! Drink and be exposed!
The cup from the LORD's right hand is coming
around to you,
and disgrace will cover your glory.

¹⁷The violence you have done to Lebanon will
overwhelm you,
and your destruction of animals will terrify
you.

For you have shed man's blood;
you have destroyed lands and cities and
everyone in them.

¹⁸"Of what value is an idol, since a man has
carved it?

Or an image that teaches lies?
For he who makes it trusts in his own
creation;

he makes idols that cannot speak.

¹⁹Woe to him who says to wood, "Come to life!"
Or to lifeless stone, "Wake up!"

Can it give guidance?
It is covered with gold and silver;
there is no breath in it.

²⁰But the LORD is in his holy temple;
let all the earth be silent before him."

Habakkuk's Prayer

3 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet. On *shigionoth*.^h

²LORD, I have heard of your fame;
I stand in awe of your deeds, O LORD.
Renew them in our day,
in our time make them known;
in wrath remember mercy.

³God came from Teman,
the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selahⁱ
His glory covered the heavens
and his praise filled the earth.

⁴His splendor was like the sunrise;
rays flashed from his hand,
where his power was hidden.

⁵Plague went before him;
pestilence followed his steps.

⁶He stood, and shook the earth;
he looked, and made the nations tremble.
The ancient mountains crumbled
and the age-old hills collapsed.
His ways are eternal.

⁷I saw the tents of Cushan in distress,
the dwellings of Midian in anguish

⁸Were you angry with the rivers, O LORD?
Was your wrath against the streams?
Did you rage against the sea
when you rode with your horses
and your victorious chariots?

⁹You uncovered your bow,
you called for many arrows.

You split the earth with rivers,
¹⁰the mountains saw you and withered.

¹ Or and what to answer when I am rebuked
faithfulness

⁵ Hebrew Sheol

⁷ Or creditors

² Or so that whoever reads it

³ Or Though he linger, wait for him, he

⁴ Or

Septuagint) and stagger
in verses 9 and 13

¹¹ Probably a literary or musical term

¹⁶ Masoretic Text, Dead Sea Scrolls, Aquila, Vulgate and Syriac (see also
¹³ A word of uncertain meaning, possibly a musical term, also

Torrents of water swept by;
the deep roared
and lifted its waves on high.

¹¹Sun and moon stood still in the heavens
at the glint of your flying arrows,
at the lightning of your flashing spear.
¹²In wrath you strode through the earth
and in anger you threshed the nations.

¹³You came out to deliver your people,
to save your anointed one.

You crushed the leader of the land of
wickedness

you stripped him from head to foot. *Selah*

¹⁴With his own spear you pierced his head

3:14 God at Work

"With his own spear you pierced his head," is how Habakkuk sees God overcoming the leader of evil. Earlier (2:6-7) Habakkuk showed how this works out: the Babylonians' own enemies would treat them just as they had treated others. Violence turns back on the violent. On the surface, God's power is not always visible, but the person of faith knows God is behind it all.

when his warriors stormed out to scatter us,
gloating as though about to devour
the wretched who were in hiding

¹⁵You trampled the sea with your horses,
churning the great waters

¹⁶I heard and my heart pounded,
my lips quivered at the sound;
decay crept into my bones,
and my legs trembled

Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity
to come on the nation invading us

¹⁷Though the fig tree does not bud
and there are no grapes on the vines,
though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce no food,
though there are no sheep in the pen
and no cattle in the stalls,

¹⁸yet I will rejoice in the LORD,
I will be joyful in God my Savior.

¹⁹The Sovereign LORD is my strength;
he makes my feet like the feet of a deer,
he enables me to go on the heights.

For the director of music. On my stringed
instruments.

ZEPHANIAH

INTRODUCTION

Beyond Darkness

A worldwide catastrophe and a shining light

"The LORD . . . will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing." 3:17

Zephaniah wrote not long after Manasseh had ended his 50-year reign in Judah. One of the worst kings on record, Manasseh had made idol worship and child sacrifice common practice. He had built altars for star worshipers in God's temple and had encouraged male prostitution as part of the religious ritual. He had also "shed so much innocent blood that he filled Jerusalem from end to end . . ." (2 Kings 21:16). His son Amon carried on in the same way during his short reign.

Then came King Josiah, who took the throne at the age of eight, after his father's assassination. The Bible says there was never a king like Josiah (2 Kings 23:25). He led a reform, destroying all the pagan idols and restoring the temple. He organized the first Passover celebration in generations.

Zephaniah, who was probably related to the king through his great great grandfather King Hezekiah, apparently spoke just before the big changes. The nation's future hung in the balance, and Zephaniah's words may well have helped tip it toward renewal of faith in God.

From Gloom to Exultation

Zephaniah's book begins in deep gloom. Like other prophets, he condemned the sins of his nation and predicted judgment from God. But he went one big step further. He talked repeatedly about "the day of the LORD," and saw that it would be a supernatural event sweeping clean the whole planet. Zephaniah offered no hope that it could be avoided. The Lord had warned and pleaded, but to no avail (3:6-7). Zephaniah saw hope for a minority only. A faithful, humble remnant could be sheltered from disaster if they would seek God.

Beyond the judgment fires Zephaniah saw something remarkably bright. He predicted that a purified remnant of God's people, truthful and humble, would trust in God. He foresaw a remade world learning to worship God.

Therefore this short book, which starts with such gloom, ends with an ecstatic song of joy: an anticipation of the kingdom to come after the judgment. God's blessing will flow freely as every nation worships him. Zephaniah's words may have been influential in encouraging Josiah's reforms, but his vision extended far beyond. The New Testament speaks often, like Zephaniah, of the worldwide judgment and a renewed world to come.

How to Read Zephaniah

Zephaniah will seem more interesting if you grasp the historical situation in which he wrote. For the decadence that led to King Josiah's reforms, read 2 Kings 21. Josiah's history is told in chapters 22 and 23. Second Chronicles 33-35 tells the same story with slightly different details. You can find a brief summary of these reigns in "A Lineup of Rulers," page 338.

Zephaniah is easily understood. It has a clear and symmetrical structure, opening (after a brief introduction) with a warning of judgment for Judah and its capital of Jerusalem, then extending the judgment to Judah's neighbors, and closing in chapter 3 with good news about Jerusalem.

PLANS FOR READING ZEPHANIAH

Read the book of Zephaniah in 15 min.

— **Chapter 1:** Hear the proclamation as Zephaniah and chapter 1 with its hopeful portrait of Jerusalem after the judgment

— **Chapter 2:** Hear the proclamation in 15 min.

— **Chapter 3:** Hear the proclamation in 15 min.

1 The word of the Lord that came to Zephaniah son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, during the reign of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah.

Warning of Coming Destruction

and sweep away everything
under the sky on the earth.

¹ declares the Lord

and sweep away both men and animals,
and sweep away the birds of the air
and the fish of the sea.

The mankind will have only heaps of rubble
when I sweep man from the face of the

² declares the Lord

Against Judah

and stretch out my hand against Judah
and against all who live in Jerusalem

and say, "We are safe because every remnant of
Dad,

the names of the pagan and the idolatrous
people—

³ "We will not be punished on the day of

the LORD because we are holy."

So will you down and swear by the LORD
and who also swear by Molech?

Those who turn back from following the LORD
and neither seek the LORD nor inquire of

⁴ him.

Be silent before the Sovereign LORD,
for the day of the LORD is near

⁵ and you have prepared a sacrifice

to him, and he has invited those he has invited

to the day of the LORD's sacrifice

⁶ and he will punish the princes

and he will kill the sons

and he will destroy the

and he will destroy the

⁷ On that day I will punish

all who avoid stepping on the
threshold.

⁸ And on the temple of their gods
and on the altar and on the

⁹ declares the LORD

and I will go up from the Fish Gate.

and I will go up from the New Quarter,

and I will go up from the hills.

¹⁰ Wail, you who live in the market district;
all your merchants will be wiped out,
all who trade with silver will be ruined.

¹¹ At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps
and punish those who are complacent
who are like some left on its debris
who think, "The LORD will do nothing
either good or bad."

¹² Their wealth will be plundered,

their houses demolished.

They will build houses

but not live in them.

They will plant vineyards

but not drink the wine.

The Great Day of the Lord

¹⁴ The great day of the LORD is near—
near and coming quickly.

¹⁵ Listen! The cry on the day of the LORD will be
better

the shouting of the warrior there

¹⁶ That day will be a day of wrath,

a day of distress and anguish,

a day of trouble and ruin,

a day of darkness and gloom,

a day of clouds and blackness,

¹⁷ a day of trumpet and battle cry

against the fortified cities

and against the corner towers

¹⁸ I will bring distress on the people

and they will walk like blind men

because they have sinned against the LORD.

Their blood will be poured out like dust

and their entrails like filth.

¹⁹ Neither their silver nor their gold

will be able to save them

on the day of the LORD's wrath.

In the fire of his jealousy

the whole world will be consumed,

for he will make a sudden end

of all who live in the earth.

2 Gather together, gather together,
O shameful nation,

² before the appointed time arrives

and that day sweeps on like chaff,

before the fierce anger of the LORD comes upon
you,

before the day of the LORD's wrath comes
upon you.

³ Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land,
you who do what he commands.

Seek righteousness, seek humility,
perhaps you will be sheltered
on the day of the LORD's anger.

¹⁰ The meaning of the Hebrew for this line is uncertain.

¹¹ Or he shall. ¹² Or in

¹⁵ Hebrew Malcom, that is, Micom

¹⁹ See 1 Samuel 5:5

Against Philistia

⁴ Gaza will be abandoned
and Ashkelon left in ruins
At midday Ashdod will be emptied
and I know uprooted
⁵ Woe to you who live by the sea,
O Kerethite people,
the word of the LORD is against you,
O Canaan, land of the Philistines

I will destroy you,
and none will be left "

⁶ The land by the sea, where the Kerethites
dwell
will be a place for shepherds and sheep
pens
It will belong to the remnant of the house of
Judah
there they will find pasture
In the evening they will lie down
in the houses of Ashkelon
The LORD their God will care for them;
he will restore their fortunes.^b

Against Moab and Ammon

⁸ "I have heard the insults of Moab
and the taunts of the Ammonites,
who insulted my people
and made threats against their land.
Therefore, as surely as I live,"
declares the LORD Almighty, the God of
Israel,
"surely Moab will become like Sodom,
the Ammonites like Gomorrah—
a place of weeds and salt pits,
a wasteland forever.
The remnant of my people will plunder them;
the survivors of my nation will inherit their
land."

¹⁰ This is what they will get in return for their
pride,
for insulting and mocking the people of the
LORD Almighty.

¹¹ The LORD will be awesome to them
when he destroys all the gods of the land.
The nations on every shore will worship him,
every one in its own land.

Against Cush

¹² "You too, O Cushites,^c
will be slain by my sword."

Against Assyria

¹³ He will stretch out his hand against the north
and destroy Assyria,
leaving Nineveh utterly desolate
and dry as the desert.

¹⁴ Flocks and herds will lie down there,
creatures of every kind.

The desert owl and the screech owl
will roost on her columns.

Their calls will echo through the windows,
rubble will be in the doorways,

the beams of cedar will be exposed.
¹⁵ This is the crafty city
(that lived in safety
'the hand to her neck'
I am, and there is none besides me."
What a ruin she has become,
a lair for wild beasts!
All who pass by her scoff
and shake their fists.

The Future of Jerusalem

3 Woe to the city of oppressors,
rebellious and defiled!

² She obeys no one,
she accepts no correction.
She does not trust in the LORD,
she does not draw near to her God
³ Her officials are roaring lions,
her rulers are evening wolves,
who leave nothing for the morning
⁴ Her prophets are arrogant;
they are treacherous men.
Her priests profane the sanctuary
and do violence to the law.

⁵ The LORD within her is righteous,
he does no wrong.
Morning by morning he dispenses his justice,
and every new day he does not fail,
yet the unrighteous know no shame

⁶ "I have cut off nations;
their strongholds are demolished.
I have left their streets deserted,
with no one passing through.
Their cities are destroyed;
no one will be left—no one at all.

⁷ I said to the city,
'Surely you will fear me
and accept correction!'
Then her dwelling would not be cut off,
nor all my punishments come upon her
But they were still eager
to act corruptly in all they did
⁸ Therefore wait for me," declares the LORD,
"for the day I will stand up to testify."^d
I have decided to assemble the nations,
to gather the kingdoms
and to pour out my wrath on them—
all my fierce anger.
The whole world will be consumed
by the fire of my jealous anger.

⁹ "Then will I purify the lips of the peoples,
that all of them may call on the name of the
LORD
and serve him shoulder to shoulder.

¹⁰ From beyond the rivers of Cush^e
my worshipers, my scattered people,
will bring me offerings.

¹¹ On that day you will not be put to shame
for all the wrongs you have done to me,
because I will remove from this city
those who rejoice in their pride
Never again will you be haughty
on my holy hill.

^{a6} The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain
upper Nile region

^{b8} Septuagint and Syriac, Hebrew will rise up to plunder

^{c7} Or will bring back their captives

^{d12} That is, people from the
^{e10} That is, the upper Nile region

"But I will save with you
 the remnant of the Lord
 who will do no wrong
 and will not be found in their mouths
 They will eat and be down
 and no one will make them afraid."

"Sing, O Daughter of Zion,
 shout aloud, O Israel!
 Be glad and rejoice with all your heart,
 O Daughter of Jerusalem!
 "The Lord has taken away your punishment,
 he has turned back your enemy.
 The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you,
 never again will you fear any harm.
 "On that day they will say to Jerusalem,
 Do not fear, O Zion;
 do not let your hands hang limp.
 "The Lord your God is with you.

he is mighty to save
 He will take great delight in you,
 he will quiet you with his love,
 he will rejoice over you with singing."

¹⁸"The sorrows for the appointed feasts
 I will remove from you
 they are a burden and a reproach to you."
¹⁹At that time I will deal
 with all who oppressed you;
 I will rescue the lame
 and gather those who have been scattered.
 I will give them praise and honor
 in every land where they were put to shame.
²⁰At that time I will gather you;
 at that time I will bring you home
 I will give you honor and praise
 among all the peoples of the earth
 when I restore your fortunes^b
 before your very eyes,"

says the Lord

^a18 Or "I will gather you who mourn for the appointed feasts, / your reproach is a burden to you

^b20 Or I bring back your captives

HAGGAI

INTRODUCTION

The Prophet Who Got Results

For once, God's people listened

The whole remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the LORD their God and the message of the prophet Haggai, because the LORD their God had sent him. 1:12

Sometimes, at crucial moments, a single voice can stir a directionless mass of people to action. Winston Churchill's inspiring oratory may have saved Britain in World War II. True leaders of nations are those who inspire their people to constructive action.

Haggai's words, similarly, rang clear in a time of confusion. The Jews had come back from their exile in Babylon nearly 20 years before. But they seemed to have forgotten the point of returning. After one false start on the temple, the exiles had devoted their energy to building their own houses. The ruins of Solomon's temple stood as a nagging reminder that they had neglected God.

Now Haggai urged these pioneers to "give careful thought" to their situation. He did not rage like Jeremiah or build eloquent poems like Isaiah. He put it simply and logically. They had worked hard, but what had it earned them? Their crops were unsuccessful. Their money disappeared as soon as they earned it. Why? Haggai asked. Because they had mistaken their priorities. They needed to put God first. They needed to rebuild his temple.

A Response from the Heart

People responded to Haggai immediately. Prophets before him, such as Amos, Isaiah, or Jeremiah, had spoken for decades without seeing such a heartfelt reaction. Haggai's messages span a mere four months, but he accomplished everything he set out to do. In four years the temple was complete.

What made the temple so important? After all, the proper sacrifices and rituals could be carried out on a makeshift altar. But God's reputation was at stake. He could not be properly honored so long as the house he called home lay in ruins. The temple symbolized God's presence, and Israel's priorities.

Would rebuilding the temple change Israel's financial situation? Haggai's first words promised nothing. He simply said, "Give careful thought to your ways," and pointed out that Israel's lack of prosperity was God's doing. They had worked hard, but God had withheld the rain their crops needed. A month later (2:1-9) Haggai said that God had glorious plans for Israel, plans that would shake the whole earth. But he referred to God's presence with them, not to good crops.

Only on the last day accounted for in this brief book did Haggai get back to the subject of harvests. He said that God wanted his people to "give careful thought" again—this time to the dramatic difference they would see in their harvests since they had put God first. "From this day on I will bless you," God said through Haggai.

How to Read Haggai

One of the shortest books in the Bible, Haggai can easily be read at a sitting. Haggai's words came at a critical time in the life of the nation of Israel. They mark one of the few times in all history when God spoke and his people quickly and unquestioningly obeyed. For the historical background, read Ezra 1-6. Haggai's crucial message is mentioned in Ezra 5:1-2. "A Lineup of Rulers," page 338, can help you place Haggai in Israelite history.

There is a progression to God's warnings and his promises through Haggai. Study each of Haggai's messages, and note down what *encouragement*, what *warning*, and what *hope* God offered Israel. How did God motivate them to obey him?

PLANS FOR READING HAGGAI

PLAN 1: An Overview of Haggai in 1 Day

Day 1: Read the Introduction to Haggai and chapter 1 which tells how Haggai's message changed Israel's direction

PLAN 2: All of Haggai in 2 Days

A Call to Build the House of the Lord

1 In the second year of King Darius, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest. **2** The Lord Almighty says: "These people have said, 'The Lord's house has not yet come for the people.'"

3 Then the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai: **4** "Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house

lies in ruins? **5** Now this is what the Lord Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways. **6** You have sown much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes."

7 This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways. **8** Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build the house so that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified," says the Lord. **9** "You expected much, but it turned out to be little. What you brought in, I blew away. Why?" declares the Lord Almighty. "Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house. **10** Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. **11** I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the oil and whatever the ground produces, on men and cattle, and on the labor of your hands."

12 Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the whole remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the message of the prophet Haggai, because the Lord their God had sent him. And the people feared the Lord.

13 Then Haggai, the Lord's messenger, gave this message of the Lord to the people: "I am with you," declares the Lord. **14** So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of the whole remnant

of the people. They came and began to work on the house of the Lord Almighty, their God. **15** On the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month in the second year of King Darius

The Promised Glory of the New House

2 On the twenty-first day of the seventh month, the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai: **3** "Speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people. Ask them, 'Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory?' How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing? **4** But now be strong, O Zerubbabel," declares the Lord. "Be strong, O Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land," declares the Lord, "and work. For I am with you," declares the Lord Almighty. **5** "This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt: And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear."

6 "This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. **7** I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the Lord Almighty. **8** 'The silver is mine and the gold is mine,' declares the Lord Almighty. **9** 'The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,' says the Lord Almighty. 'And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the Lord Almighty."

Blessings for a Defiled People

10 On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Haggai: **11** "This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Ask the priests what the law says: **12** If a person carries consecrated meat in the fold of his garment, and that fold touches some bread or stew, some wine, oil or other food, does it become consecrated?'"

The priests answered, "No."

13 Then Haggai said, "If a person defiled by contact with a dead body touches one of these things, does it become defiled?"

"Yes," the priests replied, "it becomes defiled."

* A variant of *Jeshua*, here and elsewhere in Haggai

¹⁴Then Haggai said, "So it is with this people and this nation in my sight," declares the LORD. "Whatever they do and whatever they offer there is defiled."

¹⁵"Now give careful thought to this from this day on^a—consider how things were before one stone was laid on another in the LORD's temple. ¹⁶When anyone came to a heap of twenty measures, there were only ten. When anyone went to a wine vat to draw fifty measures, there were only twenty. ¹⁷I struck all the work of your hands with blight, mildew and hail, yet you did not turn to me," declares the LORD. ¹⁸"From this day on, from this twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, give careful thought to the day when the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid. Give careful thought! ¹⁹Is there yet any seed left in the barn? Until now, the vine and the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree have not borne fruit."

2:12 The Spread of Good and Evil

"Which is contagious, good or evil?" In the Old Testament law Haggai found that consecrated meat—set aside to be used in sacrificial worship—did not "spread" its holiness. But a person who became "unclean" did spread his or her defilement. Under the Old Testament law, evil spread, but goodness did not. Their failure to rebuild the temple had defiled everything the Israelites touched—even their good deeds.

"From this day on I will bless you."

Zerubbabel the Lord's Signet Ring

²⁰The word of the LORD came to Haggai a second time on the twenty-fourth day of the month. ²¹Tell Zerubbabel governor of Judah that I will shake the heavens and the earth. ²²I will overturn royal thrones and shatter the power of the foreign kingdoms. I will overthrow chariots and their drivers, horses and their riders will fall, each by the sword of his brother.

²³"On that day," declares the LORD Almighty, "I will take you, my servant Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel," declares the LORD, "and I will make you like my signet ring, for I have chosen you," declares the LORD Almighty."

2:23 The Imprint of the Master

Some 78 years before, King Jehoiachin had been captured and taken to Babylon. God had rejected him: "Even if you, Jehoiachin . . . were a signet ring on my right hand, I would still pull you off" (Jeremiah 22:24).

But now his grandson Zerubbabel had come back to Jerusalem, chosen again as the Lord's "signet ring." Such a ring was used in place of a signature, to impress the king's seal on important documents. God had accepted men from the royal line of David as his chosen leaders again. The complete fulfillment of this prophecy would have to wait for Zerubbabel's descendant Jesus, a son of David who fully printed God's image on humanity.

^a15 Or to the days past

ZECHARIAH

INTRODUCTION

Starting Over

How could they rebuild with broken pieces?

'The LORD says, 'I will return to Jerusalem with mercy, and there my house will be rebuilt.' " 1:16

When the Jews reviewed their history, it looked like a long slide downhill. Consistently, they had responded to God's love by grumbling against him, by disobeying his law, by worshiping idols. Finally, after centuries of warning, punishment had come. Jerusalem was flattened. The survivors marched off in chains toward the other end of the world.

They had not merely lost a battle. They had lost, seemingly, their place in God's heart and their future as his special people.

But hope for a new start came in exile. When Persian emperor Cyrus took power, he offered Jews a chance to return to their land and rebuild their temple. Some jumped at the chance. They took the long journey to a homeland most of them had never seen (you can read about the trip in the first chapters of Ezra). They wanted not merely to rebuild; they hoped somehow to escape the downward, anti-God trend that had plagued their nation from its beginnings.

Hope Begins to Fade

They found a disheartening scene. Their once-beautiful city was a ghost town. Everything of value had been destroyed. Fertile fields were overgrown. The region was almost empty of people.

The small band of returned exiles built an altar on the grounds of the ruined temple. But soon they grew discouraged about actual rebuilding. They had enough trouble finding shelter and eking out a living from the land. When their non-Jewish neighbors fought against rebuilding the temple, the former exiles gave up. Their hopes of a glorious "new beginning" began to fade.

The temple stayed in a state of disrepair for nearly 20 years, until the prophets Haggai and Zechariah stirred up renewed interest. These prophets saw that as long as the temple lay in ruins, Israel's distinctive character as a people of God was ruined, too. At their urging, the Jews organized to build again.

The book of Zechariah is a record from that critical period of rebuilding. Its first recorded message dates from approximately two months after the temple foundation was laid. The temple was completed four years later, at least partly due to Zechariah's encouraging words.

Needed: A Change of Heart

Zechariah wasn't mainly interested in a building, however. More important was the relationship with God that the temple symbolized. In his first recorded words Zechariah warned his people not to be like their ancestors. What good had a temple done them? A really new beginning required a change of heart. "'Return to me,' declares the LORD Almighty, 'and I will return to you'" (1:3).

The last half of Zechariah widens its view to the whole world. The small refugee community of Jews, Zechariah says, holds the world's future. Their new beginning would become the hope of the world.

How to Read Zechariah

Most people find Zechariah difficult to understand. Throughout the book you will find references to people and events that are hard to interpret. A commentary can be a great help, clarifying the meaning of these details. For historical background on Zechariah's times, read Ezra 1-6. Zechariah is mentioned by name in Ezra 5:1.

The book of Zechariah breaks into three parts. The first six chapters offer eight symbolic visions, which were meant to encourage the builders of the temple. They are not too difficult to understand if you take them one at a time and don't rush through them. Their main emphasis: God is at work again. He plans to live with his people in Jerusalem. He will protect them from

their enemies, cleanse them from their sin, banish evil. He is making a new beginning for them. Chapters 7-8 address the quality of life God wants his renewed people to enjoy. These words contain many encouraging promises to Israel.

The last six chapters are packed with puzzling references to the struggles Israel must endure in becoming what God wants. You will find predictions of terrible suffering and absolute victory. These chapters, as complex as they are, helped the Gospel writers understand Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection. The writers quoted these chapters as they wrote of Jesus' final days. The book of Revelation, telling of the final goal of history, also drew on Zechariah's predictions.

PLANS FOR READING ZECHARIAH

PLAN 1: An Overview of Zechariah in 1 Day

- Day 1: Read the Introduction to Zechariah, and chapter 8, which describes the future God has in mind for his people.

PLAN 2: All of Zechariah in 11 Days

1 | 2-4 | 4-5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12-13 | 14

A Call to Return to the LORD

1 In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah son of Berekiah, the son of Iddo:

²"The LORD was very angry with your forefathers. ³Therefore tell the people: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Return to me,' declares the LORD Almighty, 'and I will return to you,' says the LORD Almighty. ⁴Do not be like your forefathers, to whom the earlier prophets proclaimed: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Turn from your evil ways and your evil practices.' But they would not listen or pay attention to me, declares the LORD. ⁵Where are your forefathers now? And the prophets, do they live forever? ⁶But did not my words and my decrees, which I commanded my servants the prophets, overtake your forefathers?"

"Then they repented and said, 'The LORD Almighty has done to us what our ways and practices deserve, just as he determined to do.'"

The Man Among the Myrtle Trees

⁷On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, the month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah son of Berekiah, the son of Iddo.

⁸During the night I had a vision—and there before me was a man riding a red horse! He was standing among the myrtle trees in a ravine. Behind him were red, brown and white horses.

⁹I asked, "What are these, my lord?"

The angel who was talking with me answered, "I will show you what they are."

¹⁰Then the man standing among the myrtle trees explained, "They are the ones the LORD has sent to go throughout the earth."

¹¹And they reported to the angel of the LORD, who was standing among the myrtle trees, "We have gone throughout the earth and found the whole world at rest and in peace."

¹²Then the angel of the LORD said, "LORD Almighty, how long will you withhold mercy from Jerusalem and from the towns of Judah, which you have been angry with these seventy years?" ¹³So the LORD spoke kind and comforting words to the angel who talked with me.

¹⁴Then the angel who was speaking to me said, "Proclaim this word: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'I am very jealous for Jerusalem and Zion, ¹⁵but I am very angry with the nations that feel secure. I was only a little angry, but they added to the calamity.'"

¹⁶"Therefore, this is what the LORD says: 'I will return to Jerusalem with mercy, and there my house will be rebuilt. And the measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem,' declares the LORD Almighty.

¹⁷"Proclaim further: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'My towns will again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and choose Jerusalem.'"

Four Horns and Four Craftsmen

¹⁸Then I looked up—and there before me were four horns! ¹⁹I asked the angel who was speaking to me, "What are these?"

He answered me, "These are the horns that scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem."

²⁰Then the LORD showed me four craftsmen. ²¹I asked, "What are these coming to do?"

He answered, "These are the horns that scat-

1:18 Brute Power

In an agricultural society that does its plowing with oxen, nothing is stronger than a bull. Probably because of this, horns are frequently used as symbols of power in the Old Testament.

ried Judah so that no one could raise his head, but the craftsmen have come to terrify them and throw down these horns of the nations who lifted up their horns against the land of Judah to scatter its people."

A Man With a Measuring Line

2 Then I looked up—and there before me was a man with a measuring line in his hand! ²He asked, "Where are you going?"

He answered me, "To measure Jerusalem, to find out how wide and how long it is."

³Then the angel who was speaking to me left, and another angel came to meet him ⁴and said to him "Run, tell that young man, 'Jerusalem will be a city without walls because of the great number of men and livestock in it. ⁵And I myself will be a wall of fire around it,' declares the LORD, 'and I will be its glory within.'"

⁶"Come! Come! Flee from the land of the north," declares the LORD, "for I have scattered you to the four winds of heaven," declares the LORD.

⁷"Come, O Zion! Escape, you who live in the Daughter of Babylon!" ⁸For this is what the LORD Almighty says: "After he has honored me and has sent me against the nations that have plundered you—for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye—⁹I will surely raise my hand against them so that their slaves will plunder them." Then you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me.

¹⁰"Shout and be glad, O Daughter of Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you," declares the LORD. ¹¹"Many nations will be joined with the LORD in that day and will become my people. I will live among you and you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you. ¹²The LORD will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem. ¹³Be still before the LORD, all mankind, because he has roused himself from his holy dwelling."

Clean Garments for the High Priest

3 Then he showed me Joshua^a the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan^c standing at his right side to accuse him. ²The LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?"

³Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. ⁴The angel said to those who were standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes."

Then he said to Joshua, "See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you."

⁵Then I said, "Put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the LORD stood by.

⁶The angel of the LORD gave this charge to Joshua: ⁷"This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'If you will walk in my ways and keep my requirements, then you will govern my house and

have charge of my courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here.

⁸"Listen, O high priest Joshua and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come: I am going to bring my servant, the Branch. ⁹See, the stone I have set in front of Joshua! There are seven eyes^d on that one stone, and I will engrave an inscription on it," says the LORD Almighty, "and I will remove the sin of this land in a single day."

¹⁰"In that day each of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and fig tree," declares the LORD Almighty."

The Gold Lampstand and the Two Olive Trees

4 Then the angel who talked with me returned and wakened me, as a man is wakened from his sleep. ²He asked me, "What do you see?"

I answered, "I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lights on it, with seven channels to the lights. ³Also there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left."

⁴I asked the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?"

⁵He answered, "Do you not know what these are?"

"No, my lord," I replied.

⁶So he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty."

⁷"What are you, O mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of 'God bless it! God bless it!'"

⁸Then the word of the LORD came to me: ⁹"The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you."

¹⁰"Who despises the day of small things? Men will rejoice when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel."

"(These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range throughout the earth.)"

¹¹Then I asked the angel, "What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?"

¹²Again I asked him, "What are these two olive branches beside the two gold pipes that pour out golden oil?"

¹³He replied, "Do you not know what these are?"

"No, my lord," I said.

¹⁴So he said, "These are the two who are anointed to serve the Lord of all the earth."

The Flying Scroll

5 I looked again—and there before me was a flying scroll!

²He asked me, "What do you see?"

^a8,9 Or says after eye ⁷1 plunder them ^c1 Satan means accuser ⁴9 Or facets ⁷7 Or Who

^d1 A variant of Joshua, here and elsewhere in Zechariah ¹⁴14 Or two who bring oil and

I answered, "I see a flying scroll, thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide."

³And he said to me, "This is the curse that is going out over the whole land; for according to what it says on one side, every thief will be banished, and according to what it says on the other, everyone who swears falsely will be banished. ⁴The Lord Almighty declares, 'I will send it out, and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of him who swears falsely by my name. It will remain in his house and destroy it, both its timbers and its stones.'"

The Woman in a Basket

⁵Then the angel who was speaking to me came forward and said to me, "Look up and see what this is that is appearing."

⁶I asked, "What is it?"

He replied, "It is a measuring basket."^a And he added, "This is the iniquity^b of the people throughout the land."

⁷Then the cover of lead was raised, and there in the basket sat a woman! ⁸He said, "This is wickedness," and he pushed her back into the basket and pushed the lead cover down over its mouth.

⁹Then I looked up—and there before me were two women, with the wind in their wings! They had wings like those of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between heaven and earth.

¹⁰"Where are they taking the basket?" I asked the angel who was speaking to me.

¹¹He replied, "To the country of Babylonia^c to build a house for it. When it is ready, the basket will be set there in its place."

Four Chariots

⁶I looked up again—and there before me were four chariots coming out from between two mountains—mountains of bronze! ²The first chariot had red horses, the second black, ³the third white, and the fourth dappled—all of them powerful. ⁴I asked the angel who was speaking to me, "What are these, my lord?"

⁵The angel answered me, "These are the four spirits of heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the Lord of the whole world. ⁶The one with the black horses is going toward the north country, the one with the white horses toward the west, and the one with the dappled horses toward the south."

⁷When the powerful horses went out, they were straining to go throughout the earth. And he said, "Go throughout the earth!" So they went throughout the earth.

⁸Then he called to me, "Look, those going

toward the north country have given my Spirit^d rest in the land of the north."

A Crown for Joshua

⁹The word of the Lord came to me: ¹⁰"Take silver and gold, from the exiles Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah, who have arrived from Babylon. Go the same day to the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah. ¹¹Take the silver and gold and make a crown, and set it on the head of the high priest, Joshua son of Jehozadak. ¹²Tell him this is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the Lord. ¹³It is he who will build the temple of the Lord, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.' ¹⁴The crown will be given to Heldai,^e Tobijah, Jedaiah and Heni son of Zephaniah as a memorial in the temple of the Lord. ¹⁵Those who are far away will come and help to build the temple of the Lord, and you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you. This will happen if you diligently obey the Lord your God."

Justice and Mercy, Not Fasting

⁷In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, the month of Kislev. ²The people of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regem-Melech, together with their men, to entreat the Lord ³by asking the priests of the house of the Lord Almighty and the prophets, "Should I mourn and fast in the fifth month, as I have done for so many years?"

⁴Then the word of the Lord Almighty came to me: ⁵"Ask all the people of the land and the priests, 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months for the past seventy years, was it really for me that you fasted? ⁶And when you were eating and drinking, were you not just feasting for yourselves? ⁷Are these not the words the Lord proclaimed through the earlier prophets when Jerusalem and its surrounding towns were at rest and prosperous, and the Negev and the western foothills were settled?'"

⁸And the word of the Lord came again to Zechariah: ⁹"This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion

7:3 Repent for How Long?

While in exile, Jews had fasted and mourned on certain days in memory of the siege and overthrow of Jerusalem. Now that they had returned to Jerusalem they wanted to know: should we keep fasting? Zechariah's answer came in 8:19: fasting should now be replaced with feasting. But Zechariah warned that all religious ceremonies, however proper, were meaningless unless people's lives were controlled by God.

5.2 A Message for Everyone

The flying scroll probably symbolizes God's law, which condemns sin. It is unrolled and flying like a banner for all to read—not rolled up for only priests to read.

^a Hebrew twenty, thirty long and ten, thirty wide about 4 meters long and 4.5 meters wide)
^b (b) appearance ^c Hebrew Babel ^d Or winds ^e Or turns after them
^f Hebrew ^g (h) and the generous one, the

^h Hebrew an ephah, also in verses 7-11
ⁱ Or spirit ^j Syriac Hebrew

to one another. ¹⁰Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. In your hearts do not think evil of each other."

¹¹"But they refused to pay attention, stubbornly they turned their backs and stopped up their ears. ¹²They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the LORD Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the LORD Almighty was very angry."

¹³"When I called, they did not listen; so when they called, I would not listen," says the LORD Almighty. ¹⁴"I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations, where they were strangers. The land was left so desolate behind them that no one could come or go. This is how they made the pleasant land desolate."

The LORD Promises to Bless Jerusalem

8 Again the word of the LORD Almighty came to me. ²This is what the LORD Almighty says: "I am very jealous for Zion; I am burning with jealousy for her."

³This is what the LORD says: "I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain."

⁴This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Once again men and women of ripe old age will sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with cane in hand because of his age. ⁵The city streets will be filled with boys and girls playing there."

⁶This is what the LORD Almighty says: "It may seem marvelous to the remnant of this people at that time, but will it seem marvelous to me?" declares the LORD Almighty.

⁷This is what the LORD Almighty says: "I will save my people from the countries of the east and the west. ⁸I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem; they will be my people, and I will be faithful and righteous to them as their God."

⁹This is what the LORD Almighty says: "You who now hear these words spoken by the prophets who were there when the foundation was laid for the house of the LORD Almighty, let your hands be strong so that the temple may be built. ¹⁰Before that time there were no wages for man or beast. No one could go about his business safely because of his enemy, for I had turned every man against his neighbor. ¹¹But now I will not deal with the remnant of this people as I did in the past," declares the LORD Almighty.

¹²"The seed will grow well, the vine will yield its fruit, the ground will produce its crops, and the heavens will drop their dew. I will give all these things as an inheritance to the remnant of this people. ¹³As you have been an object of cursing among the nations, O Judah and Israel, so will I save you, and you will be a blessing. Do not be afraid, but let your hands be strong."

¹⁴This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Just as I had determined to bring disaster upon you and showed no pity when your fathers angered me,"

says the LORD Almighty. ¹⁵"so now I have determined to do good again to Jerusalem and Judah. Do not be afraid. ¹⁶These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in your courts, ¹⁷do not plot evil against your neighbor, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this," declares the LORD.

¹⁸Again the word of the LORD Almighty came to me. ¹⁹This is what the LORD Almighty says: "The fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months will become joyful and glad occasions and happy festivals for Judah. Therefore love truth and peace."

²⁰This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Many peoples and the inhabitants of many cities will yet come, ²¹and the inhabitants of one city will go to another and say, 'Let us go at once to entreat the LORD and seek the LORD Almighty. I myself am going.' ²²And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the LORD Almighty and to entreat him."

²³This is what the LORD Almighty says: "In those days ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, 'Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.'"

Judgment on Israel's Enemies

An Oracle

9 The word of the LORD is against the land of Hadrach

and will rest upon Damascus—

for the eyes of men and all the tribes of Israel are on the LORD—^a

²and upon Hamath too, which borders on it, and upon Tyre and Sidon, though they are very skillful.

³Tyre has built herself a stronghold; she has heaped up silver like dust, and gold like the dirt of the streets.

⁴But the Lord will take away her possessions and destroy her power on the sea, and she will be consumed by fire.

⁵Ashkelon will see it and fear; Gaza will writhe in agony, and Ekron too, for her hope will wither.

Gaza will lose her king and Ashkelon will be deserted.

⁶Foreigners will occupy Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.

⁷I will take the blood from their mouths, the forbidden food from between their teeth.

Those who are left will belong to our God and become leaders in Judah, and Ekron will be like the Jebusites.

⁸But I will defend my house against marauding forces.

Never again will an oppressor overrun my people,

for now I am keeping watch.

The Coming of Zion's King

⁹Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem!

^a1 Or Damascus. / For the eye of the LORD is on all mankind, / as well as on the tribes of Israel.

See, your king^a comes to you,
righteous and having salvation,
gentle and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

¹⁰I will take away the chariots from Ephraim
and the war-horses from Jerusalem,
and the battle bow will be broken.

He will proclaim peace to the nations
His rule will extend from sea to sea
and from the River^b to the ends of the
earth.^c

¹¹As for you, because of the blood of my
covenant with you,
I will free your prisoners from the waterless
pit.

¹²Return to your fortress, O prisoners of hope;
even now I announce that I will restore twice
as much to you.

¹³I will bend Judah as I bend my bow^d
and fill it with Ephraim
I will rouse your sons, O Zion,
against your sons, O Greece,
and make you like a warrior's sword.

The LORD Will Appear

¹⁴Then the LORD will appear over them,
his arrow will flash like lightning.

^a9 Or King

^b10 That is, the Euphrates

^c10 Or the end of the land

^d15 Or bowl, i like

The Sovereign LORD will sound the trumpet,
he will march in the storms of the south,
¹⁵and the LORD Almighty will shield them
They will destroy
and overcome with slingstones
They will drink and roar as with wine;^e
they will be full like a bowl
used for sprinkling^d the corners of the altar
¹⁶The LORD their God will save them on that day
as the flock of his people
They will sparkle in his land
like jewels in a crown.
¹⁷How attractive and beautiful they will be!
Grain will make the young men thrive,
and new wine the young women.

The LORD Will Care for Judah

10 Ask the LORD for rain in the springtime;
it is the LORD who makes the storm clouds
He gives showers of rain to men,
and plants of the field to everyone.
²The idols speak deceit,
diviners see visions that lie;
they tell dreams that are false,
they give comfort in vain
Therefore the people wander like sheep
oppressed for lack of a shepherd

INSIGHT

New King, New Kingdom

The paradox of leadership that triumphs through suffering

Your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey 9:9

The book of Zechariah takes a radical turn at chapter 9. A series of messages from God, expressed in fragmented images, tell the future of the world—and the role of God's people in it.

These chapters are difficult to understand, even in our day. The ultimate future is clearly good, however; instead of remaining a small, subject nation, God's people will shake the world. The nations will worship at Jerusalem. "The LORD will be king over the whole earth" (14:9).

How could it be? Even for the Israelites this dream sounded farfetched. In Zechariah's day they needed clearance from the far-off Persian government just to rebuild their temple. Persia was the center of their world. Jerusalem hardly mattered. How could Israel become a great nation?

A Rejected Leader

These chapters of Zechariah show Israel's greatness emerging through struggle and suffering. No one who reads these words could have a false idea that God makes things easy. Evil and misery virtually triumph before God's final intervention.

The key to Israel's future is a coming leader—a very unusual leader. People naturally expected the Messiah to be a triumphant warrior, especially since many Old Testament prophecies spoke of him that way. But this king would come on a donkey instead of a warhorse (9:9). Zechariah speaks of a shepherd—a term for "leader"—who would be rejected by the nation (11:4-17). It describes a nation in mourning for "the one they have pierced" (12:10).

All these predictions of a coming leader were quoted in the New Testament as applying to Jesus: a king without an army, whose crown was made of thorns. In all the Old Testament, only Isaiah (especially in chapter 53) captures so fully the paradox of Jesus' life: gentle leadership that triumphs through suffering.

Life Questions. Who is the "greatest" person you've known up close? Did some kind of suffering contribute to his or her greatness?

³"My anger burns against the shepherds,
and I will punish the leaders;
for the LORD Almighty will care
for his flock, the house of Judah,
and make them like a proud horse in battle.
⁴From Judah will come the cornerstone,
from him the tent peg,
from him the battle bow,
from him every ruler.

⁵Together they^a will be like mighty men
trampling the muddy streets in battle.
Because the LORD is with them,
they will fight and overthrow the horsemen.

⁶"I will strengthen the house of Judah
and save the house of Joseph.
I will restore them
because I have compassion on them.
They will be as though
I had not rejected them,
for I am the LORD their God
and I will answer them.

⁷The Ephraimites will become like mighty men,
and their hearts will be glad as with wine.
Their children will see it and be joyful;
their hearts will rejoice in the LORD.

⁸I will signal for them
and gather them in
Surely I will redeem them;
they will be as numerous as before.

⁹Though I scatter them among the peoples,
yet in distant lands they will remember me.
They and their children will survive,
and they will return.

¹⁰I will bring them back from Egypt
and gather them from Assyria.
I will bring them to Gilead and Lebanon,
and there will not be room enough for them.

¹¹They will pass through the sea of trouble;
the surging sea will be subdued
and all the depths of the Nile will dry up.
Assyria's pride will be brought down
and Egypt's scepter will pass away.

¹²I will strengthen them in the LORD
and in his name they will walk,"
declares the LORD.

11 Open your doors, O Lebanon,
so that fire may devour your cedars!
²Wail, O pine tree, for the cedar has fallen;
the stately trees are ruined!
Wail, oaks of Bashan,
the dense forest has been cut down!
³Listen to the wail of the shepherds;
their rich pastures are destroyed!
Listen to the roar of the lions;
the lush thicket of the Jordan is ruined!

Two Shepherds

⁴This is what the LORD my God says: "Pasture
the flock marked for slaughter. ⁵Their buyers
slaughter them and go unpunished. Those who
sell them say, 'Praise the LORD, I am rich!' Their
own shepherds do not spare them. ⁶For I will no
longer have pity on the people of the land," de-

clares the LORD. "I will hand everyone over to his
neighbor and his king. They will oppress the land,
and I will not rescue them from their hands."

⁷So I pastured the flock marked for slaughter,
particularly the oppressed of the flock. Then I took
two staves and called one Favor and the other
Union, and I pastured the flock. ⁸In one month I
got rid of the three shepherds.

The flock detested me, and I grew weary of
them ⁹and said, "I will not be your shepherd. Let
the dying die, and the perishing perish. Let those
who are left eat one another's flesh."

¹⁰Then I took my staff called Favor and broke it,
revoking the covenant I had made with all the
nations. ¹¹It was revoked on that day, and so the
afflicted of the flock who were watching me knew
it was the word of the LORD.

¹²I told them, "If you think it best, give me my
pay; but if not, keep it." So they paid me thirty
pieces of silver.

¹³And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the
potter"—the handsome price at which they priced
me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw
them into the house of the LORD to the potter.

¹⁴Then I broke my second staff called Union,
breaking the brotherhood between Judah and Is-
rael.

¹⁵Then the LORD said to me, "Take again the
equipment of a foolish shepherd. ¹⁶For I am going
to raise up a shepherd over the land who will not
care for the lost, or seek the young, or heal the
injured, or feed the healthy, but will eat the meat
of the choice sheep, tearing off their hoofs.

¹⁷"Woe to the worthless shepherd,
who deserts the flock!

May the sword strike his arm and his right eye!
May his arm be completely withered,
his right eye totally blinded!"

Jerusalem's Enemies to Be Destroyed

An Oracle

12 This is the word of the LORD concerning
Israel. The LORD, who stretches out the
heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and
who forms the spirit of man within him, declares:
²"I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all
the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be be-
sieged as well as Jerusalem. ³On that day, when all
the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I
will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the
nations. All who try to move it will injure them-
selves. ⁴On that day I will strike every horse with
panic and its rider with madness," declares the
LORD. "I will keep a watchful eye over the house of
Judah, but I will blind all the horses of the nations.
⁵Then the leaders of Judah will say in their hearts,
'The people of Jerusalem are strong, because the
LORD Almighty is their God.'

⁶"On that day I will make the leaders of Judah
like a firepot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch
among sheaves. They will consume right and left
all the surrounding peoples, but Jerusalem will
remain intact in her place.

^a4,5 Or ruler, all of them together / ⁵They

⁷"The LORD will save the dwellings of Judah first, so that the honor of the house of David and of Jerusalem's inhabitants may not be greater than that of Judah. ⁸On that day the LORD will shield those who live in Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the Angel of the LORD going before them. ⁹On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem.

Mourning for the One They Pierced

¹⁰"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit^a of grace and supplication. They will look on^b me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son. ¹¹On that day the weeping in Jerusalem will be great, like the weeping of Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. ¹²The land will mourn, each clan by itself, with their wives by themselves: the clan of the house of David and their wives, the clan of the house of Nathan and their wives, ¹³the clan of the house of Levi and their wives, the clan of Shimei and their wives, ¹⁴and all the rest of the clans and their wives.

Cleansing From Sin

13 "On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.

²"On that day, I will banish the names of the idols from the land, and they will be remembered no more," declares the LORD Almighty. "I will remove both the prophets and the spirit of impurity from the land. ³And if anyone still prophesies, his father and mother, to whom he was born, will say to him, 'You must die, because you have told lies in the LORD's name.' When he prophesies, his own parents will stab him.

⁴"On that day every prophet will be ashamed of his prophetic vision. He will not put on a prophet's garment of hair in order to deceive. ⁵He will say, 'I am not a prophet. I am a farmer; the land has been my livelihood since my youth.'⁶ If someone asks him, 'What are these wounds on your body?' he will answer, 'The wounds I was given at the house of my friends.'

The Shepherd Struck, the Sheep Scattered

⁷"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!" declares the LORD Almighty.

"Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn my hand against the little ones.

⁸In the whole land," declares the LORD, "two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it.

⁹This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold.

They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are my people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is our God.'"

The LORD Comes and Reigns

14 A day of the LORD is coming when your plunder will be divided among you.

²I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city.

³Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. ⁴On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. ⁵You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake^c in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.

⁶On that day there will be no light, no cold or frost. ⁷It will be a unique day, without daytime or nighttime—a day known to the LORD. When evening comes, there will be light.

⁸On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half to the eastern sea^d and half to the western sea,^e in summer and in winter.

⁹The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name.

¹⁰The whole land, from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem, will become like the Arabah. But Jerusalem will be raised up and remain in its place, from the Benjamin Gate to the site of the First Gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the royal winepresses. ¹¹It will be inhabited; never again will it be destroyed. Jerusalem will be secure.

¹²This is the plague with which the LORD will strike all the nations that fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. ¹³On that day men will be stricken by the LORD with great panic. Each man will seize the hand of another, and they will attack each other. ¹⁴Judah too will fight at Jerusalem. The wealth of all the surround-

13:7 A Prophecy of Jesus

Jesus applied this verse to himself just before he died (Matthew 26:31). Some commentators believe that his words about the shepherd who "lays his life down for his sheep" (John 10) also drew on this passage. Zechariah's prophecies were on the minds of the Gospel writers: 9:9 is quoted in Matthew 21:5; 12:10 in John 19:37; and 11:12-13 in Matthew 27:9.

^a10 Or the Spirit

^b10 Or to

^c5 Or farmer, a man sold me in my youth

^d6 Or wounds between your hands

^e5 Or My

mountain valley will be blocked and will extend to Azel. It will be blocked as it was blocked because of the earthquake

^f8 That is, the Dead Sea

¹⁸ That is, the Mediterranean

ing nations will be collected—great quantities of gold and silver and clothing. ¹⁹A similar plague will strike the horses and mules, the camels and donkeys, and all the animals in those camps.

²⁰Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. ²¹If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, they will have no rain. If the Egyptian people do not go up and celebrate, they will have no rain. The Lord will bring on them the plague he inflicts on the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. ²²This will be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.

²³On that day HOLY TO THE LORD will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, and the cooking pots in the Lord's house will be like the sacred

bowls in front of the altar. ²⁴Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the Lord Almighty, and all who come to sacrifice will take some of the pots and cook in them. And on that day there will no longer be a Canaanite^a in the house of the Lord Almighty.

14:21 No More Secular and Sacred

The priests and the temple had always been separate and more holy than the rest of Israel. HOLY TO THE LORD had been inscribed on the priests' turbans (Exodus 28:36) as a symbol of this. But, Zechariah predicted, in the future such words would decorate even horses. Ordinary kitchen pots would become as sacred as the holy sacramental vessels. There would no longer be a distinction between the sacred and secular, for everything would be sacred.

^a18 Or part then the LORD

^b21 Or merchant

MALACHI

INTRODUCTION

When Faith Grows Weary

Malachi spoke to people "going through the motions"

"A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me?" 1:6

Success has dangers of its own. When you reach the top, you may tend to slack off. Spiritual life can gradually deteriorate too.

Malachi, in this short book, tried to awaken Israel from slackness in relating to God. Years before, they had optimistically returned to Jerusalem after a long exile. Their faith had grown deeper through difficulties. Despite fierce opposition they had rebuilt the temple, the symbol of their hope in God. They had expected God to supernaturally fill it with his glory and make their nation the center of the world.

By Malachi's time Israel's hope had faded. In fact, life seemed to have passed the Israelites by. They could not see that God loved them (1:2), and they felt that serving God brought no reward (2:17; 3:14).

No Big Sinners

The people of Jerusalem had become lukewarm. Their complaints showed it, and so did their actions. They were not "big" sinners like the people before the exile, who had practiced child sacrifice and brought idols into the temple. Malachi's people had kept their religion, but they had lost contact with the God whom the religion was all about.

While Malachi mentioned the same injustices and evils earlier prophets had blasted (3:5), he concentrated most of his energy on problems that may seem petty in comparison: mixed marriages, divorce, and apathetic worship (shown in their second-rate offerings). Through Malachi's eyes, we see the Israelites going through the motions of their faith, doing the bare minimum.

How do you heat up a lukewarm faith? Malachi used several tactics. He began with God's love. To his audience, it was not apparent. But if they would compare their situation with neighboring Edom's, they would see that God had been caring for them all along.

Curing a Careless Attitude

Malachi then challenged the Jews to take obedience seriously. They were bringing injured or sick animals to God for offerings. "Try offering them to your governor!" Malachi said. "Would he be pleased with you?" (1:8). Malachi urged them to bring the perfect animals God's law demands and his honor requires. Malachi further demanded that they stop marrying women of other religions, a practice that inevitably introduced religious compromise. They must also put an end to divorce. And finally, they must bring a full tenth—the "tithe"—of their income to God at the temple. Their skimping amounted to robbery—robbery from God.

Malachi didn't demand these changes just because they were in the rulebook. They were actions meant to symbolize an inner attitude. The people must practice their faith seriously. "Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it" (3:10).

The Last Voice

Malachi's was the last Old Testament voice. It reverberated through 400 or more years of biblical silence. During those years at least some of Malachi's message took hold. Led by the Pharisees, Jews became increasingly devoted to keeping the Old Testament law. Unfortunately, many of them lost Malachi's main point. They forgot that the law was not an end in itself. It was a means by which to give God the honor he deserves.

How to Read Malachi

God's voice dominates Malachi, the voice of a loving father pleading with his children. The people's response is given in the form of seven questions or complaints. The result is a kind of dialogue—almost an argument—which lets you see into the personal attitudes of God and the people he is speaking to.

As in most arguments, a variety of issues are raised, but they are all rooted in a few basic attitudes. As you read through Malachi, try to see what attitudes lay behind the questions, complaints, and problems of God's people. Also note what attitudes lay behind God's words and promises to them.

You can place Malachi's message in the context of Israelite history by looking up "A Lineup of Rulers" page 338.

PLANS FOR READING MALACHI

PLAN 1: An Overview of Malachi in 1 Day

- Day 1. Read the Introduction to Malachi, and chapter 3, which lays out some of God's promises and expectations for his people.

PLAN 2: All of Malachi in 3 Days

- 1 □ 2 □ 3-4

1 An oracle: The word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi.^a

Jacob Loved, Esau Hated

²"I have loved you," says the LORD.

"But you ask, 'How have you loved us?'"

Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" the LORD says. "Yet I have loved Jacob, ³but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his mountains into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals."

⁴Edom may say, "Though we have been crushed, we will rebuild the ruins."

But this is what the LORD Almighty says: "They may build, but I will demolish. They will be called the Wicked Land, a people always under the wrath of the LORD. ⁵You will see it with your own eyes and say, 'Great is the LORD—even beyond the borders of Israel!'"

Blemished Sacrifices

⁶"A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?" says the LORD Almighty. "It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name.

"But you ask, 'How have we shown contempt for your name?'"

⁷"You place defiled food on my altar.

But you ask, 'How have we defiled you?'"

By saying that the LORD's table is contemptible. ⁸When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the LORD Almighty

⁹"Now implore God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?"—says the LORD Almighty.

¹⁰"Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD Almighty, "and I will accept no offering from your hands. ¹¹My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations," says the LORD Almighty.

¹²"But you profane it by saying of the Lord's table, 'It is defiled,' and of its food, 'It is contemptible.' ¹³And you say, 'What a burden!' and you sniff at it contemptuously," says the LORD Almighty.

"When you bring injured, crippled or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?" says the LORD. ¹⁴"Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king," says the LORD Almighty, "and my name is to be feared among the nations.

Admonition for the Priests

2 "And now this admonition is for you, O priests. ²If you do not listen, and if you do not set your heart to honor my name," says the LORD Almighty, "I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not set your heart to honor me.

³"Because of you I will rebuke^b your descend-

^aMalachi means my messenger.

^bOr cut off (see Septuagint).

ants; I will spread on your faces the oil from your festival sacrifices, and you will be carried off with it. ⁴And you will know that I have sent you this admonition so that my covenant with Levi may continue," says the LORD Almighty. ⁵"My covenant was with him, a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my name. ⁶True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin.

⁷"For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction—because he is the messenger of the LORD Almighty. ⁸But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi," says the LORD Almighty. ⁹"So I have caused you to be despised and humiliated before all the people, because you have not followed my ways but have shown partiality in matters of the law."

Judah Unfaithful

¹⁰Have we not all one Father?^b Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our fathers by breaking faith with one another?

¹¹Judah has broken faith. A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the LORD loves, by marrying the daughter of a foreign god. ¹²As for the man who does this, whoever he may be, may the LORD cut him off from the tents of Jacob^c—even though he brings offerings to the LORD Almighty.

¹³Another thing you do: You flood the LORD's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. ¹⁴You ask, "Why?" It is because the LORD is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.

¹⁵Has not [the LORD] made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring.^d So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth.

¹⁶"I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel, "and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment," says the LORD Almighty.

So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith.

The Day of Judgment

¹⁷You have wearied the LORD with your words. "How have we wearied him?" you ask.

By saying, "All who do evil are good in the eyes of the LORD, and he is pleased with them" or "Where is the God of justice?"

3 "See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty.

²But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years.

³"So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear me," says the LORD Almighty.

Robbing God

⁴"I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. ⁷Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD Almighty.

"But you ask, 'How are we to return?'

⁸'Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me.

"But you ask, 'How do we rob you?'

⁹'In tithes and offerings. ⁹You are under a curse—the whole nation of you—because you are robbing me. ¹⁰Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. ¹¹I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the LORD Almighty. ¹²"Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the LORD Almighty.

¹³"You have said harsh things against me," says the LORD.

"Yet you ask, 'What have we said against you?'

3:1 What Difference Does Serving God Make?

Here and in 3:14 people harshly complained they could see no point in serving God, when you got no special reward. In responding, God did not try to convince them that the righteous were, in fact, better off. He told them that he keeps a "scroll of remembrance," on which he records those who fear him, and that sometime in the future he will come as judge, destroying the wicked and preserving those who fear him. The value of serving him will be obvious someday, even if it is not today.

^{a3} Or will blight your grain the man who does this An offspring from God

^{b10} Or father ^{c15} Or 'But the one who is our father, did not do this not as long as life remained in him. And what was he seeking? ^{c16} Or his wife

^{c12} Or ¹²May the LORD cut off from the tents of Jacob anyone who gives testimony in behalf of

¹⁴“You have said, ‘It is futile to serve God. What do we gain by observing his requirements and going about making men before the LORD Almighty? We will not see the arrogant blessed.’”¹⁵“But now we will see the arrogant blessed, for the evildoers will prosper, and even those who sow trouble will escape.”

¹⁶“But those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A remembrance was written in his presence for those who feared the LORD and honored his name.”

¹⁷“They will be mine,” says the LORD Almighty, “on the day when I make up my treasured possession.”¹⁸“I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him.”¹⁹“And you will also see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.”

The Day of the Lord

† Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire,” says the LORD Almighty. “Not a

root or a branch will be left to them.”²“But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.”³“Then you will trample down the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things,” says the LORD Almighty.

⁴“Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel.”

⁵“See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, or else I will come and strike the land with a curse.”

4:5 The Second Elijah

The prophet Elijah, Malachi predicted, would precede the Lord. This prophecy was carefully noted in the New Testament. Jesus identified John the Baptist as the one predicted (Matthew 11:14; 17:9-13).

¹⁸Or Almighty. ¹⁹my treasured possession, on the day when I act

The New Testament

MATTHEW

INTRODUCTION

A Bridge from Old to New

Why start with a list of names?

... will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." 1:21

For over a hundred years, nothing new was added to the Bible. The prophets fell silent. During the same Middle Eastern empires rose and fell, and the tiny nation of Israel suffered under the domination of greater powers like Greece and Rome.

And then, something momentous happened. A baby was born—a baby unlike any who had ever come before. By introducing this baby who grew into the man Jesus, the book of Matthew opens a whole new section of the Bible—the New Testament.

Matthew makes his intentions clear from the very first sentence: he connects Jesus' arrival with the Old Testament story line. Jesus was a Jew, he says, the son of Abraham. And also a king, the son of David. Matthew then sets out to prove an audacious claim: this Jesus, from the humble town of Nazareth, is the very "Messiah," the deliverer promised back in the Old Testament. (*Christ* is a Greek translation of the word *Messiah*).

Jesus' Family Tree

People all over the world, especially Jews, had been eagerly awaiting the Messiah. His coming would change the entire history of the world, they believed. Could this carpenter's son be the long expected king? To answer that question, Matthew starts with a genealogy.

Genealogies—long lists of names—rarely prove interesting to anyone but the people directly involved. To those people, however, the lists are anything but boring.

Listen to one modern author describe what it was like to hear an ancient genealogy: "There is an expression—the peak experience, a moment which emotionally can never again be equaled in your life. I had mine, that first day in the village of Juffure, in black west Africa . . . Goose bumps came out on me the size of marbles." With those words, Alex Haley, author of *Roots*, recalls the day he first heard, from the lips of an aged storyteller, the account of young Kunta Kinte being taken captive by slave traders in 1752.

The Importance of Roots

Haley's ancestors had descended directly from a native African captured in a tiny village in Gambia. The day he listened to the gentle African elder recite, "And so-and-so took as a wife so-and-so, and begat so-and-so," the final link in Haley's family chain snapped into place. *Roots* tells the story of this connection.

In a similar way, the book of Matthew doesn't begin with Jesus' birth, but reaches back further to establish his roots. If indeed Jesus is the Messiah, his ancestors must match up to that claim. As any student of history knows, kings don't merely declare themselves; they must belong to a royal line. Matthew traces Jesus' lineage to the father of the Jewish race, Abraham—who first received the promise of the Messiah—then to the great Jewish king, David.

Links to the Old Testament

After recording Jesus' bloodline, Matthew narrates the story of Jesus' life on earth. He relies heavily on the Old Testament, quoting it more frequently than does any other New Testament author. (Note such phrases as "that it might be fulfilled as was spoken by the prophets.")

The first book in the New Testament, then, stands as the Gospel that pulls things together, the link between the old and the new. Matthew starts with Jesus' roots, but he also contrasts Jesus

with the traditional Jewish picture of the Messiah. Jesus, a king, ended thousands of years of eager waiting. But he came to establish a wholly new kind of kingdom—a kingdom different from what anyone expected.

How to Read Matthew

Anybody who has looked over an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) form knows what tax collectors like: neat, orderly rows of figures, with all expenses and income classified by type and source. Fittingly, the Gospel attributed to former tax collector Matthew reflects systematic, ledger-sheet thinking. He doesn't tell Jesus' story chronologically; he groups facts topically.

Matthew collects Jesus' sayings in five main places. First comes the famous Sermon on the Mount in chapters 5-7. Chapter 10 records Jesus' instructions to his disciples about their mission; chapter 13, a series of parables on the kingdom; chapter 18, Christ's words on the church as a community; and chapters 23-25, Jesus' thoughts on religious hypocrisy and his predictions of the future. Sandwiched in among these five great discourses you'll find connected scenes of Jesus in action.

The skillful blending of Jesus' action and teaching has helped earn this Gospel an esteemed place in literature. Artists are often drawn to it as a capsule summary of Jesus' ministry: witness J.S. Bach's greatest choral work, *St. Matthew's Passion*, the joyous play *Godspell*, and Pasolini's film *The Gospel according to St. Matthew*. The French skeptic Renan praised Matthew as "the most important book of Christendom—the most important book that has ever been written."

Two approaches will help in a detailed study of Matthew. First, consider how it differs from the other three Gospels; this will give you some idea of Matthew's distinctive purpose. Then, you will find it enlightening to look up many of Matthew's references to the Old Testament. Most are cited in footnotes.

PLANS FOR READING MATTHEW

PLAN 1: An Overview of Matthew in 7 Days

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to Matthew. Then turn to Matthew 5 and begin the Sermon on the Mount.
- ☐ Day 2. Read chapter 6, a continuation of Jesus' longest single speech, perhaps the most familiar passage in the entire Bible.
- ☐ Day 3. Matthew 13 records some of Jesus' parables—concise stories with a powerful meaning behind them. Read these parables about the "kingdom of heaven," referring to "What Should a Leader Look Like?", for help in understanding.
- ☐ Day 4. As a former tax collector, Matthew was especially sensitive to what Jesus had to say about money. Read his comments on this and other topics in chapter 19.
- ☐ Day 5. The last three chapters of Matthew give a complete, factual account of Jesus' death. Read chapter 26, the story of the arrest and trial.
- ☐ Day 6. Continue the crucifixion story with chapter 27.
- ☐ Day 7. Read chapter 28, which tells of Jesus' resurrection.

PLAN 2: All of Matthew in 28 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16
☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28

The Genealogy of Jesus

1 A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham

Abraham was the father of Isaac
 Isaac the father of Jacob
 Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers
 Judah the father of Perez and Zerah
 whose mother was Tamar,
 Perez the father of Hezron
 Hezron the father of Ram,
 Ram the father of Amminadab
 Amminadab the father of Nahshon
 Nahshon the father of Salmon
 Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother
 was Rahab
 Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother
 was Ruth
 Obed the father of Jesse
 and Jesse the father of King David

David was the father of Solomon, whose
 mother had been Uriah's wife
 Solomon the father of Rehoboam,
 Rehoboam the father of Abijah,
 Abijah the father of Asa
 Asa the father of Jehoshaphat,
 Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram,
 Jehoram the father of Uzziah,
 Uzziah the father of Jotham,
 Jotham the father of Ahaz,
 Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,
 Hezekiah the father of Manasseh,
 Manasseh the father of Amon,
 Amon the father of Josiah,
 and Josiah the father of Jeconiah¹¹ and his
 brothers at the time of the exile to Bab-
 ylon

After the exile to Babylon:
 Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel,
 Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,
¹³Zerubbabel the father of Abiud,
 Abiud the father of Eliakim,
 Eliakim the father of Azor,
¹⁴Azor the father of Zadok,
 Zadok the father of Akim,
 Akim the father of Eliud,
¹⁵Eliud the father of Eleazar,
 Eleazar the father of Matthan,
 Matthan the father of Jacob,
¹⁶and Jacob the father of Joseph, the hus-
 band of Mary, of whom was born Jesus,
 who is called Christ

¹⁷Thus there were fourteen generations in all
 from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to
 the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to
 the Christ.¹⁸

The Birth of Jesus Christ

¹⁸This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came
 about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married
 to Joseph, but before they came together, she was
 found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.

¹⁹Because Joseph her husband was a righteous
 man and did not want to expose her to public
 disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰But after he had considered this, an angel of
 the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said,
 "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take
 Mary home as your wife, because what is con-
 ceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give
 birth to a son, and you are to give him the name
 Jesus, because he will save his people from their
 sins."

²¹All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had
 said through the prophet: ²²"The virgin will be
 with child and will give birth to a son, and they will
 call him Immanuel," which means "God with
 us."

²³When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel
 of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary
 home as his wife. ²⁴But he had no union with her
 until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the
 name Jesus.

The Visit of the Magi

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea
 during the time of King Herod, Magi from the
 east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the
 one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw
 his star in the east and have come to worship
 him."

³When King Herod heard this he was disturbed,
 and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴When he had called
 together all the people's chief priests and teachers
 of the law, he asked them where the Christ⁵ was
 to be born. ⁵"In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied,
 "for this is what the prophet has written:

^{6a} "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
 are by no means least among the rulers of
 Judah;

for out of you will come a ruler
 who will be the shepherd of my people
 Israel."

⁷Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found
 out from them the exact time the star had ap-
 peared. ⁸He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go
 and make a careful search for the child. As soon as
 you find him, report to me, so that I too may go
 and worship him."

⁹After they had heard the king, they went on
 their way, and the star they had seen in the east
 went ahead of them until it stopped over the place

1:18 More Than Engaged

Jewish custom in Joseph and Mary's day
 recognized a state called "betrothal" that fell
 somewhere between our modern commitments of
 engagement and marriage. A betrothal was more
 binding than an engagement; it could only be
 broken with an act of divorce. And if a betrothed
 woman became pregnant, she was regarded as an
 adulteress.

¹¹ That is, Jehoiachin, also in verse 12.
 Anointed One

¹⁷ Or Messiah "The Christ" (Greek) and "the Messiah" (Hebrew) both mean "the
 Anointed One"

¹² Or star when it rose

¹⁴ Or Messiah

¹⁶ Micah 5:2

²³ Isaiah 7:14

¹⁹ Or even when it rose

²¹ Traditionally Wier

where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

The Escape to Egypt

¹³When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

¹⁴So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, ¹⁵where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."^a

¹⁶When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. ¹⁷Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸"A voice is heard in Ramah,
weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children
and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more."^b

The Return to Nazareth

¹⁹After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ²⁰and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead."

²¹So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, ²³and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: "He will be called a Nazarene."

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

3 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea ²and saying, "Repent,

for the kingdom of heaven is near." ³This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah

"A voice of one calling in the desert,
'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.'"^c

⁴John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. ⁶Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

⁷But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹"I baptize you with^d water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹²His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

The Baptism of Jesus

¹³Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

¹⁵Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

¹⁶As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. ¹⁷And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

The Temptation of Jesus

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. ²After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

⁴Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'^e"

⁵Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶"If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

" 'He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'^f"

2:11 The Wise Men

Of the four Gospels, Matthew alone tells of the visit of the Magi, or wise men. This incident shows that people from other parts of the world, not just from Israel, were anticipating the Messiah. The Magi's visit underscores that Jesus came for all people, not just the Jews. The last words of this Gospel spell out that mission very clearly.

^a15 Hosea 11:1

^b18 Jer 31:15

^c3 Isaiah 40:3

^d11 Or in

^e4 Deut 8:3

^f6 Psalm 91:11,12

heaven. ²⁰For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Murder

²¹"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder,'^a and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment. ²²But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother^b will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother 'Raca'^c is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

²³Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

²⁵"Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. ²⁶I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.^d

Adultery

²⁷"You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.'^e ²⁸But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Divorce

³¹"It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.'^f ³²But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.

Oaths

³³"Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep

the oaths you have made to the Lord.'^g ³⁴But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; ³⁵or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. ³⁶And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. ³⁷Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No,' anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

An Eye for an Eye

³⁸"You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.'^h ³⁹But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴²Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Love for Enemies

⁴³"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighborⁱ and hate your enemy.'^j ⁴⁴But I tell you: Love your enemies^k and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Giving to the Needy

6 "Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

²"So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Prayer

⁵"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹"This, then, is how you should pray:

5:17 Jesus and Moses' Law

In this statement, Jesus clarifies his relationship to the Law of Moses. The next chapter gets more specific, contrasting Jesus' teaching with many common interpretations of that Law. "You have heard that it was said . . .," he begins, and then concludes, "But I tell you . . ." Jesus revealed the true intent of the Old Testament law, rather than its legalistic interpretations.

^a21 Exodus 20:13

^b22 Some manuscripts brother without cause

^c22 An Aramaic term of contempt

^d26 Greek *adrantes*

^eExodus 20:14

^f32 Deut 24:1

^g38 Exodus 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21

^h43 Lev 19:18

ⁱ44 Some late

manuscripts enemies bless those who curse you do good to those who hate you

hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

Do Not Worry

²⁵"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?"

²⁸"And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³²For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Judging Others

7 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ²For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you

³"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

⁶"Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.

Ask, Seek, Knock

⁷"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened

⁹"Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! ¹²So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

The Narrow and Wide Gates

¹³"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

A Tree and Its Fruit

¹⁵"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them

²¹"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' ²³Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

The Wise and Foolish Builders

²⁴"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

²⁸When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, ²⁹because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

The Man With Leprosy

8 When he came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. ²A man with leprosy^b came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

³Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately

8:1 Following Up Words with Actions

Typically, Matthew blends together Jesus' words and actions. Chapters 5-7 contain Jesus' longest recorded speech, the Sermon on the Mount—a speech that greatly affected the audience. The next few chapters mention ten miracles performed by Jesus, which further established his authority.

^a 77 Or single cubit to his height

^b 78 The Greek word was used for various diseases affecting the skin—not necessarily leprosy

ately he was cured^a of his leprosy. ⁴Then Jesus said to him, "See that you don't tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

The Faith of the Centurion

⁵When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. ⁶"Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed and in terrible suffering."

Jesus said to him, "I will go and heal him."

⁷The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁸For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

¹⁰When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. ¹¹I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. ¹²But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

¹³Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! It will be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that very hour.

Jesus Heals Many

¹⁴When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. ¹⁵He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him.

¹⁶When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick.

¹⁷This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah

¹⁸"He took up our infirmities
and carried our diseases."^b

The Cost of Following Jesus

¹⁹When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake.

²⁰Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."

²¹Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

²²Another disciple said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

²³But Jesus told him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

Jesus Calms the Storm

²⁴Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. ²⁵Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. ²⁶The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!"

²⁷He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

²⁸The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

The Healing of Two Demon-possessed Men

²⁹When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes,^c two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. ³⁰"What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?"

³¹Some distance from them a large herd of pigs was feeding. ³²The demons begged Jesus, "If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs."

³³He said to them, "Go!" So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water. ³⁴Those tending the pigs ran off, went into the town and reported all this, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. ³⁵Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they pleaded with him to leave their region.

Jesus Heals a Paralytic

³⁶Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over and came to his own town. ³⁷Some men brought to him a paralytic, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven."

³⁸At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, "This fellow is blaspheming!"

³⁹Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, "Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? ⁴⁰Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? ⁴¹But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . ." Then he said to the paralytic, "Get up, take your mat and go home." ⁴²And the man got up and went home. ⁴³When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to men.

The Calling of Matthew

⁴⁴As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

⁴⁵While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples. ⁴⁶When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"

⁴⁷On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ⁴⁸But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' ⁴⁹For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

^a Greek made clean

^b 17 Isaiah 53:4

^c28 Some manuscripts Gergesenes, others Gerasenes

^d23 House 68

Jesus' Disciples Ask About Fasting

"Then John's disciples came and asked him, 'Why do you and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?'"

Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast."

"There was a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse." "Neither do men put new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the wine will run out and the skins will be ruined. No, they put new wine in new wineskins, and both are preserved."

A Dead Girl and a Sick Woman

"While he was saying this, a ruler came and knelt before him. 'My daughter has just died,' he said. 'But you came here and my child is alive!' And she got up and went with him, and the crowd followed him."

"Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched his robe. 'She said to herself, "If only I touch his robe, I will be healed."'"

Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed from that moment.

Jesus then entered the ruler's house and saw the girl, crying, and the noisy crowd. "He said, 'Child, get up.' The girl was not dead but asleep." But the crowd began to laugh at him. "After the crowd had been dismissed, he went in and took the girl by the hand and she got up. News of this spread throughout that region."

Jesus Heals the Blind and Mute

"As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, 'Have mercy on us, Son of David.'"

When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?"

They said, "Yes, Lord."

"Then he touched their eyes and said, 'According to your faith will it be done to you'; and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly,

'See that no one knows about this.' But they went out and spread the news about him all over that region."

"While they were going out, a man who was demon possessed and could not talk was brought to Jesus. And when the demon was driven out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowd was amazed and said, 'Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.'"

"But the Pharisees said, 'It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons.'"

The Workers Are Few

"Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'"

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

10 He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

"These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew, James son of Zebedee, and his brother John, Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew the tax collector, James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him."

"These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: 'Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, preach this message: The kingdom of heaven is near. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy,^b drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. Do not take along any gold or silver or copper in your belts; take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff; for the worker is worth his keep.

"Whatever town or village you enter, search for some worthy person there and stay at his house until you leave. As you enter the home, give it your greeting. If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town. I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town. I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.

"Be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues. On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them

9:9 A Friend Even to Tax Collectors

Tax collectors like Matthew were even less popular in Jesus' day than now. Many Jews viewed them as traitors serving the hated Roman empire. In this poignant scene, the Gospel tells how Jesus first called Matthew and then came to his house to mingle freely with "tax collectors and sinners." Later Matthew was transformed into a loyal disciple who applied his orderly mind to organize this account of Jesus' life.

^a Greek *leprosy*

^b The Greek word was used for various diseases affecting the skin—not necessarily leprosy

performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. ²⁴But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you."

Rest for the Weary

²⁵At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. ²⁶Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure

²⁷"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

²⁸"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light

Lord of the Sabbath

12 At that time Jesus went through the grain-fields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. ²When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, "Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath."

³He answered, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. ⁵Or haven't you read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple desecrate the day and yet are innocent? ⁶I tell you that one^a greater than the temple is here. ⁷If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,'^b you would not have condemned the innocent. ⁸For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

⁹Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, ¹⁰and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"

¹¹He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? ¹²How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

11:20 Miracles Aren't Enough

Surprisingly, seeing supernatural miracles didn't lead people to repent and follow Jesus' teaching. Throughout his ministry, Jesus showed annoyance with crowds who flocked to see a popular leader do something supernatural. He wanted from them not applause, but commitment. Gradually, he relied more and more on parables, which, in private, he would explain to his disciples (see 13:11-17).

¹³Then he said to the man "Stretch out your hand." So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other. ¹⁴But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.

God's Chosen Servant

¹⁵Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. Many followed him, and he healed all their sick, ¹⁶warning them not to tell who he was. ¹⁷This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

¹⁸"Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. ¹⁹He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. ²⁰A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory. ²¹In his name the nations will put their hope."

Jesus and Beelzebub

²²Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. ²³All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

²⁴But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub,^d the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons."

²⁵Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. ²⁶If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? ²⁷And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. ²⁸But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

²⁹"Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house.

³⁰"He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters. ³¹And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven

12:12 The Pharisees Take Offense

Chapter 12 gives insight into why the Pharisees were offended by Jesus. First, his disciples picked grain on the Sabbath (verses 1-7), something forbidden by the Pharisees. A provocative healing on the Sabbath followed. Jesus accused the Pharisees of caring more for the letter of the law than the spirit, so much so that they showed more concern for animal life than human.

^a6 Or something, also in verses 41 and 42
²⁷

⁶⁷ Hosea 6:6

²¹ Isaiah 42 1-4

⁴²⁴ Greek Beelzeboul or Berelzeboul, also in verse

11 But the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. 12 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

13 Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. 14 You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.

15 The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. 16 But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. 17 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

The Sign of Jonah

18 Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him: "Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you."

19 He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 20 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 21 The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here. 22 The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here."

23 When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it roams through and places seeking rest and does not find it. 24 Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. 25 Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation.

Jesus' Mother and Brothers

26 While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. 27 Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you."

28 He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" 29 Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. 30 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

The Parable of the Sower

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. 2 Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. 3 Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A

farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was sowing, the seed fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 4 Some seed fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 5 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. 6 Other seed fell among the thorns. The thorns grew up and choked the plants. 7 Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop: a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. 8 He returned at noon, but

9 the disciples came to him and asked: "Why do you speak to the people in parables?"

10 He replied: "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. 11 Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. 12 This is why I speak to them in parables."

"Though seeing, they do not see;
though hearing, they do not hear or
understand."

13 In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

"You will be ever hearing but never understanding;
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.
15 For this people's heart has become calloused,
they hardly hear with their ears,
and they have closed their eyes.
Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts
and turn, and I would heal them."

16 But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. 17 For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

18 Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: 19 When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. 20 The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. 21 But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. 22 The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. 23 But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

The Parable of the Weeds

24 Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while everyone was sleeping, his

13 Something also in verse 42

43 Greek unclear

47 Some manuscripts do not have verse 47

45 Isaiah 6:9-10

enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

²⁷"The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?'"

²⁸" 'An enemy did this,' he replied.

"The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'"

²⁹" 'No,' he answered, 'because while you are

pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. ³⁰Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.' "

The Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast

³¹He told them another parable: "The kingdom

INSIGHT

What Should a Leader Look Like?

Not everyone wanted Jesus' kind of kingdom

"Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked. "Isn't this the carpenter's son?" 13:54-55

Important leaders, such as presidents and prime ministers, work hard to convey an impression of confidence and power. A leader, they assume, should look like a leader, and many of them hire an "image specialist" to learn how. Wherever they go, press agents, bodyguards, loyal assistants, and throngs of eager admirers follow in their wake.

Matthew depicts Jesus as a true leader—a king, in fact—but one who broke stereotypes. Jesus had undeniable power. He could quiet an angry storm and even walk on the surface of a lake. Yet he used that power compassionately, for the sake of others: to feed the hungry and heal the sick. He wasn't concerned about a powerful image.

A New Kind of Kingdom

First-century Jews, who hated the Roman Empire, would have rallied eagerly around a militant Jewish king. They rebelled often until a vengeful Roman general flattened Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The kingdom Jesus presented, however, didn't meet their expectations.

At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus turned down a tempting offer of glory and territory (4:8-11), and he consistently bucked the pressures of the crowd. Although he was the most powerful leader ever, he spent his time telling stories, not raising an army. As a true Messiah, he sought not to satisfy people's false image of him, but to please God.

In chapter 13, Matthew collects several of the stories Jesus told to describe his "kingdom of heaven"—a phrase used 32 times in Matthew. Although Jesus never concisely defined the phrase, he gave many clues about the nature of his kingdom. The kingdom is so important, he said, that belonging to it is worth selling everything a person owns.

Jesus said his kingdom doesn't have geographical boundaries. Unlike, say, Greece or China or Spain, it can't be charted on a map. Its followers live right among their enemies, not separated from them by a moat or a wall. Yet Jesus predicted that his kingdom would show remarkable growth even in an evil environment bent on its destruction.

The Disciples Fail to Understand

The "kingdom of heaven" consists of the rule of God in the world. It's made up of people of all races and from all nations who loyally follow God's will on earth. Jesus stressed that this new kingdom was a major advance in God's plan: its least member, he said, is even greater than John the Baptist (11:11).

The disciples, accustomed to more traditional images of power and leadership, couldn't quite grasp Jesus' concept of the kingdom. They kept asking him to explain his parables even as they jockeyed vainly for status.

As the days passed, the disciples became convinced that Jesus was "the Messiah, the Son of the Living God!" — Peter won warm praise for that assertion (16:17). But he received Jesus' strongest rebuke in the next scene when he recoiled from the idea that his leader might soon suffer and die.

The paradoxes of Jesus' style of leadership deepened as he neared Jerusalem, the capital city. He allowed one moment of public triumph, on the day we call Palm Sunday. Yet, even then he rode not a chariot or a stallion, but a donkey colt. And a few days later he left his followers an enduring emblem: not a royal banner or a scepter, but an executioner's cross.

Life Questions: Could Jesus run for political office? What kind of leader do people want today?

of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. ⁴²Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches."

⁴³He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough."

⁴⁴Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in a parable; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. ⁴⁵So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet

I will open my mouth in parables,
I will utter things hidden since the creation
of the world.

The Parable of the Weeds Explained

⁴⁶When he left the crowd and went into the house, his disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."

He answered: "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. ⁴⁷The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

⁴⁸As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the furnace, so it will be at the end of the age. ⁴⁹The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. ⁵⁰They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁵¹Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

⁴⁴The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

⁴⁵Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

The Parable of the Net

⁴⁷Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. ⁴⁸When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. ⁴⁹This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹"Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked.

"Yes," they replied.

⁵²He said to them, "Therefore every teacher of

the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."

A Prophet Without Honor

⁵³When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there. ⁵⁴Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked. ⁵⁵"Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? ⁵⁶Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" ⁵⁷And they took offense at him.

But Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honor."

⁵⁸And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

John the Baptist Beheaded

14 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the reports about Jesus, and he said to his attendants, "This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead! That is why miraculous powers are at work in him."

³Now Herod had arrested John and bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, ⁴for John had been saying to him: "It is not lawful for you to have her." ⁵Herod wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of the people, because they considered him a prophet.

⁶On Herod's birthday the daughter of Herodias danced for them and pleased Herod so much ⁷that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. ⁸Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist." ⁹The king was distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he ordered that her request be granted ¹⁰and had John beheaded in the prison. ¹¹His head was brought in on a platter and given to the girl, who carried it to her mother. ¹²John's disciples came and took his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus.

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

¹³When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When Jesus landed and saw a

13:57 No Respect at Home

Jesus had opened his ministry at home in a synagogue, an occasion marked by a near-riot. When he returned later, he aroused great curiosity but little belief. The townsfolk couldn't fathom that one who'd been raised in their midst by a carpenter was now teaching like a rabbi and performing miracles. Jesus declined to display his supernatural power for them, and quietly withdrew.

⁴³ Greek three *satals* (probably about 1/2 bushel or 22 liters)

⁵³ Psalm 78:2

large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

¹⁵As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food."

¹⁶Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

¹⁷"We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

¹⁸"Bring them here to me," he said. ¹⁹And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. ²⁰They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ²¹The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Jesus Walks on the Water

²²Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. ²³After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴but the boat was already a considerable distance^a from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

²⁵During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

²⁷But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

²⁸"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

²⁹"Come," he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

³¹Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

³²And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

³⁴When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret. ³⁵And when the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought all their sick to him ³⁶and begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed.

Clean and Unclean

15 Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, ²"Why do your disciples break the tradition

of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat!"

³Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? ⁴For God said, 'Honor your father and mother'^b and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.'^c ⁵But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,' ⁶he is not to 'honor his father' with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. ⁷You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:

⁸"These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

⁹They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men."^d

¹⁰Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen and understand. ¹¹What goes into a man's mouth does not make him 'unclean,' but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him 'unclean.'"

¹²Then the disciples came to him and asked, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?"

¹³He replied, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. ¹⁴Leave them; they are blind guides.^e If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit."

¹⁵Peter said, "Explain the parable to us."

¹⁶"Are you still so dull?" Jesus asked them. ¹⁷"Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? ¹⁸But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. ²⁰These are what make a man 'unclean'; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him 'unclean.'"

The Faith of the Canaanite Woman

²¹Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²²A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession."

²³Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us."

²⁴He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."

²⁵The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said.

15:1 Attacking Legalism

The Pharisees and teachers of the law considered their own strict traditions as binding as Old Testament law. In this passage, Jesus points out glaring inconsistencies in those traditions.

^a24 Greek many stadia

^b4 Exodus 20:12, Deut. 5:16

^c4 Exodus 21:17, Lev. 20:9

^d4 Some manuscripts father or his mother

^e9 Isaiah 29:13

^f14 Some manuscripts guides of the blind

He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs."

"Yes, Lord," she said, "but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."

"Then Jesus answered, 'Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.' And her daughter was healed from that very hour."

Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand

Jesus left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on a mountainside and sat down. Great crowds came to him, bringing the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet, and he healed them. The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for these people, they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they will collapse on the way."

His disciples answered, "Where could we get enough bread in this remote place to feed such a crowd?"

"How many loaves do you have?" Jesus asked.

"Seven," they replied, "and a few small fish."

He told the crowd to sit down on the ground.

Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people. They all ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was four thousand, besides women and children. After Jesus had sent the crowd away, he got into the boat and went to the vicinity of Magadan.

The Demand for a Sign

16 The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven.

He replied, "When evening comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,' and in the morning, 'Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah." Jesus then left them and went away.

The Yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees

"When they went across the lake, the disciples forgot to take bread. "Be careful," Jesus said to them. "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

They discussed this among themselves and said, "It is because we didn't bring any bread."

Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, "You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves

about having no bread? Do you still not understand? Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? How is it you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Peter's Confession of Christ

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

Jesus Predicts His Death

From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"

Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever

16:16 Peter's Highs and Lows

The disciple Peter earned a reputation for impulsiveness, and this chapter shows him at his very best and very worst. He won highest praise for discerning Jesus' true identity, but in the very next scene he made one of his biggest blunders. He wanted Jesus to avoid pain, not understanding that the pain of the cross would bring salvation to the whole world.

Some early manuscripts do not have the rest of verse 2 and all of verse 3.

¹⁶ Or Messiah; also in verse 20

¹⁸ Peter means

¹⁸ Or hell

¹⁸ Or not prove stronger than it

¹⁹ Or huge been

wants to save his life* will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. ²⁶What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? ²⁷For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done. ²⁸I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

The Transfiguration

17 After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ²There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. ³Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

⁴Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

⁵While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

⁶When the disciples heard this, they fell face-down to the ground, terrified. ⁷But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." ⁸When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

⁹As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

¹⁰The disciples asked him, "Why then do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?"

¹¹Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things. ¹²But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands." ¹³Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist.

The Healing of a Boy With a Demon

¹⁴When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. ¹⁵"Lord, have mercy on my son," he said. "He has seizures and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire

or into the water. ¹⁶I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him."

¹⁷"O unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me." ¹⁸Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed from that moment.

¹⁹Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"

²⁰He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

²²When they came together in Galilee, he said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. ²³They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised to life." And the disciples were filled with grief.

The Temple Tax

²⁴After Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax came to Peter and asked, "Doesn't your teacher pay the temple tax?"

²⁵"Yes, he does," he replied.

When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak. "What do you think, Simon?" he asked. "From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes—from their own sons or from others?"

²⁶"From others," Peter answered.

"Then the sons are exempt," Jesus said to him.

²⁷"But so that we may not offend them, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours."

The Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven

18 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

²He called a little child and had him stand among them. ³And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

⁵"And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. ⁶But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."

⁷"Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come! ⁸If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. ⁹And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it

17:5 An Unforgettable Experience

Three of Jesus' disciples had the opportunity to observe this dramatic scene of God's approving of his Son Jesus. Moses, the first great lawgiver, and Elijah, the first great prophet, appeared with Jesus, and God spoke from heaven. The apostle Peter described the impact of this experience in 2 Peter 1:16-18.

* The Greek word means either life or soul, also in verse 26 prayer and fasting

²⁴ Greek the two drachmas

²⁰ Some manuscripts you. ²¹But this kind does not go out except by

away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

¹⁰"See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven."

¹¹"What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? ¹²And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. ¹³In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost.

A Brother Who Sins Against You

¹⁴If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. ¹⁵But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' ¹⁶If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church, and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

¹⁷"I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

¹⁸"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ¹⁹For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

²¹Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?"

²²Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."

²³"Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents¹ was brought to him. ²⁵Since he was not able to pay, the master

ordered that he be sold with his wife and children and all his possessions to pay the debt.

²⁶At this, the servant fell on his knees and begged the master to have pity on him. 'Please,' he said, 'be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'

²⁷But the master refused to let him go. 'No,' he said, 'I will have you sold to pay the debt.' So the servant went away, weeping and full of despair.

²⁸Then the master's servant went to a fellow servant who owed him a small amount of money. He demanded that he pay him back at once.

²⁹The fellow servant begged for mercy, saying, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' But the master's servant refused. 'No,' he said, 'I will have you sold to pay the debt.' So he took him to the marketplace and sold him to a creditor.

³⁰Then the master's servant went to a fellow servant who owed him a small amount of money. He demanded that he pay him back at once. The fellow servant begged for mercy, saying, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' But the master's servant refused. 'No,' he said, 'I will have you sold to pay the debt.' So he took him to the marketplace and sold him to a creditor.

³¹Then the master's servant went to a fellow servant who owed him a small amount of money. He demanded that he pay him back at once. The fellow servant begged for mercy, saying, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' But the master's servant refused. 'No,' he said, 'I will have you sold to pay the debt.' So he took him to the marketplace and sold him to a creditor.

Divorce

19 When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went into the region of Judea to the desert near the village of Bethsaida. Large crowds followed him, and he began to teach them.

Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?"

"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female?" And said, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." For they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.

"Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?"

Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you, that anyone who divorces his wife except for marital unfaithfulness and marries another woman commits adultery."

The disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry."

Jesus replied, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given."

"For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the

18:23 Matthew's Interest in Money

Just as Luke, a doctor, gives more descriptive accounts of physical healings, Matthew, a former tax collector, highlights stories about money. This story in chapter 18, as well as others in chapters 20 and 25, appears only in Matthew's Gospel. Significantly, the former tax collector records Jesus' strongest words on treatment of the poor and needy.

¹⁰ Some manuscripts heaven. ¹¹ The Son of Man came to save what was lost. ¹² Deut. 19:15. ¹³ Or have been. ¹⁴ Or seventy times seven. ¹⁵ Gen. 1:27. ¹⁶ Gen. 2:24. ¹⁷ Or have been eunuchs.

¹⁸ Some manuscripts a man who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery. ¹⁹ This is the situation between a husband and wife. ²⁰ It is better not to marry.

kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it."

The Little Children and Jesus

¹³Then little children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them.

¹⁴Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." ¹⁵When he had

placed his hands on them, he went on from there

The Rich Young Man

¹⁶Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"

¹⁷"Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments."

¹⁸"Which ones?" the man inquired.

Jesus replied, "Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony,

INSIGHT

Out to Destroy Jesus

Jesus confronts his enemies

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them. They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd. 21:45-46

The mere birth of Jesus had threatened King Herod so much that he had ordered a bloody slaughter of boy babies. The pattern of opposition continued. Early on, Jesus openly predicted his own death.

Beginning in chapter 19, Matthew explains some of the escalating tensions between Jesus and the groups who resisted him. Enemies followed him from town to town, setting traps. Even so, Jesus neither tempered his words nor tried to hide. Instead, he used the occasions of conflict to warn his disciples and the watching crowds against those enemies, whose fury only increased.

Chapter 22 shows Jesus confronting three different groups of enemies on the same day: two religious sects, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, as well as the political Herodians. Jesus easily avoided their carefully devised verbal traps. In fact, he succeeded so brilliantly that Matthew concludes, "From that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions" (22:46).

What Did Jesus Have Against the Pharisees?

Students of history have often puzzled over why Jesus lashed out so strongly at one Jewish sect, the Pharisees—a group the New Testament mentions 100 times. At first glance, they seem like people Jesus should have liked. They were the most religious people of the day. More than any other group, they strove to follow the letter of the Old Testament law. Their very name, meaning "separatists," hinted at their desire to rise above normal behavior.

Pharisees were legalists: besides unduly focusing on minute details of the law, they embellished it with their own strict traditions. For example, a person could ride a donkey without breaking the Sabbath rules, but if he carried a switch to speed up the animal, he would be guilty of laying a burden on it.

A Pharisee could give to a beggar on the Sabbath only if the beggar stuck his hand inside the home of the Pharisee so that he needn't reach outside. A woman couldn't look in the mirror on the Sabbath—she might see a gray hair and be tempted to pull it out.

Matthew 23 records Jesus' eloquent verdict on the Pharisees. He scored them for being proud and cliquish and petty, and for refusing to admit their wrongs. External, showy forms of legalism, he said, tend to divert attention away from a person's inner attitude toward God and other people.

Are There Pharisees Now?

As he entered into the last weeks of his life on earth, Jesus polarized people. He boldly contrasted his own teaching with that of his opponents. In addition, he warned his followers about what to expect after his death. Opposition from enemies like the Pharisees wouldn't fade away when he departed. Rather, it would crescendo until the day of final judgment.

Jesus singled out the Pharisees as an example of legalism carried to an extreme. But he wasn't talking merely against an ancient Jewish sect. His words describe persistent tendencies of human beings, then and now. The errors he mentioned have characterized the church throughout its history. Christians still battle against pride and intolerance and a religion based on works.

Life Questions: Jesus describes characteristics of Pharisees in the first century. But what about our own time? What Pharisee-like qualities exist in your church? In you?

"honor your father and mother,"^a and "love your neighbor as yourself."^b

All these I have kept," the young man said. What do I still lack?"

Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?"

Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?"

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first."

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard

20 For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. He told them, "You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right." So they went.

He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same thing. About the eleventh hour he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, "Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?"

"Because no one has hired us," they answered.

He said to them, "You also go and work in my vineyard."

When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, "Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first."

The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a denarius. So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. When they received it, they

began to grumble against the landowner. "These men who were hired last worked only one hour," they said, "and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day."

But he answered one of them, "Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?"

"So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

Jesus Again Predicts His Death

Now as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside and said to them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!"

A Mother's Request

Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him.

"What is it you want?" he asked.

She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom."

"You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?"

"We can," they answered.

Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father."

When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Two Blind Men Receive Sight

As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"

The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"

Jesus stopped and called them. "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.

"Lord," they answered, "we want our sight."

Jesus had compassion on them and touched

^a19 Exodus 20:12-16, Deut 5:16-20

^b19 Lev 19:18

^c29 Some manuscripts mother or wife

their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

The Triumphal Entry

21 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away."

⁴This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

"Say to the Daughter of Zion,

"See, your king comes to you,

gentle and riding on a donkey,

on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted:

"Hosanna to the Son of David!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

"Hosanna in the highest!"

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"

The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Jesus at the Temple

Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. ¹³"It is written," he said to them, "My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'"

Then the blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in

the temple area, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant.

¹⁶"Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him.

"Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read

"From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise'?"

¹⁷And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.

The Fig Tree Withers

¹⁸Early in the morning, as he was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. ¹⁹Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, "May you never bear fruit again!" Immediately the tree withered.

²⁰When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. "How did the fig tree wither so quickly?" they asked.

²¹Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. ²²If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

The Authority of Jesus Questioned

²³Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you this authority?"

²⁴Jesus replied, "I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ²⁵John's baptism—where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or from men?"

They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' ²⁶But if we say, 'From men'—we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet."

²⁷So they answered Jesus, "We don't know."

Then he said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

The Parable of the Two Sons

²⁸"What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'

²⁹"I will not," he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

³⁰Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.

³¹"Which of the two did what his father wanted?"

"The first," they answered.

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³²For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the pros-

21:12 Drastic Action at the Temple

In Jesus' day, activities at the temple, supposedly the center for worship of God, had taken on a commercial cast. Merchants sold sacrificial animals to pilgrims and foreigners at inflated prices. The system was designed more for profit than for true worship. Jesus responded first by aggressively turning out these "robbers," and then by turning his attention to the people with real needs, the blind and the lame.

¹ Zech 9:9 ² A Hebrew expression meaning "Save!" which became an exclamation of praise, also in verse 15
¹⁸ 26 ¹³ Isaiah 56:7 ¹³ Jer 7:11 ¹⁶ Psalm 8:2

¹ Psalm

ites did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

The Parable of the Tenants

Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. ³⁰When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.

³¹"The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. ³²Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first, and the tenants treated them the same way. ³³At last he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said.

But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.' ³⁴So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"

"He will bring those wretches to a wretched end," they replied, "and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the harvest at harvest time."

Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures

The stone the builders rejected
has become the capstone,⁴²
the Lord has done this
and it is marvelous in our eyes⁴³?"

⁴⁴"Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. ⁴⁵He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed."

⁴⁶When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them. ⁴⁷They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.

The Parable of the Wedding Banquet

22 Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: ²"The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. ³He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

⁴"Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.'

⁵"But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. ⁶The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. ⁷The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

⁸"Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding

banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. ⁹Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.' ¹⁰So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹"But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. ¹²'Friend,' he asked, 'how did you get in here without wedding clothes?' The man was speechless.

¹³Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

¹⁴"For many are invited, but few are chosen."

Paying Taxes to Caesar

¹⁵Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. ¹⁶They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are. ¹⁷Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

¹⁸But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? ¹⁹Show me the coin used for paying the tax." They brought him a denarius, ²⁰and he asked them, "Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?"

²¹"Caesar's," they replied.

Then he said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

²²When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

Marriage at the Resurrection

²³That same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. ²⁴"Teacher," they said, "Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and have children for him. ²⁵Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. ²⁶The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh. ²⁷Finally, the woman died. ²⁸Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?"

²⁹Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do

22:17 A Double Bind

The Pharisees, allied with a party following King Herod, posed a question designed to trap Jesus regardless of his answer. If Jesus said, Pay the taxes, he would lose the support of the independence-minded Jews; if he said, Don't pay, he could be turned in to Rome for breaking the law.

⁴² Or cornerstone

⁴³ Psalm 118:22-23

⁴⁴ Some manuscripts do not have verse 44

not know the Scriptures or the power of God.³⁰ At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.³¹ But about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what God said to you,³² 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."

³³When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching.

The Greatest Commandment

³⁴Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together.³⁵ One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question:³⁶ "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

³⁷Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'^b ³⁸This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'^c ⁴⁰All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Whose Son Is the Christ?

⁴¹While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ⁴²"What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?"

"The son of David," they replied.

⁴³He said to them, "How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'? For he says,

⁴⁴" 'The Lord said to my Lord:

"Sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies
under your feet." ^e

⁴⁵If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?" ⁴⁶No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Seven Woes

23 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: ²"The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. ³So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. ⁴They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

⁵"Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries^f wide and the tassels on their garments long; ⁶they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; ⁷they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them 'Rabbi.'

⁸"But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. ⁹And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. ¹⁰Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ.^g ¹¹The greatest among you

will be your servant. ¹²For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

¹³"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to."

¹⁵"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.

¹⁶"Woe to you, blind guides! You say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.'^h ¹⁷You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? ¹⁸You also say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is bound by his oath.'ⁱ ¹⁹You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? ²⁰Therefore, he who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. ²¹And he who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. ²²And he who swears by heaven swears by God's throne and by the one who sits on it.

²³"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. ²⁴You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel!

²⁵"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

²⁷"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. ²⁸In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

²⁹"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. ³⁰And you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.'^j ³¹So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. ³²Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers!

³³"You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? ³⁴Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from

^a32 Exodus 3:6 ^b37 Deut. 6:5 ^c39 Lev. 19:18 ^d42,10 Or Messiah ^e44 Psalm 110:1 ^f5 That is, boxes containing Scripture verses, worn on forehead and arm ^g13 Some manuscripts to. ^h14 Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Therefore you will be punished more severely.

town to town.³ And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.⁴ I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation.

⁵“(O) Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.⁶ Look, your house is left to you desolate.⁷ For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

Signs of the End of the Age

24 Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings.² “Do you see all these things?” he asked. “I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

³As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

⁴Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you.⁵ For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.⁶ You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.⁸ All these are the beginning of birth pains.

⁹“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other,¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.¹² Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,¹³ but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

¹⁵“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’^c spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—¹⁶then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.¹⁷ Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house.¹⁸ Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak.¹⁹ How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers!²⁰ Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath.²¹ For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again.²² If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.²³ At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not

believe it.²⁴ For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—²⁵if that were possible.²⁶ See, I have told you ahead of time.

²⁷So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the desert,’ do not go out, or, ‘There he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it.²⁸ For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.²⁹ Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.

³⁰“Immediately after the distress of those days
“the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;
the stars will fall from the sky,
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.”^d

³¹“At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.³² And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

³³“Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near.³⁴ Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it^e is near, right at the door.³⁵ I tell you the truth, this generation^f will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.³⁶ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

The Day and Hour Unknown

³⁷“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son,³⁸ but only the Father.³⁹ As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.⁴⁰ For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark;⁴¹ and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.⁴² Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.⁴³ Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

⁴⁴“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.⁴⁵ But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let

24:27 When Will Jesus Return?

Matthew 24 records one of Jesus’ longest statements about the future. Jesus gives direct clues to events that will precede his second coming. But, notably, almost half the chapter consists of warnings that no one can predict the precise time of his coming.

³⁹ Psalm 118:26

⁴⁵ Or *Messiah*, also in verse 23

⁴¹⁵ Daniel 9:27, 11:31, 12:11

⁴²⁹ Isaiah 13:10; 34:4

⁴³³ Or *he*

³⁴ Or *race*

⁴³⁶ Some manuscripts do not have *nor the Son*

his house be broken into. ⁴⁴So you also must be ready because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

⁴⁵Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. ⁴⁷I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁸But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' ⁴⁹and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. ⁵⁰The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. ⁵¹He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

25 At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish and five were wise. ³The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. ⁴The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. ⁵The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

⁶At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'

⁷Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.'

⁹'No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'

¹⁰But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

¹¹Later the others also came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said 'Open the door for us!'

¹²But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.'

¹³Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour

The Parable of the Talents

¹⁴Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. ¹⁵To one he gave five talents^a of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. ¹⁷So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. ¹⁸But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

¹⁹After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. ²⁰The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me

with five talents. See, I have gained five more.'

²¹His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

²²The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.'

²³His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

²⁴Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

²⁶His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed?

²⁷Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.'

²⁸'Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. ²⁹For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. ³⁰And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The Sheep and the Goats

³¹'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

⁴⁰The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

⁴¹Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴²For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed

^a15 A talent was worth more than a thousand dollars

clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me."

⁴⁴"They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'"

⁴⁵"He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'"

⁴⁶Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

The Plot Against Jesus

26 When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, ²"As you know, the Passover is two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."

³Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, ⁴and they plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him. ⁵"But not during the Feast," they said, "or there may be a riot among the people."

Jesus Anointed at Bethany

⁶While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, ⁷a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.

⁸When the disciples saw this, they were indig-

nant. "Why this waste?" they asked. ⁹"This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor."

¹⁰Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ¹¹The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. ¹²When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. ¹³I tell you the truth, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

¹⁴Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests ¹⁵and asked, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" So they counted out for him thirty silver coins. ¹⁶From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

The Lord's Supper

¹⁷On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

¹⁸He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'"¹⁹So the disci-

INSIGHT

The Killing of a King

Arrest, trial, and execution

"What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify him!" 27:22

In spare, unadorned language the last three chapters of Matthew draw together the deep ironies of Jesus' life. From the first sentence, Matthew has stressed that Jesus is the Messiah, a true king. This Gospel is sometimes called the "royal" Gospel because it refers so many times to kingship.

But at the end of his life, the man whom wise men had crossed a continent to worship was sold, like a slave, for thirty pieces of silver. Jesus got a royal robe and crown at last—but as a cruel, mocking joke. Blood from the wounds on his back clotted on the robe, and the crown of thorns streaked his face with more blood.

A short time before, he had rebuked the religious leaders with accusations. But when they put him on the stand and accused him, his strong voice stayed mostly silent.

Jesus' Self-Defense

Jesus' enemies asked him two chief questions: "Are you the king of the Jews?" and "Are you the Messiah?" He answered with a simple "Yes, it is as you say," confirming the major themes woven throughout Matthew's book (27:11). Finally he was executed, with his "crime"—being a king—posted above his sagging body.

Jesus was indeed a king, but not the kind of king people expected. Even his disciples, who had known Jesus intimately for three years, slipped away in doubt.

The story, however, doesn't end with the death scene in chapter 27. Good Friday would never have been called "good" without the miracle described next. The king came back! And the writer who opened his book by tracing Jesus' Jewish roots ends it with Jesus' stirring call to take the good news to all nations.

Life Questions The people who crucified Jesus—what did they hate in him? Is it the same today?

ples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.

²⁰When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. ²¹And while they were eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me."

²²They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely not I, Lord?"

²³Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. ²⁴The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

²⁵Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?"

Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you."^a

²⁶While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

²⁷Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸This is my blood of the^b covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

³⁰When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

³¹Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written:

"I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep of the flock will be
scattered."

³²But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."

³³Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will."

³⁴"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times."

³⁵But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same.

Gethsemane

³⁶Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

³⁹Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

⁴⁰Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. ⁴¹"Watch

and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

⁴²He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

⁴³When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

⁴⁵Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

Jesus Arrested

⁴⁷While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him." ⁴⁹Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him.

⁵⁰Jesus replied, "Friend, do what you came for."^d

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. ⁵¹With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

⁵²"Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

⁵⁵At that time Jesus said to the crowd, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. ⁵⁶But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Before the Sanhedrin

⁵⁷Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. ⁵⁸But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the court-

26:47 A Name Disgraced

Judas (like Jesus) was a common name for Jewish men in those days; it is the Greek form of Judah. He came from a region called Judea, whereas all the other disciples came from Galilee. Yet he gained enough trust to be named the disciples' treasurer. The Bible gives few details on Judas's motive for betraying Jesus. He may have become disillusioned when Jesus didn't fulfill his expectations of a powerful king and Messiah.

^a25 Or "You yourself have said it"

^b28 Some manuscripts the new

^c31 Zech. 13:7

^d50 Or "Friend, why have you come?"

and of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome.

The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. ⁶⁰But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward.

Finally two came forward and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'"

Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" ⁶¹But Jesus remained silent.

The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God. Tell us if you are the Christ,⁶² the Son of God."

"Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

⁶³Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. ⁶⁴What do you think?"

"He is worthy of death," they answered.

⁶⁵Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him ⁶⁶and said, "Prophecy to us, Christ. Who hit you?"

Peter Disowns Jesus

⁶⁷Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said.

⁶⁸But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

⁶⁹Then he went out to the gateway, where another girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth."

⁷⁰He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!"

⁷¹After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away."

⁷²Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!"

Immediately a rooster crowed. ⁷³Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Judas Hangs Himself

27 Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people came to the decision to put Jesus to death. ²They bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.

³When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. ⁴"I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood."

"What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility."

⁵Then Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

⁶The chief priests picked up the coins and said, "It is against the law to put this into the treasury since it is blood money."⁷ So they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. ⁸That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day. ⁹Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: "They took the thirty silver coins, the price set on him by the people of Israel, ¹⁰and they used them to buy the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me."

Jesus Before Pilate

¹¹Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

"Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied.

¹²When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. ¹³Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?" ¹⁴But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor.

¹⁵Now it was the governor's custom at the Feast to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. ¹⁶At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. ¹⁷So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" ¹⁸For he knew it was out of envy that they had handed Jesus over to him.

¹⁹While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him."

²⁰But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

²¹"Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor.

"Barabbas," they answered.

²²"What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?" Pilate asked.

They all answered, "Crucify him!"

²³"Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

²⁴When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!"

²⁵All the people answered, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!"

²⁶Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

²⁷Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. ²⁸They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹and then twisted to-

⁶³ Or *Messiah*; also in verse 68

⁷⁰ See Zech. 11:12, 13; Jer. 19:1-13; 32:6-9

gether a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. ³⁰They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. ³¹After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

The Crucifixion

³²As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. ³³They came to a place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull). ³⁴There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall, but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. ³⁵When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. ³⁶And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. ³⁷Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ³⁸Two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁹Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!"

⁴¹In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. ⁴²"He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.' " ⁴⁴In the same way the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

The Death of Jesus

⁴⁵From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land. ⁴⁶About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, ^b lama sabachthani?"—which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

⁴⁷When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling Elijah."

⁴⁸Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. ⁴⁹The rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him."

⁵⁰And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

⁵¹At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. ⁵²The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. ⁵³They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

⁵⁴When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son^d of God!"

⁵⁵Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. ⁵⁶Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

The Burial of Jesus

⁵⁷As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. ⁵⁹Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. ⁶¹Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.

The Guard at the Tomb

⁶²The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. ⁶³"Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' ⁶⁴So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first."

⁶⁵"Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." ⁶⁶So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

The Resurrection

28 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

²There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

⁵The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has

27:51 A Curtain Is Torn

At Jesus' death, the massive, thick curtain in the temple in Jerusalem ripped in two. This curtain sealed off the Most Holy Place. No one except the high priest was allowed into the presence of God in that Most Holy Place. And the high priest was permitted in only once a year, on a special day. The author of Hebrews looked on the miraculously torn curtain as symbolic: it signified the immediate access to God made possible by Jesus' death (Hebrews 10:19,20).

^{a35} A few late manuscripts *lots* that the word spoken by the prophet might be fulfilled. "They divided my garments among themselves and cast lots for my clothing" (Psalm 22:18)

^{b46} Some manuscripts *Eli, Eli*

^{c46} Psalm 22:1

^{d54} Or a son

men from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you.

So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them: "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, where they will see me."

The Guards' Report

While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him

away while we were asleep.' " If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble. " So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.

The Great Commission

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him, but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

For the full story, see Acts 1:16-19; Romans 6:3-11; Cor. 1:13, 10-2 and Gal. 3:27

INSIGHT

The Rightful King Regains His Throne

The first blessing and command of the new king

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age. 28:18-20

When a new king was ready to assume his throne in ancient times, tradition required a ceremony of pomp and power. In regal splendor the ruler stepped forward to assume the symbols of authority: a crown, a scepter, or a throne. The former king was gone, defeated or deceased. The new ruler was now elevated to his rightful place and would from this time rule all the territory under his dominion.

Jesus' Resurrection and Enthronement

In the climax of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus the king has finally defeated the "prince of this world." On the cross and in the resurrection he has taken away Satan's power, and now resplendent in glory he speaks to his followers as the one who is enthroned over all the powers of this world. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

The first command of this new king Jesus to "go and make disciples of all nations" is also the first blessing of the enthroned king. It is a blessing that promises the sharing of his power, and the responsibility to assert the rightful reign of God over his entire creation. It is also the blessing of his presence. Surely he will be with us always even "to the very end of the age."

The followers of King Jesus now take the good news to all nations, the news that the illegitimate reign of Satan is coming to an end, that the victory of Jesus has already been established, and the good news that all people everywhere can now begin to obey everything that he has commanded. **Life Questions.** List some ways in which you see or experience the reign of Jesus today. What difference does this make for those who bring the good news to all nations?

MARK

INTRODUCTION

The Fast paced Gospel

Mark's stories are full of action

News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee (1:28)

A lone figure appears – an eccentric wearing camel's hair and crying something in the thin desert air. So begins Mark.

It helps to imagine the book of Mark as a concisely edited document. Unlike the other Gospels, this one has little tolerance for dialogue and personal reflection. The author is writing to a restless, impatient audience.

Mark deftly controls the focus of the action, alternately showing large crowds and then concentrating on individual people. He leaves no doubt about the main character. After the opening verses on John the Baptist, he turns to focus on Jesus and follows him everywhere.

An Emphasis on Action

Those who look for an outline in Mark come away baffled. Matthew and Luke each give four chapters of historical warm-up before recording a miracle by Jesus. Mark covers three miracles and a group event in the first chapter alone.

In contrast to all its action scenes, the book includes only a sampling of Jesus' parables. It focuses on events, not speeches or editorial comments. Mark shows large crowds pressing around Jesus so tightly that he launches a boat to escape them. Wherever he goes, the crowds follow, buzzing about his remarkable life. "Is he the Holy One of God?" "Is he mad?" "Isn't this the carpenter's boy?"

A Breathless Pace

By dispensing with all but bare-bones action, Mark manages to achieve more drama than perhaps any other biblical writer. Action guarantees an attentive audience, and Mark jams sequences together breathlessly. The heavens open *immediately*, the Spirit sends Jesus into the wilderness *immediately*, he calls his disciples *immediately*. 42 times this book uses that hurry-up adverb (in Greek).

Characters rush from place to place, jostle among crowds, are astonished at mighty works. Mark is a Gospel of exclamation points, full of words like *amazed*, *overwhelmed*, *terrified*. A phenomenon is loose on the earth, and the author is determined to capture its impact for future generations.

How to Read Mark

About 90% of Mark's content appears in the other three Gospels, but the book makes an ideal starting place for someone who knows little about Jesus. Its style – simple sentences, without complicated transitions or long speeches – makes understanding easier. In fact, Mark was probably written as a missionary book to people who knew next to nothing about the new Christian faith.

Except where he cites Jesus' own quotations, Mark quotes the Old Testament directly in only one place (1:2-3). In addition, Mark doesn't refer to the Old Testament Law, a striking difference from the other Gospels. Such facts indicate his book was written to a non-Jewish audience, probably the Romans.

You'll need no special instructions on reading Mark. This book's breezy style makes it as understandable as a newspaper. Because it loosely follows the chronology of Jesus' life, Mark offers an excellent introduction to the life of Jesus. As you read, stop and ponder the events Mark records. Why did Mark select these facts? What meaning did they have for the people in Jesus' day? What about for you?

A PLAN FOR READING MARK

PLAN 1: A of Mark in 15 Days

Reading Mark will give you a quick summary of Jesus' acts on this earth. For this reason, plan to spend two weeks reading all 16 chapters of Mark.

Day 1. Read the Introduction to Mark, then chapter 1.

Day 2. Read chapter 2's record of scenes from Jesus' life during a period of popular acclaim.

Day 3. Read chapter 3, which shows Jesus calling his 12 disciples.

Day 4. Read the brief parables and the account of the calming of a storm in chapter 4.

Day 5. Mark 5 tells of three miracles of healing; note the different crowd reaction to each one.

Day 6. Read chapter 6, which includes several famous miracles and also the story of John the Baptist's beheading.

Day 7. Read chapter 7, which shows the Pharisees' opposition to Jesus beginning to mount.

Day 8. As you read chapter 8, notice, on the one hand, Jesus' increasing popularity, and on the other, the growing tension that will eventually culminate in his death.

Day 9. Read the account of Jesus' transfiguration and the other events recorded in chapter 9.

Day 10. Mark 10 records Jesus' teaching on divorce, humility, and wealth.

Day 11. Read chapter 11's account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem for the last week of his life.

Day 12. Read chapter 12, which includes Jesus' teaching on a variety of topics.

Day 13. Read chapter 13 for Jesus' predictions of the end of the world.

Day 14. Mark 14 records the events leading up to Jesus' arrest, as well as his trial before a Jewish court.

Day 15. Read chapters 15 and 16, which report the last events in Jesus' life on earth.

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

In the beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ,
the Son of God—

—written in Isaiah the prophet:

“I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way”¹—
the voice of one calling in the desert,
to prepare the way for the Lord,
to make straight paths for him.”²

1 John came baptizing in the desert region
and preaching a baptism of repentance for the for-
giveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside
and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him
confessing their sins, they were baptized by him
in the Jordan River. John wore clothing made of
camel hair, with a leather belt around his waist,

and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷And this was
his message: “After me will come one more power-
ful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not
worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸I baptize you
with⁴ water, but he will baptize you with the Holy
Spirit.”

The Baptism and Temptation of Jesus

⁹At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Gali-
lee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰As
Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw
heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending
on him like a dove. ¹¹And a voice came from
heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love, with you I
am well pleased.”

¹²At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert,
¹³and he was in the desert forty days, being tempt-
ed by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and
angels attended him.

¹ Mal 3:1

² Mal 3:1

³ Isaiah 40:3

⁴ Or in

The Calling of the First Disciples

¹⁴After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

¹⁶As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." ¹⁸At once they left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. ²⁰Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

Jesus Drives Out an Evil Spirit

²¹They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. ²²The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. ²³Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil²³ spirit cried out, ²⁴"What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"

²⁵"Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" ²⁶The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

²⁷The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him." ²⁸News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

Jesus Heals Many

²⁹As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. ³¹So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

³²That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. ³³The whole town gathered at the door, ³⁴and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

Jesus Prays in a Solitary Place

³⁵Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. ³⁶Simon and his companions went to look for him, ³⁷and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"

³⁸Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come." ³⁹So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

A Man With Leprosy

⁴⁰A man with leprosy⁴⁰ came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."

⁴¹Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" ⁴²Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.

⁴³Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: ⁴⁴"See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." ⁴⁵Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.

Jesus Heals a Paralytic

2 A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. ²So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. ³Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. ⁴Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralytic man was lying on. ⁵When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

⁶Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ⁷"Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

⁸Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? ⁹Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk?' ¹⁰But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . ." He said to the paralytic, ¹¹"I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." ¹²He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

The Calling of Levi

¹³Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. ¹⁴As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.

¹⁵While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. ¹⁶When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the "sinners" and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"

²³ Greek *unclean*; also in verses 26 and 27
leprosy

⁴⁰ The Greek word was used for various diseases affecting the skin—not necessarily

On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not to healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Jesus Questioned About Fasting

John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, "How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?"

Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast."

Someone sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, he pours new wine into new wineskins."

Lord of the Sabbath

One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"

He answered, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions."

Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

Another time he went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath. Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Stand up in front of everyone."

Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent.

He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.

Crowds Follow Jesus

Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. When they heard all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon. Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him. For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to

touch him. Whenever the evil spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." But he gave them strict orders not to tell who he was.

The Appointing of the Twelve Apostles

Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons. These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter), James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means Sons of Thunder), Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Jesus and Beelzebul

Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."

And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebul." By the prince of demons he is driving out demons.

So Jesus called them and spoke to them in parables. "How can Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house. I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin."

He said this because they were saying, "He has an evil spirit."

Jesus' Mother and Brothers

Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call

3:21 Out of His Mind?

Jesus provoked a strong reaction in just about everyone. In this instance, Jesus' own family members questioned his sanity, and teachers of the law wondered about demon possession. He aroused the fiercest opposition among his own neighbors and among the religious "professionals" of his day. But, as Mark shows, throngs of other people were amazed by his authoritative teaching and his miraculous powers. Personal contact with Jesus left virtually no one unmoved.

him. ³²A crowd was sitting around him and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you."

³³"Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked.

³⁴Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and

my brothers' ³⁵Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother.

The Parable of the Sower

4 Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake.

INSIGHT

Why Come to Earth?

The only way God could get through

They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"
4:41

Paul Harvey tells a modern parable about a religious skeptic who worked as a farmer. One cold winter night the man heard an irregular thumping sound against the kitchen storm door. He went to a window and watched as tiny, shivering sparrows, attracted to the evident warmth inside, beat in vain against the glass.

Touched, the farmer bundled up and trudged through fresh snow to open the barn door for the struggling birds. He turned on the lights and tossed some hay in a corner. But the sparrows, which had scattered in all directions when he emerged from the house, hid in the darkness, afraid.

The man tried various tactics to get them into the barn. He laid down a trail of bread crumbs to direct them. He tried circling behind the birds to drive them toward the barn. Nothing worked. He, a huge, alien creature, had terrified them; the birds couldn't comprehend that he actually desired to help.

The farmer withdrew to his house and watched the doomed sparrows through a window. As he stared, a thought hit him like lightning from a clear blue sky. *If only I could become a bird—one of them—just for a moment. Then I wouldn't frighten them so. I could show them the way to warmth and safety.*

At the same moment, another thought dawned on him. He had grasped the reason Jesus was born.

When God Came to Earth

A man becoming a bird is nothing compared to God becoming a man. The concept of a sovereign eternal being who created the universe, confining himself to a human body was—and is—too much for some people to believe. But how else could God truly communicate with us?

We don't know what God looked like as a man; no Gospel writer described the physical appearance of Jesus. But, in other ways, Mark painted a full picture of his humanity. Jesus, who claimed to be God, didn't have a supernatural "glow" about him. His own neighbors and family marveled that he seemed so, well, normal.

Mark does not diminish Jesus. He shows the power of a man who healed the blind with a simple touch (8:25), and the authority of a teacher so captivating that people sat three days straight, with empty stomachs, just to hear him (8:2). Even after Jesus hushed them, people wouldn't stop talking about his miracles.

But Mark also reveals the full range of Jesus' emotions: a surge of compassion for a person with leprosy (1:41), a deep sigh in response to nagging Pharisees (8:12), a look of anger and distress at cold-hearted legalists (3:5), and then an awful cry on the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (15:34). Jesus was sometimes witty, and he sometimes cried. He got tired—five times, Mark records, he sought a quiet place for rest away from the crowds.

Like No One Else

Jesus was like no other person who ever lived. Twelve men left their jobs and families at a single command to follow him. Yet Jesus was also fully "one of us." He needed food and friends. He got lonely and tired. He showed anger and disappointment. Because Jesus experienced all we experience as human beings, he can understand us completely, and share in our joys and sorrows.

Mark portrays both sides of Jesus—the divine and the human. The disciples needed to see both dimensions to give their lives to him.

Life Questions: Suppose that Jesus had never come, that God had merely sent an elaborate written message. What difference would that make?

While all the people were along the shore at the water's edge.² He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said:³ "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed.⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.⁵ Some fell on rocky places where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly because the soil was shallow.⁶ But as the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.⁷ Some seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain.⁸ Other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times."

Then Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables.¹¹ He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables,¹² so that

they may be ever seeing but never perceiving,
and ever hearing but never understanding,
otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!"¹⁴

Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable?"¹⁴ The farmer sows the word.¹⁵ Some seeds are like seed along the path, where the birds come and eat them. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.¹⁶ Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy.¹⁷ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.¹⁸ Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word,¹⁹ but the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.²⁰ Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown.

A Lamp on a Stand

He said to them, "Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don't you put it on its stand?"²² For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open.²³ If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."

"Consider carefully what you hear," he continued. "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more.²⁵ Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him."

The Parable of the Growing Seed

He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground.² Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know

how.²⁸ All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head.²⁹ As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

³⁰ Again he said, "What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it?"³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest seed you plant in the ground.³² Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds of the air can perch in its shade."

³³ With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand.³⁴ He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.

Jesus Calms the Storm

³⁵ That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side."³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him.³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

⁴⁰ He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

⁴¹ They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

The Healing of a Demon-possessed Man

5 They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes.^b ² When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil^c spirit came from the tombs to meet him.³ This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even with a chain.⁴ For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him.⁵ Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

⁶ When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him.⁷ He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God

4:30 Scarce Parables

Unlike Matthew and Luke, Mark devotes little space to parables, the unique form of teaching Jesus often relied on. Yet Mark includes as many miracles as does any Gospel. Clearly, this book emphasizes action over words.

^a Some manuscripts Gadarenes, other manuscripts Gergesenes

^b 2 Greek unclear, also in verses 8 and 13

that you won't torture me!" For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you evil spirit!"

Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

"My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs, allow us to go into them." He gave them permission, and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs as well. Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

A Dead Girl and a Sick Woman

When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet and pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"

But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you.

Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

While Jesus was still speaking, some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher any more?"

Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, "Don't be afraid, just believe."

He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. When they came to the home of the synagogue ruler, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep."

But they laughed at him. After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum!" (which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). Immediately the girl stood up and walked around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

A Prophet Without Honor

Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.

"Where did this man get these things?" they asked. "What's this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles? Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph,^b Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him.

Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor." He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith.

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits.

These were his instructions: "Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals but not an extra tunic. Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave, as a testimony against them."

They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

John the Baptist Beheaded

King Herod heard about this, for Jesus' name had become well known. Some were saying,^c

^a That is, the Ten Cities.

^b Greek *Joseph*, a variant of *Joseph*.

^c Greek *unknow*.

^d Some early manuscripts *He was*.

in the Baptist has been raised from the dead, that is why miraculous powers are at work in

... He is I think

and still others claimed, "He is a prophet, like all the prophets of long ago

But when Herod heard this, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised from the

For Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested, and he had him bound and put in

He did this because of Herodias, his brother-in-law's wife, whom he had married. For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But he was not able to.

Because Herod feared John and liked to listen to him, for he knew John to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled, yet he liked to listen to him.

Finally the opportune time came. On his birthday Herod gave a banquet for his high officials and

military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. When the daughter of Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests.

The king said to the girl, "Ask me for anything you want, and I'll give it to you." And he promised her with an oath, "Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

She went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?"

"The head of John the Baptist," she answered.

At once the girl hurried in to the king with the request: "I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a platter."

The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. The man went, beheaded John in the prison, and brought back his head on a platter. He presented it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother. On hearing of this, John's disciples came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

pts he did many things

INSIGHT

Eyewitness Reports

Where did Mark get his facts?

He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. 5:37

When people translate the Bible into a new language, they have a lot of explaining to do. How do you convey Christianity to someone who has never heard of Abraham or Moses or the apostles Peter and Paul? Where do you start?

More often than not, translators begin with the book of Mark. Its simple sentences and brief, action-filled scenes allow for easier translation. It reads like a newspaper. And the book seems written for a foreign culture (perhaps the Romans) in the first place; common Jewish customs are explained in parentheses.

The Peter Connection

Perhaps the most compelling feature of Mark to an unfamiliar reader, though, is its vividness. It has the feel of an eyewitness account. Those who study such things have concluded that Mark probably got his facts from Peter, one of Jesus' intimate disciples. Peter, or someone like him, provided believable, close-up details.

Jesus spent his time in the desert "with the wild animals" (1:13). When he went to pray, he got up "very early in the morning, while it was still dark" (1:35)—a memorable detail to Jesus' disciples, sometimes known for their untimely sleeping habits. In the midst of a furious squall Jesus lay in a boat "sleeping on a cushion" (4:38).

Whoever told Mark about the scene on the Mount of Transfiguration described Jesus' clothes as "dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them" (9:3). And only Mark tells us that Peter sat with the guards during Jesus' trial, warming himself by the fire.

Why Details Matter

You can say these details don't matter, and it's true that Matthew and Luke recounted the same events without them. But as any good writer knows, details like these make a story come alive. Vivid images that stuck in the eyewitness's memory will likely stick with the reader as well.

For example, Mark could have matter-of-factly told of people being healed, but it just didn't happen that way. A blind man, "throwing his cloak aside . . . jumped to his feet and came to Jesus" (10:50). And after the paralytic stood up, "This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this!'" (2:12).

Life Questions As you read Mark, what "eyewitness details" stand out to you?

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

11The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught.
12Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

13So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. But when the crowds saw that Jesus was there, they followed him on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of him. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

14As the time came for him to say good-bye to his disciples, he said, "This is a quiet place. Let's eat." And the disciples were amazed and asked, "The teacher does not eat?" So he said to the astonished disciples, "I have said to you, I am not eating and drinking anything either."

15Then he answered, "Don't give them something to eat?"

16They said to him, "That would take eight months of a man's wages! Are we to go and spend that time to bread and give it to them to eat?"

17"Is a man's life to be lost?" he asked. "Or are you losing it?"

18After they found out they said, "Five—no, ten loaves."

19Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. When they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties, Jesus took the loaves and the fish, gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. After all ate and were satisfied, he said to the disciples, "Pick up the pieces so that we won't lose them. I want to burn them with fire and eat them." The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

Jesus Walks on the Water

20Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida while he dismissed the crowd. After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

21That evening came, the boat was in the middle of the lake and he was alone in it. He saw the disciples struggling at the oars, because the wind was against them. About the fourth watch of

the night he went out to them, walking on the lake. They were about to pass on when they saw him walking on the lake and they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, "Because they all saw him and were terrified."

22Immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." Then he climbed into the boat with them and the wind died down. They were completely amazed. But they said nothing to him about the cakes, their hearts were hardened.

23After that had passed over they arrived at Capernaum and remained there. Was soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. They got the message that whose name and image the king of Israel is wherever they went he was there. Wherever he went—and villages, towns and countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed.

Clean and Unclean

24The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and asked him about his disciples eating food with hands that were unclean, that is, unwashed. 25The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. 26When they come from the marketplace they do not wash even their hands. And they observe many other customs, such as the washing of cups, jars and kettles.

27So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with unclean hands?"

28He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites, as it is written:

"These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men."

29You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men."

30And he said to them, "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions." 31For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'—and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' But you reject this command of God in order to obey your own traditions. 32Isaiah says that it is a man's heart that is

6:31 The Need to Get Away

Mark graphically shows the press of the crowds around Jesus. Wherever he went, people followed, bringing him the sick to heal and challenging him with questions. In five separate places (3:7-9; 6:31; 6:45; 7:24; 9:30) Mark records that Jesus took his disciples aside to some quiet place, to escape the crush of the crowd.

7:3 Explaining Jewish Customs

The parenthetical remark in verses 3-4 explains a common Jewish custom of ceremonial hand-washing. Such remarks as these indicate Mark was writing to a non-Jewish audience that needed background explanations.

11. Greek: all the apostles gathered.

12. Some manuscripts: they.

14. Some early manuscripts: so they, after that they were

15. Greek: they were

16. Greek: they were

17. Greek: they were

father or mother. "Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban" (that is, a gift devoted to God), ¹²then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. ¹³Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.

¹⁴Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. Nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean.'"^a

After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. "Are you so dull?" he asked. "Don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him 'unclean'? ¹⁹For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.)^b

He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' ²¹For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²²greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. ²³All these evils come from inside and make a man unclean."

The Faith of a Syrophenician Woman

Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre.^c He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret. ²⁵In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an evil spirit came and fell at his feet. ²⁶The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.

"First let the children eat all they want," he told her, "for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs."

²⁸"Yes, Lord," she replied, "but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

²⁹Then he told her, "For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter."

³⁰She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

The Healing of a Deaf and Mute Man

³¹Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis.^d ³²There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged him to place his hand on the man.

³³After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue. ³⁴He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "Ephphatha!" (which means, "Be opened!"). ³⁵At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.

³⁶Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it. ³⁷People were overwhelmed with amaze-

ment. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand

⁸ During those days another large crowd gathered. Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, ²"I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. ³If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance."

⁴His disciples answered, "But where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them?"

⁵"How many loaves do you have?" Jesus asked. "Seven," they replied.

⁶He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. When he had taken the seven loaves and given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people, and they did so. ⁷They had a few small fish as well; he gave thanks for them also and told the disciples to distribute them. ⁸The people ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ⁹About four thousand men were present. And having sent them away, ¹⁰he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha.

¹¹The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven. ¹²He sighed deeply and said, "Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to it." ¹³Then he left them, got back into the boat and crossed to the other side.

The Yeast of the Pharisees and Herod

¹⁴The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat. ¹⁵"Be careful," Jesus warned them. "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod."

¹⁶They discussed this with one another and said, "It is because we have no bread."

¹⁷Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? ¹⁸Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? ¹⁹When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?"

"Twelve," they replied.

²⁰"And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?"

They answered, "Seven."

²¹He said to them, "Do you still not understand?"

The Healing of a Blind Man at Bethsaida

²²They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch

^aMany early manuscripts: "unclean." ^bIf anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.

^cThat is, the Ten Cities.

^d24 Many early manuscripts: Tyre and Sidon.

him. ²³He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?"

²⁴He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around."

²⁵Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. ²⁶Jesus sent him home, saying, "Don't go into the village."

Peter's Confession of Christ

²⁷Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?"

²⁸They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."

²⁹"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Peter answered, "You are the Christ."¹

³⁰Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him

Jesus Predicts His Death

³¹He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. ³²He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

³³But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

³⁴Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ³⁵For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. ³⁶What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? ³⁷Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? ³⁸If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

8:29 Peter Learns Humility

Most scholars believe that Mark got his eyewitness details from the disciple Peter. If so, the book reveals something about how Peter changed. Mark tells of three separate instances when Jesus rebuked Peter (see, for example, 8:33), but omits several compliments paid him. For example, compare this passage (8:29,30) to a parallel account in Matthew 16:13-20, where Jesus commended Peter highly. Evidently, brash Peter learned a few lessons about humility along the way.

⁹ And he said to them, "I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

The Transfiguration

²After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. ³His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. ⁴And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

⁵Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." ⁶(He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)

⁷Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"

⁸Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

⁹As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. ¹⁰They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what "rising from the dead" meant.

¹¹And they asked him, "Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?"

¹²Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah does come first, and restores all things. Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected? ¹³But I tell you, Elijah has come, and they have done to him everything they wished, just as it is written about him."

The Healing of a Boy With an Evil Spirit

¹⁴When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. ¹⁵As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.

¹⁶"What are you arguing with them about?" he asked.

¹⁷A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. ¹⁸Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not."

¹⁹"O unbelieving generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me."

²⁰So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

²¹Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?"

"From childhood," he answered. ²²"It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."

¹ Some manuscripts Don't go and tell anyone in the village mean "The Anointed One."

²⁹ Or Messiah "The Christ" (Greek) and "the Messiah" (Hebrew) both

³⁵ The Greek word means either life or soul, also in verse 36

“If you can,” said Jesus. “Everything is possible for him who believes.”

“Then,” the boy’s father exclaimed, “I do believe. Help me overcome my unbelief!”

When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to him, he rebuked the evil spirit. “You deaf and dumb spirit,” he said, “I command you come out of him and never enter him again.”

The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and he fell. The boy looked so much like a corpse that they said, “He’s dead.” But Jesus took the boy by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he got up.

After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples were amazed. “Why couldn’t we drive it out?”

He replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer.”

Then he left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they

were.³⁶ Because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise.”³⁷ But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.

Who Is the Greatest?

“They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, ‘What were you arguing about on the road?’³⁸ But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.”

Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.”

“He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them, ‘Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes

³⁶ Some manuscripts proper and fitting

INSIGHT

Training the 12 Disciples

A most unpromising group of recruits

“Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear?” 8:18

A skilled dramatist, Mark describes the crowd reactions to Jesus all through his account. He shows people astonished, confused, and upset by Jesus' actions. Always, twelve people, the disciples, loom in the background, working out the logistics of Jesus' ministry.

At first, the disciples did not distinguish themselves—to put it mildly. Their most obvious trait was stupidity. “Are you so dull?” Jesus asked (7:18) and again, “How long shall I put up with you?” (9:19).

Dense Disciples

Almost halfway through the book of Mark (chapter 8), the focus shifts away from the crowds and the disciples. In spite of their erratic performance, Jesus devoted much of his time to them. They were gathered to watch and listen, but Jesus concentrated on training the Twelve, preparing them to carry on his work after his departure.

How would the disciples handle the increased attention? If anything, they proved even more inept. When Jesus referred to his coming death, they either missed the point or foolishly protested his decision. Sometimes they squabbled about who deserved the most favored position. They obviously did not understand the dazzling events going on around them. In short, the disciples amply demonstrated the mixture of good and bad present in all of us.

Near the end of Mark, as events conspired toward Jesus' death, the disciples grew more anxious and fearful. Jesus singled out two followers in particular, John and Peter, for his strongest endorsement. Yet, despite vigorous pronouncements of loyalty, each one of the Twelve deserted quietly and ashamedly away from Jesus in his moment of deepest need.

A Decisive Change

One event, however, dramatically altered them. Something passed through their lives like a lightning bolt: Jesus' resurrection from death. After that, Jesus' patient hours of training seemed to bear fruit.

The disciples' change in behavior is astonishing. Of the proofs for the resurrection of Jesus, one of the most compelling is simply to compare these cowering disciples as portrayed in a Gospel like Mark with the bold, confident figures in the book of Acts. There, in a remarkable irony, we see the church in the advance of the early church being led by the two disciples with the thickest heads of all, John and Peter.

But sometimes we think of the disciples as saints or heroes, but Mark shows their weakness. What weak spots keep you from following Jesus as you might?

me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."

Whoever Is Not Against Us Is for Us

¹⁸"Teacher," said John, "we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us."

¹⁹"Do not stop him," Jesus said. "No one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, ⁴⁰for whoever is not against us is for us. ⁴¹I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward

Causing to Sin

⁴²"And if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck. ⁴³If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. ⁴⁵And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. ⁴⁷And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸where

"their worm does not die,
and the fire is not quenched."

⁴⁹Everyone will be salted with fire.

⁵⁰"Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other."

Divorce

10 Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them.

²Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"

³"What did Moses command you?" he replied.

⁴They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away."

⁵"It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law," Jesus replied. ⁶"But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male

and female.' ⁴⁷For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, ⁴⁸and the two will become one flesh.' ⁴⁹So they are no longer two, but one. ⁵⁰Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

¹⁰When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. ¹¹He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. ¹²And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery."

The Little Children and Jesus

¹³People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." ¹⁶And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.

The Rich Young Man

¹⁷As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

¹⁸"Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. ¹⁹You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.' ²⁰"

²⁰"Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy."

²¹Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

²²At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

²³Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"

²⁴The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is ²⁵to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁶It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

²⁶The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?"

²⁷Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."

²⁸Peter said to him, "We have left everything to follow you!"

²⁹"I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel ³⁰will fail to receive a hundred times as much in

10:2 Teaching on Divorce

The Pharisees tested Jesus with questions about common practices of divorce and remarriage. Jesus responded by pointing back to the origin of marriage at creation. His disciples were surprised by his strict views on divorce, and questioned him further in private. For other Bible passages on this topic, see Matthew 19:1-12 and 1 Corinthians 7:1-16.

⁴³ Some manuscripts out, ⁴⁴where "their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched." ⁴⁸ Isaiah 66:24 ⁴⁶ Gen. 1:27
have and be united to his wife ¹⁸ Gen. 2:24 ¹⁹ Exodus 20:12-16; Deut. 5:16-20

⁴⁵ Some manuscripts hell ⁴⁶where ⁴⁷ Some early manuscripts do not ²⁴ Some manuscripts is for those who

present age (homes, brothers, sisters, others, children and fields—and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last

181

Jesus Again Predicts His Death

They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were alarmed, while those who followed were afraid. As he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him, ³³"We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, ³⁴who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.

The Request of James and John

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask."

"What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.

They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory."

"You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized in the baptism I am baptized with?"

"We can," they answered.

Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, ⁴⁰but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared."

When the ten heard about this, they became resentful with James and John. ⁴²Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ⁴³Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. ⁴⁵For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as ransom for many.

Blind Bartimaeus Receives His Sight

⁴⁶Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (that is, the son of Timaeus), was sitting by the roadside begging. ⁴⁷When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

"Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'

Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."

So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." ⁵⁰Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him.

The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see."

⁵²"Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

The Triumphal Entry

11 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, ²saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.'"

⁴They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, ⁵some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" ⁶They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. ⁷When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. ⁸Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. ⁹Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

"Hosanna!"^a

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"^b

¹⁰"Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!"

"Hosanna in the highest!"

¹¹Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

Jesus Clears the Temple

¹²The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. ¹³Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. ¹⁴Then he said to the tree, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard him say it.

¹⁵On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, ¹⁶and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts.

11:9 Short-lived Acceptance

During much of his ministry, Jesus hushed up news about his miraculous power and his identity as the true Messiah. But in this rare scene, large crowds clearly recognized him as the Messiah and honored him as such. The next few chapters, however, demonstrate how tragically short-lived public acceptance proved to be.

^a Hosanna was a Hebrew word meaning "Save!" which became an exclamation of praise, also in verse 10

^b Psalm 118:25,26

17 And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not writ-

1. 1990年12月22日

So we have made it 2 days of resters &

1. The first step is to identify the problem or goal. This involves understanding the current situation and what needs to be achieved.

11. The number of people who are not in the club is 11.

The Withered Fig Tree

一、王明、李德、博古等人在“左”倾冒险主义路线指导下，使中国革命遭受了严重损失。

[illegible]

The Authority of Jesus Christ

一、自一九四九年十月一日，即中華人民共和國成立以來，我國人民在
 中國共產黨領導下，已經取得了新民主主義革命的勝利，建立了人民民主
 專政的國家，並開始了社會主義建設。在過去幾年裏，我們已經取得了
 巨大的成就，國民經濟得到了迅速的恢復和發展，科學技術事業也取得了
 長足的進步。但是，我們不能不承認，我們的工作還存在著許多缺點和
 錯誤，我們必須認真總結經驗教訓，進一步發揚成績，克服缺點，使
 我們的工作做得更好。

[illegible][illegible]

1. The American people are not aware of the fact that the United States is a free country.

THE FUTURE OF THE TOWNSHIP

12

The band once had to spend a lot of money to buy the rights to the song. They were

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION
455 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

[illegible]

THE STATE OF TEXAS, COUNTY OF DALLAS.

DATE OF ISSUE

THE ...

DATE : 8 SEP 1965

[illegible]

Paying Taxes to Caesar

[illegible]

1. The first step is to identify the problem. This involves understanding the current situation and the goals that need to be achieved.

1. 凡在本行开立存款账户的自然人，均可向本行申请开立个人通知存款。
 2. 个人通知存款分为一天通知存款和七天通知存款两种。
 3. 个人通知存款的利率按照本行公布的个人通知存款利率执行。
 4. 个人通知存款的起存金额为人民币50,000元。
 5. 个人通知存款的存期分为一天和七天两种。
 6. 个人通知存款的支取方式为凭密码支取。
 7. 个人通知存款的提前支取按照本行规定的提前支取规则办理。
 8. 个人通知存款的利息按照本行规定的利率计算。
 9. 个人通知存款的开户、销户、支取、提前支取等手续按照本行规定办理。
 10. 个人通知存款的其他事项按照本行相关规定办理。

1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2679, 26

... "Great! Jesus was
in Caesar's and in God's and in God's."

And they were amazed at how

Marriage at the Resurrection

[illegible]

12.15 Opposition Heads Up

1. What is the main purpose of the text?
 2. What are the main points of the text?
 3. What are the main arguments of the text?
 4. What are the main conclusions of the text?
 5. What are the main recommendations of the text?
 6. What are the main findings of the text?
 7. What are the main implications of the text?
 8. What are the main limitations of the text?
 9. What are the main strengths of the text?
 10. What are the main weaknesses of the text?

10 "At the resurrection^a whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?"

11 Jesus replied, "Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? 12 When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. 13 Now about the dead rising

have you not read in the book of Moses, in the ¹⁴ story of the bush, how God said to him, 'I am ¹⁵ the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?' 16 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!"

The Greatest Commandment

17 One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

18 The most important one," answered Jesus, is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.' 19 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 20 The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

21 "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. 22 To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

23 When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

Whose Son Is the Christ?

24 While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, "How is it that the teachers of the law say that the Christ^b is the son of David? 25 David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared:

The Lord said to my Lord:
Sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies
under your feet."^c

26 David himself calls him 'Lord.' How then can he be his son?"

27 The large crowd listened to him with delight.

28 As he taught, Jesus said, "Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted in the marketplaces, 29 and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. 30 They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely."

The Widow's Offering

31 Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich

people threw in large amounts. 32 But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins,^d worth only a fraction of a penny.

33 Calling his disciples to him Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 34 They all gave out of their wealth, but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on."

Signs of the End of the Age

13 As he was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!"

14 "Do you see all these great buildings?" replied Jesus. "Not one stone here will be left on another, every one will be thrown down."

15 As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?"

16 Jesus said to them: "Watch out that no one deceives you. 17 Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive many. 18 When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 19 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.

20 "You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. 21 And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. 22 Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

23 "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. 24 All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

25 "When you see 'the abomination that causes desolation'^e standing where it^f does not belong—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 26 Let no one on the roof of his house go down or enter the house to take anything out. 27 Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. 28 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! 29 Pray that this will not take place in winter, 30 because those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now—and never to be equaled again. 31 If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them. 32 At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. 33 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect—if

^a Some manuscripts resurrection, when men rise from the dead.

^b26 Exodus 3:6

^c29 Or the Lord our God is one Lord

^d27 64

^e31 Lev 19:18

^f33 21 Or Messiah

^g36 Psalm 110:1

^h42 Greek two leptas

ⁱ42 Greek kodrantes

^j42 27, 11 31, 12 11

^k44 Or he; also in verse 29

that were possible. ²⁵So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.

²⁶"But in those days, following that distress,

"the sun will be darkened,

and the moon will not give its light,

²⁷the stars will fall from the sky,

and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."^a

²⁸"At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. ²⁹And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

³⁰"Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. ³¹Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. ³²I tell you the truth, this generation^b will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ³³Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

The Day and Hour Unknown

³⁴"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁵Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. ³⁶It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

³⁷"Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. ³⁸If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. ³⁹What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"

Jesus Anointed at Bethany

14 Now the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill him. ²"But not during the Feast," they said, "or the people may riot."

³While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.

⁴Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? ⁵It could have been sold for more than a year's

wages^c and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly.

⁶"Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. ⁷She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. ⁸I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

⁹Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. ¹⁰They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

The Lord's Supper

¹²On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

¹³So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. ¹⁴Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' ¹⁵He will show you a large upper room furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."

¹⁶The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

¹⁷When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. ¹⁸While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me."

¹⁹They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely not I?"

²⁰"It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me. ²¹The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

²²While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."

²³Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it.

²⁴"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. ²⁵"I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of

14:1 Festival Time in Jerusalem

The Passover, celebrating the Jews' deliverance from Egypt, was one of the high points of the Jewish calendar. All males older than twelve went to Jerusalem for the holiday. Thus the city was filled with hundreds of thousands of pilgrims at the time of Jesus' death.

14:22 The Origin of the Lord's Supper

Virtually all Christian churches celebrate the practice of Communion (Mass, Eucharist, or Lord's Supper) in some form. Matthew, Mark, and Luke each record the original Passover meal when Jesus instituted the practice.

^{a25} Isaiah 13:10, 34:4

^{b30} Or race

^{c33} Some manuscripts alert and pray

^{d5} Greek than three hundred denarii

^{e24} Some manuscripts the new

"...until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God."

When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

"You will all fall away," Jesus told them, "for it is written:

"I will strike the shepherd,

Zech. 13:7. ³⁰ Some early manuscripts do not have *there*.

and the sheep will be scattered."

²⁸ But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."

²⁹ Peter declared, "Even if all fall away, I will not."

³⁰ "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice^b you yourself will disown me three times."

³¹ But Peter insisted emphatically, "Even if I

INSIGHT

The Day of Execution

The disciples were totally unprepared

And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" 15:39

Few events in Jesus' life—the birth in a manger, the death on a cross—can become so familiar that we miss the point. They're too close to us. In thinking about them, it sometimes helps to let the mind wander and search out whole new images.

A Bible study group was asked to suggest word images that might apply to Jesus. Common ones surfaced first: a Shepherd, a Lamb, a Door. Then out of nowhere came a wildly different one: a firework in reverse.^a Everyone turned, puzzled, to the middle-aged woman who had suggested it.

"Think about it," she said. "Fireworks explode with brilliant, dazzling colors and loud noises yet they start out in an ordinary-looking paper package. When God became a man, the opposite happened. The Creator of everything in the universe confined himself to an unimpressive human package."

When the Impossible Happened

No event in the life of Jesus fits the woman's metaphor better than his execution in Jerusalem. The idea was inconceivable, even to Jesus' closest followers. The Son of God die? How could this be?

Could the Creator of all things succumb to his creation? Disciples who had slogged through every other confrontation by his side now forsook him. It made no sense for Jesus, the Messiah, to die.

Not until later would other thoughts click into place: memories of Old Testament customs that hauntingly pointed to a cross, prophecies of a Messiah who was King but also a Suffering Servant (see Isaiah 53). To die was, after all, the central reason Jesus came to earth; he had insisted on that from the beginning.

The Most Important Week

Jesus' last week so impressed the disciples that the four chroniclers of his life, including Mark, devoted one-third of their space to that final week in Jerusalem. By the time they wrote it down, of course, they could see his death in a new light, as a mournful prelude to the greatest miracle of all, his resurrection.

Even so, nothing could erase the impact of those fear-filled, final days. When the eerie darkness had lifted and Jesus had breathed his last, the disciples had learned something profound about God, and about love.

Dorothy Sayers put it this way. "Whatever game He is playing with His creation, He has kept His own rules and played fair. He can exact nothing from man that He has not exacted from Himself. He has Himself gone through the whole of human experience, from the trivial irritations of family life and the cramping restriction of hard work and lack of money to the worst horrors of pain and humiliation—defeat, despair, and death. When He was a man, He played the man. He was born in poverty and died in disgrace and thought it well worthwhile" (from *Christian Letters to a Post-Christian World*).

At no other point in history did the fireworks appear so powerless as the day Jesus died. They had not yet been lit.

Life Questions Put yourself in the disciples' place. How would you have responded to news of Jesus' death? Would you have believed in him still?

have to die with you. I will never disown you." And all the others said the same.

Gethsemane

³³They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." ³⁴He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. ³⁵My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death, he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."

³⁶Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. ³⁷"Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

³⁸Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. Simon, he said to Peter, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.

³⁹Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.

⁴⁰Returning the third time, he said to them, Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴¹Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!

Jesus Arrested

⁴²Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.

⁴³Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard." ⁴⁴Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him. ⁴⁵The men seized Jesus and arrested him. ⁴⁶Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

⁴⁷"Am I leading a rebellion," said Jesus, "that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled." ⁴⁸Then everyone deserted him and fled.

⁴⁹A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, ⁵⁰he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.

Before the Sanhedrin

⁵¹They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, elders and teachers of the law came together. ⁵²Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire.

⁵³The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. ⁵⁴Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree.

⁵⁵Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: ⁵⁶"We heard him say, 'I will destroy this man-made temple and in three days will build another, not made by man.'"⁵⁷Yet even then their testimony did not agree.

⁵⁸Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" ⁵⁹But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.

Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?"

⁶⁰"I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

⁶¹The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked. ⁶²"You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?"

They all condemned him as worthy of death. ⁶³Then some began to spit at him, they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, "Prophecy!" And the guards took him and beat him.

Peter Disowns Jesus

⁶⁴While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. ⁶⁵When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him.

"You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus," she said.

⁶⁶But he denied it. "I don't know or understand what you're talking about," he said, and went out into the entryway.⁶⁷

⁶⁸When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, "This fellow is one of them." ⁶⁹Again he denied it.

After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean."

⁷⁰He began to call down curses on himself, and he swore to them, "I don't know this man you're talking about."

⁷¹Immediately the rooster crowed the second time.⁷² Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows twice, you will disown me three times." And he broke down and wept.

Jesus Before Pilate

15 Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and

14:51 The Anonymous Author?

Many scholars believe the young man in this verse was none other than Mark himself, author of this Gospel. Often, in ancient days, an author wouldn't use his name, but would plant a clue such as this (see John 21:24).

³³ Or: Anonymous author

⁶¹ Or: Messiah

⁶⁸ Some early manuscripts: entryway and the rooster crowed

⁷² Some early

⁷² Some early manuscripts do not have twice.

the whole Sanhedrin, reached a decision. They bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate.

"Are you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate. Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied.

The chief priests accused him of many things. So again Pilate asked him, "Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of."

But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed.

"Now it was the custom at the Feast to release a prisoner whom the people requested. ⁷A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising. ⁸The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did.

"Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate, ¹⁰knowing it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. ¹¹But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead.

What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked them.

"Crucify him!" they shouted.

"Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

¹⁶The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. ¹⁷They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. ¹⁸And they began to call out to him, "Hail, king of the Jews!" ¹⁹Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. ²⁰And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

The Crucifixion

²¹A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross. ²²They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull). ²³Then they offered him wine mixed with

myrrh, but he did not take it. ²⁴And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get.

²⁵It was the third hour when they crucified him. ²⁶The written notice of the charge against him read, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ²⁷They crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left. ²⁸Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, come down from the cross and save yourself!"

³¹In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him, saying, "He saved others; he saved himself." They said, "but he can't save himself." ³²Let this Christ, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

The Death of Jesus

³³At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. ³⁴And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*—which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

³⁵When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah."

³⁶One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said.

³⁷With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.

³⁸The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. ³⁹And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

⁴⁰Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. ⁴¹In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there.

The Burial of Jesus

⁴²It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath). So as evening approached, ⁴³Joseph of Armathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. ⁴⁴Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died. ⁴⁵When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph. ⁴⁶So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. ⁴⁷Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where he was laid.

15:1 Appeal for a Death Penalty

Roman law granted the Jews many freedoms, including the right to their Jewish court system, the Sanhedrin. However, the Sanhedrin had no authority to order the death penalty. Seeking that sentence, Jesus' opponents sent him to Pilate, the Roman governor.

²⁷ Some manuscripts left, ²⁸and the scripture was fulfilled which says, "He was counted with the unclean ones." (Isaiah 53:12) Messiah ³⁴ Psalm 22:1 ³⁹ Some manuscripts do not have heard his cry and ³⁹ Or a son

The Resurrection

16 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. ²Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb ³and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

⁴But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. ⁵As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen. He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

16:1 A Late Anointing

Jewish rules forbade handling dead bodies during the Sabbath. Because Jesus died during the Sabbath celebration, his friends and relatives couldn't properly embalm and prepare his body. They returned to the tomb later for this purpose, only to find the greatest surprise of their lives.

16:7 . . . and Peter

The messenger who informed the women about Jesus' resurrection pointedly asked them to tell "his disciples and Peter," singling out the disciple who had vehemently denied Jesus. John 21 records a further, moving scene in which Jesus specifically reinstated Peter.

⁸Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

[The most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-20.]

⁹When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. ¹⁰She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. ¹¹When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.

¹²Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. ¹³These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either.

¹⁴Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.

¹⁵He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. ¹⁶Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; ¹⁸they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

¹⁹After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. ²⁰Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

LUKE

INTRODUCTION

Like a Joy-filled Musical

Something was brewing on planet Earth

But the angel said to them: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people." 2:10

Although Luke covers the same basic territory as Matthew and Mark, he gives away his own slant in the very first chapters. Matthew begins with a formal family genealogy, Mark opens with a historical Jesus scene. In contrast, Luke describes a hearty celebration.

The way Luke tells of events surrounding Jesus' birth resembled a joy-filled musical. Characters crowded into the scene: a white-haired great uncle, an astonished virgin, a tottery old prophetess. They all smiled broadly and, as likely as not, burst into song.

Once Mary had recovered from the shock of seeing an angel, she let loose with a beautiful song. The old priest Zechariah broke nine months of muteness with a rousing poem, and even the unborn John the Baptist kicked for joy inside his mother's womb (1:44). When Jesus finally made an entrance—in an inconspicuous stable, the sky filled with singing angels. Clearly, something was brewing on planet Earth.

History Split in Two

You get the feeling when you read his account that Luke wanted to capture in words the spirit of great joy that the angel predicted (2:10). Among dreary, defeated villagers in a remote corner of the Roman Empire, something climactically good was bursting out.

The author tells us (1:1-4) that he researched many accounts of Jesus' life. Intimate details in these first two chapters show he relied heavily on eyewitnesses, for no other Gospel writer picked up so many facts. Careful attention to detail and an undergirding tone of joy characterize Luke's book.

Jesus' birth literally split history into two parts, we memorialize the event whenever we write a date. The book of Luke takes us back to the world before there was an A.D. or B.C., when Jesus' life was just beginning.

Even now, almost 2,000 years later, the commemoration of Jesus' birth still gives cause for joy. We eat better during the Christmas season, buy gifts for others, donate to charity, and sing more often. Our feelings of celebration are gentle aftershocks, reminders of the remarkable moment when God became a man and lived on earth.

How to Read Luke

Luke probably did not know Jesus personally. But as a dedicated convert in the early church, he accompanied the apostle Paul on missionary trips. In three of his letters, Paul refers to Luke with great affection.

As he mentions in his introduction, Luke eventually saw the need to draw up a carefully researched account of the life of Christ. Many accounts of varying quality existed then, but Luke set out to interview eyewitnesses and compose a thoughtful summary. His book shows thoroughness and detail. It starts before Jesus' birth, and ends with his ascension into heaven.

You should find Luke a very appealing book to read. Luke was a gifted writer, and the stories he records have won their place among the classics of literature: the Good Samaritan, the Lost Son, the Rich Man and Lazarus. If Mark is a Gospel of action, Luke is a Gospel of relationships. It contains very good character descriptions.

Look for the many different ethnic, religious, economic, and social groups in Luke. Think of the diverse groups in your country. How do you think each of them would respond to Jesus in the flesh?

Note especially two large sections of Luke that present material found nowhere else: chapters 1-2 and chapters 10-19.

PLANS FOR READING LUKE

PLAN 1: An Overview of Luke in 8 Days

Over the next eight days, read from the material that's found in no other Gospel but Luke's.

- ☐ Day 1 Read the Introduction to Luke and then Luke's account in chapter 1 of the events preceding Jesus' birth.
- ☐ Day 2. Read the familiar Christmas passage, chapter 2.
- ☐ Day 3. Read chapter 10, which includes the parable of the Good Samaritan
- ☐ Day 4. Read chapter 12, in which Jesus draws a strong contrast between those who trust him, no matter how poor, and haughty rich people
- ☐ Day 5. Read the famous parables, or short stories, that Jesus tells in chapter 15.
- ☐ Day 6 Read chapter 16's two familiar stories, the shrewd manager and the rich man and Lazarus.
- ☐ Day 7. Read chapter 18.
- ☐ Day 8. How did Jesus' disciples react to his resurrection? Read a good description in chapter 24.

PLAN 2: All of Luke in 24 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16
☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24

Introduction

1 Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled^a among us, ²just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. ³Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold

⁵In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. ⁶Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly. ⁷But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren; and they were both well along in years

⁸Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, ⁹he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshippers were praying outside.

¹¹Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense.

¹²When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. ¹³But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. ¹⁴He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, ¹⁵for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth. ¹⁶Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. ¹⁷And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

¹⁸Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years."

¹⁹The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. ²⁰And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time."

²¹Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. ²²When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.

^a1 Or been surely believed

^b15 Or from his mother's womb

²³When his time of service was completed, he returned home. ²⁴After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. ²⁵"The Lord has done this for me," she said. "In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people."

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

²⁶In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. ³¹You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

³³"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁴The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called^a the Son of God. ³⁵Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. ³⁷For nothing is impossible with God."

³⁸"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

Mary Visits Elizabeth

³⁹At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴²In a loud voice she exclaimed:

Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!"

Mary's Song

⁴⁶And Mary said:

My soul glorifies the Lord

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸for he has been mindful

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me
blessed,

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me—

holy is his name

⁵⁰His mercy extends to those who fear him,
from generation to generation

⁵¹He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in
their inmost thoughts.

⁵²He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.

⁵³He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful

⁵⁵to Abraham and his descendants forever,
even as he said to our fathers."

⁵⁶Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.

The Birth of John the Baptist

⁵⁷When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.

⁵⁹On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, ⁶⁰but his mother spoke up and said, "No! He is to be called John."

⁶¹They said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who has that name."

⁶²Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. ⁶³He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, "His name is John." ⁶⁴Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue was loosed, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵The neighbors were all filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. ⁶⁶Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, "What then is this child going to be?" For the Lord's hand was with him.

Zechariah's Song

⁶⁷His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

⁶⁸"Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,
because he has come and has redeemed his
people.

⁶⁹He has raised up a horn^b of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David

⁷⁰(as he said through his holy prophets of long
ago),

⁷¹salvation from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us—

⁷²to show mercy to our fathers

and to remember his holy covenant,

⁷³ the oath he swore to our father Abraham:

⁷⁴to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,

and to enable us to serve him without fear

⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before him all
our days.

⁷⁶And you, my child, will be called a prophet of
the Most High;

for you will go on before the Lord to prepare
the way for him

⁷⁷to give his people the knowledge of salvation

^a 35 Or So the child to be born will be called holy

^b 69 Horn here symbolizes strength

through the forgiveness of their sins,
⁷⁸because of the tender mercy of our God,
 by which the rising sun will come to us from
 heaven
⁷⁹to shine on those living in darkness
 and in the shadow of death,
 to guide our feet into the path of peace."

⁸⁰And the child grew and became strong in
 spirit, and he lived in the desert until he appeared
 publicly to Israel

The Birth of Jesus

2 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree
 that a census should be taken of the entire
 Roman world. ³(This was the first census that took
 place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.)
⁴And everyone went to his own town to register.

⁵So Joseph also went up from the town of Naza-
 reth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of
 David, because he belonged to the house and line
 of David. ⁶He went there to register with Mary,
 who was pledged to be married to him and was
 expecting a child. ⁷While they were there, the time
 came for the baby to be born, ⁸and she gave birth to
 her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths
 and placed him in a manger, because there was no
 room for them in the inn.

The Shepherds and the Angels

⁹And there were shepherds living out in the
 fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at
 night. ¹⁰An angel of the Lord appeared to them,
 and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and
 they were terrified. ¹¹But the angel said to them,
 "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great
 joy that will be for all the people. ¹²Today in the
 town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is
 Christ^a the Lord. ¹³This will be a sign to you: You
 will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a
 manger."

¹⁴Suddenly a great company of the heavenly
 host appeared with the angel, praising God and
 saying,

¹⁵"Glory to God in the highest,
 and on earth peace to men on whom his
 favor rests."

¹⁶When the angels had left them and gone into
 heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's

go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has hap-
 pened, which the Lord has told us about

¹⁷So they hurried off and found Mary and Jos-
 eph and the baby, who was lying in the manger.
¹⁸When they had seen him, they spread the word
 concerning what had been told them about this
 child. ¹⁹And all who heard it were amazed at what
 the shepherds said to them. ²⁰But Mary treasured
 up all these things and pondered them in her
 heart. ²¹The shepherds returned, glorifying and
 praising God for all the things they had heard and
 seen, which were just as they had been told.

Jesus Presented in the Temple

²²On the eighth day, when it was time to circum-
 cise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel
 had given him before he had been conceived.

²³When the time of their purification according
 to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph
 and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to
 the Lord ²⁴(as it is written in the Law of the Lord,
 "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the
 Lord"^b), ²⁵and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with
 what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves
 or two young pigeons."^c

²⁶Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Sim-
 eon, who was righteous and devout. He was wait-
 ing for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit
 was upon him. ²⁷It had been revealed to him by the
 Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had
 seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁸Moved by the Spirit, he
 went into the temple courts. When the parents
 brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the
 custom of the Law required, ²⁹Simeon took him in
 his arms and praised God, saying,

³⁰"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
 you now dismiss^d your servant in peace.

³¹For my eyes have seen your salvation,

³²which you have prepared in the sight of all
 people,

³³a light for revelation to the Gentiles
 and for glory to your people Israel."

³⁴The child's father and mother marveled at
 what was said about him. ³⁵Then Simeon blessed
 them and said to Mary, his mother, "This child is
 destined to cause the falling and rising of many in
 Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against,
³⁶so that the thoughts of many hearts will be re-
 vealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul
 too."

³⁷There was also a prophetess, Anna, the
 daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was
 very old; she had lived with her husband seven
 years after her marriage, ³⁸and then was a widow
 until she was eighty-four.^e She never left the tem-
 ple but worshiped night and day, fasting and pray-
 ing. ³⁹Coming up to them at that very moment
 she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child
 to all who were looking forward to the redemption
 of Jerusalem.

⁴⁰When Joseph and Mary had done everything
 required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to
 Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴¹And the

2:1 Dating by Emperors

Among biblical writers, only Luke dated the events
 he wrote about by referring to Roman emperors.
 He had determined (1:1-4) to write a thorough,
 factual account of Jesus' life, which included
 setting the events in historical context. Because of
 the Roman census mentioned here, Mary had to
 travel from her hometown in a very advanced state
 of pregnancy. As a result, the Messiah was born in
 Bethlehem, fulfilling an ancient prophecy.

^a Or Messiah. The Christ (Greek) and the Messiah (Hebrew) both mean the Anointed One, also in verse 26.

^b Lev. 12:8.

^c29 Or promised; now dismissed.

^d37 Or widow for eighty-four years.

^e23 Exodus

child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

The Boy Jesus at the Temple

⁴¹Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. ⁴²When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. ⁴³After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. ⁴⁴Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

⁴⁹"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁵¹Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵²And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

3 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene—²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert. ³He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁴As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet:

A voice of one calling in the desert,
Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.
⁵Every valley shall be filled in,
every mountain and hill made low.
The crooked roads shall become straight,
the rough ways smooth.
⁶And all mankind will see God's salvation.' "^a

2:41 Jesus' Childhood

Most Christmas pageants rely heavily on Luke because of his thoroughness in reporting the facts of Jesus' birth. And only Luke recorded the brief glimpses of Jesus' early years given in this chapter. For this reason, many scholars believe Luke must have interviewed Mary, mother of Jesus, during his investigations into Jesus' life.

⁷John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ⁹The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

¹⁰"What should we do then?" the crowd asked.

¹¹John answered, "The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same."

¹²Tax collectors also came to be baptized. "Teacher," they asked, "what should we do?"

¹³"Don't collect any more than you are required to," he told them.

¹⁴Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?"

He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely—be content with your pay."

¹⁵The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ.^b ¹⁶John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." ¹⁸And with many other words John exhorted the people and preached the good news to them.

¹⁹But when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and all the other evil things he had done, ²⁰Herod added this to them all: He locked John up in prison.

The Baptism and Genealogy of Jesus

²¹When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened ²²and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

²³Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph,

the son of Heli, ²⁴the son of Matthat,
the son of Levi, the son of Melki,
the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph,
²⁵the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos,
the son of Nahum, the son of Esli,
the son of Naggai, ²⁶the son of Maath,
the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein,
the son of Josech, the son of Joda,
²⁷the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa,
the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel,
the son of Neri, ²⁸the son of Melki,
the son of Addi, the son of Cosam,
the son of Elmadam, the son of Er,
²⁹the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer,
the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat,

^a6 Isaiah 40:3-5

^b15 Or Messiah

^c16 Or in

the son of Levi, ³¹the son of Hinnon,
 the son of Judah, the son of Joseph,
 the son of Jonan, the son of Eliakim,
³²the son of Melea, the son of Menna,
 the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan,
 the son of David, ³³the son of Jesse,
 the son of Obed, the son of Boaz,
 the son of Salmon, ³⁴the son of Nahshon,
³⁵the son of Amminadab, the son of Ram,
 the son of Hezron, the son of Perez,
 the son of Judah, ³⁶the son of Jacob,
 the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham,
 the son of Terah, the son of Nahor,
³⁷the son of Serug, the son of Reu,
 the son of Peleg, the son of Eber,
 the son of Shelah, ³⁸the son of Cainan,
 the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem,
 the son of Noah, the son of Lamech,
³⁹the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch,
 the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel,
 the son of Kenan, ⁴⁰the son of Enosh,
 the son of Seth, the son of Adam,
 the son of God

The Temptation of Jesus

4 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

¹The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

²Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone.'"

³The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁴And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. ⁵So if you worship me, it will all be yours."

⁶Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

⁷The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. ⁸For it is written:

" 'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully;

⁹they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone ' "

3:38 A Gospel for the Gentiles

Matthew's Gospel traced Jesus' roots back to Abraham, father of the Jewish race. But Luke, probably the only Gentile writer of the New Testament, emphasized that Jesus' good news was for all people, not just the Jews. In keeping with that purpose, he carried Jesus' lineage all the way back to the first man, Adam.

¹⁰Jesus answered, "It says: 'Do not put the Lord your God in the test.'"

¹¹When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

¹²Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. ¹³He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

¹⁴He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. ¹⁵The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

¹⁶"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners

and recovery of sight for the blind,

to release the oppressed,

¹⁷to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

¹⁸Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, ¹⁹and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

²⁰All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked.

²¹Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself.' Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum."

²²"I tell you the truth," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. ²³I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years, and there was a severe famine throughout the land. ²⁴Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. ²⁵And there were many in Israel with leprosy¹ in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian."

²⁶All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. ²⁷They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the

4:26 Hard Words for the Jews

Luke's book stresses the universal appeal of the gospel. In both of these Old Testament stories (the Zarephath widow and Naaman), God sent a prophet to perform a miracle for foreigners (non-Jews). Such an emphasis scandalized the Jews, who saw themselves as God's uniquely chosen people. Jesus' words proved so inflammatory that a mob attempted to kill him. As far as is known, Jesus never returned to his home territory of Nazareth.

³² Some early manuscripts Sala

widely. ⁴ Deut. 8:3

³³ Some manuscripts Amminadab, the son of Adman, the son of Arnu, other manuscripts vary

³⁴ Deut. 6:13

³⁵ Psalm 91:11,12

³⁶ Deut. 6:16

³⁷ Isaah 61:1,2

³⁸ The Greek

word was used for various diseases affecting the skin—not necessarily leprosy

hill on which the town was built in order to throw him down the hill. But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

Jesus Drives Out an Evil Spirit

3 Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath began to teach the people. 4 They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority.

5 In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an evil spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice: 6 "Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"

7 "Be quiet!" Jesus said sternly. "Come out of him!" Then the demon threw the man down before him and came out without injuring him.

8 All the people were amazed and said to each

other, "What is this teaching? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!" 9 And the news about him spread throughout the surrounding area.

Jesus Heals Many

38 Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. 39 So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them.

40 When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them.

41 Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he

INSIGHT

A Physician Looks at the Poor

The surprising emphasis of an upper-class writer

"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick." 5:31

A great doctor once compared his professional duties to working at the complaint section of a large organization. "All through medical school I studied the body's wonderful engineering. A healthy body is perfect—absolutely beautiful to observe. But in practice I spend my time treating people whose bodies don't work right. I hear only complaints. After a while, it's easy to lose perspective."

Luke, a physician, knew firsthand about sick and suffering people; he, too, heard their daily complaints. Yet somehow he never became callous. In fact, his Gospel focuses on Jesus' ministry to society's "complaint section": the poor, the sick, and the neglected.

Jesus Announces His Mission

In Luke, even Mary's opening song strikes a chord for the poor and hungry (1:46-55). Using his favorite title for Jesus ("Son of Man") 80 times, Luke reveals him as a true servant of all humanity.

Luke 4 shows Jesus boldly declaring why he came to earth. He had just resisted temptations of wealth and power, and returned from the desert to his hometown. There Jesus, a local village boy, announced his unique mission from God: to preach good news to the poor, to free prisoners, heal the blind, and release the oppressed (4:18-19).

With little editorial comment, Luke follows Jesus from town to town. Jesus avoided such fashionable places as the resort town of Tiberias. He stayed near the farming communities and fishing villages clustered around the Sea of Galilee, serving the needs of humble people.

Reaction to Jesus varied. Naturally, the sick clamored for his attention, begging for healing. Even a few powerful people believed in him, including a respected Roman centurion and a synagogue ruler. But the religious leaders constantly challenged his actions, and his own neighbors angrily chased him out of town.

An Unlikely Friend of the Poor

Luke skillfully brings his characters to life in vignettes. Learned and sophisticated, he uses the finest Greek of any Gospel writer; but, ironically, he focuses mainly on the poor and the outcast. Women, largely ignored by ancient historians, play a large role. Luke introduces 13 women mentioned in no other Gospel. He also shows a delight and appreciation for children.

It may seem strange that Luke, by education and profession a member of the upper class, emerged as a champion of the poor and the oppressed. Evidently, Jesus' message had affected him deeply. As Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (5:31, 32)

Life Questions As Luke tells it, Jesus threatened the rich and powerful but appealed to the poor and outcast. If Jesus came today, how would those two groups in our society respond to him?

rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ.^a

⁴²At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. ⁴³But he said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." ⁴⁴And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.^b

The Calling of the First Disciples

5 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret,^c with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, ²he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. ³He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

⁴When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down^d the nets for a catch."

⁵Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

⁶When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break.

⁷So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

⁸When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" ⁹For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, ¹⁰and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." ¹¹So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

The Man With Leprosy

¹²While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy.^e When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

¹³Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" And immediately the leprosy left him.

¹⁴Then Jesus ordered him, "Don't tell anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them."

¹⁵Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. ¹⁶But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Jesus Heals a Paralytic

¹⁷One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was

present for him to heal the sick. ¹⁸Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. ¹⁹When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

²⁰When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."

²¹The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

²²Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? ²³Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? ²⁴But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . ." He said to the paralytic, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." ²⁵Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. ²⁶Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, "We have seen remarkable things today."

The Calling of Levi

²⁷After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, ²⁸and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.

²⁹Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. ³⁰But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"

³¹Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ³²I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Jesus Questioned About Fasting

³³They said to him, "John's disciples often fast and pray, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours go on eating and drinking."

³⁴Jesus answered, "Can you make the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? ³⁵But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast."

³⁶He told them this parable: "No one tears a patch from a new garment and sews it on an old one. If he does, he will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old. ³⁷And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. ³⁸No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins. ³⁹And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for he says, 'The old is better.'"

Lord of the Sabbath

6 One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and his disciples began to pick some heads of grain, rub them in their hands and

^a41 Or Messiah plural

^b44 Or the land of the Jews; some manuscripts Galilee

^c1 That is, Sea of Galilee

^d4 The Greek verb is

^e12 The Greek word was used for various diseases affecting the skin—not necessarily leprosy

eat the kernels. ²⁵Some of the Pharisees asked, "Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"

Jesus answered them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴He entered the house of God, and taking the consecrated bread, he ate what is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions." ⁵Then Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

⁶On another Sabbath he went into the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was shriveled. ⁷The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath. ⁸But Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Get up and stand in front of everyone." So he got up and stood there.

Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?"

¹⁰He looked around at them all, and then said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He did so, and his hand was completely restored. ¹¹But they were furious and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus.

The Twelve Apostles

¹²One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. ¹³When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: ¹⁴Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, ¹⁵Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, ¹⁶Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

Blessings and Woes

¹⁷He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by evil spirits were cured, ¹⁹and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.

6:9 When Love and Rules Conflict

Luke's vignettes on Jesus and the Sabbath (see also 13:10-17, demonstrate the legalism Jesus opposed. Jews of his day observed very strict rules governing what could be done on the Sabbath. Religious leaders became furious at Jesus for "breaking" the traditions. His crime? Healing people on the Sabbath. Jesus refused to let traditions interfere with compassion for needy people.

²⁰Looking at his disciples, he said:

"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

²¹Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied.

Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

²²Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.

²³"Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the prophets.

²⁴"But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.

²⁵Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry.

Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep.

²⁶Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets.

Love for Enemies

²⁷"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ²⁹If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. ³⁰Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. ³¹Do to others as you would have them do to you.

³²"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. ³³And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. ³⁴And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. ³⁵But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. ³⁶Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Judging Others

³⁷"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. ³⁸Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

³⁹He also told them this parable: "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? ⁴⁰A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.

⁴¹"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴²How can you say to your

brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

A Tree and Its Fruit

⁴³"No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. ⁴⁴Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thorn-bushes, or grapes from briers. ⁴⁵The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.

The Wise and Foolish Builders

⁴⁶"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? ⁴⁷I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. ⁴⁸He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. ⁴⁹But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

The Faith of the Centurion

⁷ When Jesus had finished saying all this in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. ² There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. ³ The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. ⁴ When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this, ⁵ because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue." ⁶ So Jesus went with them.

He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. ⁷ That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁸ For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

⁹ When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel." ¹⁰ Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.

Jesus Raises a Widow's Son

¹¹ Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. ¹² As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. ¹³ When

the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry."

¹⁴ Then he went up and touched the coffin and those carrying it stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" ¹⁵ The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

¹⁶ They were all filled with awe and praised God. "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said. "God has come to help his people." ¹⁷ This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country.

Jesus and John the Baptist

¹⁸ John's disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of them, ¹⁹ he sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?"

²⁰ When the men came to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?'"

²¹ At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. ²² So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy^a are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. ²³ Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me."

²⁴ After John's messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? ²⁵ If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear expensive clothes and indulge in luxury are in palaces. ²⁶ But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ²⁷ This is the one about whom it is written:

"I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you."

²⁸ I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

²⁹ (All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been baptized by John. ³⁰ But the Pharisees and experts in the law

7:19 Even John Questioned

The crowds Jesus attracted wavered between enthusiastic support and outright rejection of him. Evidently, some of the controversy even affected John the Baptist, who had baptized Jesus and pronounced him the Son of God (see John 1:34). John, then in prison, sent his disciples to confirm whether Jesus was the true Messiah. Jesus reassured him with a direct reference to the prophecies of Isaiah 61 (see also Luke 4:18-21).

^a17 On the land of the Jews
27 Mai 31

²² The Greek word was used for various diseases affecting the skin—not necessarily leprosy

rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.)

³¹"To what, then, can I compare the people of this generation? What are they like? ³²They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling out to each other

We played the flute for you,
and you did not dance;
we sang a dirge,
and you did not cry.'

³⁴For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.'

³⁴The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and "sinners."' ³⁵But wisdom is proved right by all her children."

Jesus Anointed by a Sinful Woman

³⁶Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. ³⁷When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, ³⁸and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them

³⁹When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

⁴⁰Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you."

"Tell me, teacher," he said

⁴¹"Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii,^a and the other fifty. ⁴²Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

⁴³Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled."

"You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

⁴⁴Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. ⁴⁷Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."

⁴⁸Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

⁴⁹The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

⁵⁰Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

The Parable of the Sower

8 After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, ²and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; ³Joanna the wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod's household, Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

⁴While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable: ⁵"A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. ⁶Some fell on rock, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. ⁸Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown."

When he said this, he called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

⁹His disciples asked him what this parable meant. ¹⁰He said, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that,

"though seeing, they may not see;
though hearing, they may not understand."

¹¹"This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. ¹²Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. ¹³Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. ¹⁴The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. ¹⁵But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop

A Lamp on a Stand

¹⁶"No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light. ¹⁷For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed,

8:3 How Did Jesus Support Himself?

In the Middle East of that day, teachers traveled from town to town, accepting the gifts of appreciative listeners. Luke points out that certain women who had been healed by Jesus helped provide for him. In all, Luke introduces 13 women who do not appear in the other Gospels.

^a 1 A denarius was a coin worth about a day's wages.

^b 10 Isaiah 6:9

and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open. ¹⁸Therefore consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him."

Jesus' Mother and Brothers

¹⁹Now Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him, but they were not able to get near him because of the crowd. ²⁰Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you."

²¹He replied, "My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice."

Jesus Calms the Storm

²²One day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's go over to the other side of the lake." So they got into a boat and set out. ²³As they sailed, he fell asleep. A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger.

²⁴The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we're going to drown!"

He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm. ²⁵"Where is your faith?" he asked his disciples.

In fear and amazement they asked one another, "Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him."

The Healing of a Demon-possessed Man

²⁶They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes,^a which is across the lake from Galilee. ²⁷When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs. ²⁸When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!" ²⁹For Jesus had commanded the evil^b spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places.

³⁰Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

"Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. ³¹And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.

³²A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into them, and he gave them permission. ³³When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

³⁴When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, ³⁵and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in

his right mind; and they were afraid. ³⁶Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured. ³⁷Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So he got into the boat and left.

³⁸The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹"Return home and tell how much God has done for you." So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him.

A Dead Girl and a Sick Woman

⁴⁰Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him. ⁴¹Then a man named Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house ⁴²because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying.

As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. ⁴³And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years,^c but no one could heal her. ⁴⁴She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.

⁴⁵"Who touched me?" Jesus asked.

When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you."

⁴⁶But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me."

⁴⁷Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. ⁴⁸Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace."

⁴⁹While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. "Your daughter is dead," he said. "Don't bother the teacher any more."

⁵⁰Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed."

⁵¹When he arrived at the house of Jairus, he did not let anyone go in with him except Peter, John and James, and the child's father and mother. ⁵²Meanwhile, all the people were waiting and mourning for her. "Stop wailing," Jesus said. "She is not dead but asleep."

⁵³They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. ⁵⁴But he took her by the hand and said, "My child, get up!" ⁵⁵Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat. ⁵⁶Her parents were astonished, but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened.

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

9 When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, ²and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. ³He told them: "Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra

^a26 Some manuscripts Gadarenes, other manuscripts Gergesenes, also in verse 37
years, and she had spent all she had on doctors

^b29 Greek unclean

^c43 Many manuscripts

“Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. If people do not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave town, as a testimony against them.”⁶ So they went out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere.

Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that Jesus was doing. And he was perplexed because some were saying that John had been raised from the dead. Others that Elijah had appeared, and

still others that one of the prophets of long ago had come back to life. But Herod said, “I beheaded John. Who, then, is this I hear such things about?” And he tried to see him.

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

¹⁰When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida, ¹¹but the crowds learned about it

INSIGHT

The Power of a Name

Jesus' time on earth was running out

He who listens to you, listens to me; he who rejects you, rejects me. 10:16

Christians speak in the name of Jesus. But that familiar phrase may not be clear for some of us. It is similar to when someone writes a letter as a representative of a government. The words have more power and effect than if the letter is sent in the name of the writer only.

It is one thing to represent the ruler of your country, it is quite another to represent God and use his name. Yet Jesus had exactly that plan in mind for his followers. He hand-selected simple folk like James and Andrew to bear his name and represent him to the world. In the same way that a governor or president delegates authority to people acting on his behalf, Jesus gave his followers his own authority and power.

Jesus' time on earth was running out. Luke 9:51 records that he “resolutely set out for Jerusalem” on his way to die. Only a few weeks remained for him to train those people who would be left behind to carry his name: “Christ-ians.” Jesus used the time as a crash training course for his followers.

Chapters 9-19 contain many of Jesus' events and sayings found nowhere else in the Bible. First he sent out the Twelve, then 72 others, to announce his message to all who would listen. These chapters convey Jesus' last detailed instructions to his loyal followers.

Final Instructions

Everything about Jesus' life increased in intensity along the treacherous road to Jerusalem. As he taught his small group of disciples, gawking crowds shoved in from all sides, sometimes even trampling each other. From those crowds, Pharisees tossed out hard questions, seeking to trap Jesus.

Jesus did not soften his words in the face of danger. Instead, he emphasized the severe cost of following him. Frequently he talked about prayer, the church's life-giving connection to the Father.

Later, the apostle Paul would say that we, the church, actually form Christ's body in the world. By coming to earth and then leaving, Jesus ushered in a completely new chapter in history. And, as he prepared for departure, he called on his people—the disciples, and us—to represent him. In every sense, we bear his name.

Life Questions What does it mean to pray “in Jesus' name”? How can your life have the power and authority of Jesus behind it?

and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing.

¹²Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, "Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here."

¹³He replied, "You give them something to eat."

They answered, "We have only five loaves of bread and two fish—unless we go and buy food for all this crowd." ¹⁴(About five thousand men were there.)

But he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." ¹⁵The disciples did so, and everybody sat down. ¹⁶Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to set before the people. ¹⁷They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

Peter's Confession of Christ

¹⁸Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say I am?"

¹⁹They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life."

²⁰"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Peter answered, "The Christ^a of God."

²¹Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. ²²And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."

²³Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. ²⁵What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? ²⁶If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. ²⁷I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God."

The Transfiguration

²⁸About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. ²⁹As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. ³⁰Two men, Moses and Elijah, ³¹appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. ³²Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. ³³As the men were leaving Jesus,

Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." (He did not know what he was saying.)

³⁴While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. ³⁵A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen, listen to him." ³⁶When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves, and told no one at that time what they had seen.

The Healing of a Boy With an Evil Spirit

³⁷The next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met him. ³⁸A man in the crowd called out, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. ³⁹A spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams; it throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It scarcely ever leaves him and is destroying him. ⁴⁰I begged your disciples to drive it out, but they could not."

⁴¹"O unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you and put up with you? Bring your son here."

⁴²Even while the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground in a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the evil^b spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father. ⁴³And they were all amazed at the greatness of God.

While everyone was marveling at all that Jesus did, he said to his disciples, ⁴⁴"Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men." ⁴⁵But they did not understand what this meant. It was hidden from them, so that they did not grasp it, and they were afraid to ask him about it.

Who Will Be the Greatest?

⁴⁶An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. ⁴⁷Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. ⁴⁸Then he said to them, "Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For he who is least among you all—he is the greatest."

⁴⁹"Master," said John, "we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us."

⁵⁰"Do not stop him," Jesus said, "for whoever is not against you is for you."

Samaritan Opposition

⁵¹As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. ⁵²And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him. ⁵³But the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. ⁵⁴When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" ⁵⁵But Jesus turned and

^a20 Or Messiah

^b42 Greek unclean

^c54 Some manuscripts them, even as Elijah did

rebuked them, ³⁶and they went to another village.

The Cost of Following Jesus

As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go."

Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place for his head."

He said to another man, "Follow me."

But the man replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me go back and say good-by to my family."

Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

Jesus Sends Out the Seventy-two

10 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. ²He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." ³Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. ⁴Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' ⁶If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. ⁷Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

⁸"When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. ⁹Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.' ¹⁰But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, ¹¹'Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.' ¹²I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

¹³'Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. ¹⁴But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. ¹⁵And you,

Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths."

¹⁶"He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me."

¹⁷The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."

¹⁸He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. ²⁰However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

²¹At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure."

²²"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

²³Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. ²⁴For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it."

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

²⁵On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

²⁶"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

²⁷He answered: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

²⁸"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

²⁹But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

³⁰In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³²So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will

9:59 Burying His Father

The man's request to "let me go and bury my father" didn't necessarily mean that the man's father had just died. Possibly the expression was a figure of speech, a way of saying, "Let me wait until my father has died." Jesus instead stressed the urgency of his mission.

¹ Some manuscripts then. And he said, "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of, for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." And ² Some manuscripts seventy, also in verse 17. ³ Greek Hades. ⁴ Deut. 6:5. ⁵ Lev. 19:18. ⁶ Greek two denarii.

nothing was for any extra expense you may have.

³⁹Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?

⁴⁰The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

At the Home of Martha and Mary

⁴¹As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ⁴²She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. ⁴³But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

⁴⁴"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴⁵but only one thing is needed.^a Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Jesus' Teaching on Prayer

11 One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

²He said to them, "When you pray, say:

Father,^b

hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come.

⁴Give us each day our daily bread.

⁵Forgive us our sins,

for we also forgive everyone who sins
against us.^c

And lead us not into temptation.^d "

⁶Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, ⁷because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.'

⁸Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you

anything.' ⁹I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness, he will get up and give him as much as he needs."

¹⁰So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ¹¹For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

¹²Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? ¹³Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹⁴If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!

Jesus and Beelzebul

¹⁵Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute. When the demon left, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowd was amazed. ¹⁶But some of them said, "By Beelzebul,^e the prince of demons, he is driving out demons." ¹⁷Others tested him by asking for a sign from heaven.

¹⁸Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall. ¹⁹If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? I say this because you claim that I drive out demons by Beelzebul. ²⁰Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. ²¹But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you."

²²"When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. ²³But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up the spoils."

²⁴"He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters."

²⁵"When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through and places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' ²⁶When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. ²⁷Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first."

²⁸As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, "Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you."

²⁹He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."

The Sign of Jonah

³⁰As the crowds increased, Jesus said, "This is a wicked generation. It asks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah. ³¹For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation. ³²The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with

^a42 Some manuscripts but few things are needed—or only one come. May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven deliver us from the evil one. ^b18 Or persistence. ^c11 Some manuscripts for bread will give him a stone or if he asks for Beelzebul or Beelzeboul, also in verses 18 and 19.

^d2 Some manuscripts Our Father in heaven. ^e13 Greek everyone who is indebted to us. ^f11 Some manuscripts for bread will give him a stone or if he asks for Beelzebul or Beelzeboul, also in verses 18 and 19. ^g24 Greek unclean.

^h2 Some manuscripts temptations but. ⁱ13 Greek everyone who is indebted to us. ^j11 Some manuscripts for bread will give him a stone or if he asks for Beelzebul or Beelzeboul, also in verses 18 and 19. ^k24 Greek unclean.

men of this generation and condemn them; for I come from the ends of the earth to listen to your wisdom, and now one greater than you is here. ³²The men of Nineveh will stand up in judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here.

The Lamp of the Body

³³Whoever lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl, instead of putting it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light. ³⁴Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness. ³⁵See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness. ³⁶Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be completely lighted, as when the light of a lamp shines on you."

Six Woes

When Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee invited him to eat with him; so he went in and reclined at the table. ³⁸But the Pharisee, noticing that Jesus did not first wash before the meal, was surprised.

³⁹Then the Lord said to him, "Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. ⁴⁰You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? ⁴¹But give what is inside the dish to the poor, and everything will be clean for you."

⁴²Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.

⁴³Woe to you Pharisees, because you love the most important seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces.

⁴⁴Woe to you, because you are like unmarked graves, which men walk over without knowing.

⁴⁵One of the experts in the law answered him, Teacher, when you say these things, you insult

⁴⁶Jesus replied, "And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them."

⁴⁷Woe to you, because you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your forefathers who killed them. ⁴⁸So you testify that you approve of what

your forefathers did, they killed the prophets, and you build their tombs. ⁴⁹Because of this, God in his wisdom said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute.' ⁵⁰Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world, ⁵¹from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible for it all.

⁵²"Woe to you experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge. You yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering."

⁵³When Jesus left there, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to oppose him fiercely and to besiege him with questions, ⁵⁴waiting to catch him in something he might say.

Warnings and Encouragements

12 Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying: "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. ²There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. ³What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs."

⁴"I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. ⁵But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. ⁶Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. ⁷Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."

⁸"I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. ⁹But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God. ¹⁰And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven."

¹¹"When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, ¹²for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say."

The Parable of the Rich Fool

¹³Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

¹⁴Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" ¹⁵Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

¹⁶And he told them this parable: "The ground of

11:29 Sensation-Seekers

Jesus had no tolerance for people who begged for miraculous signs. Here and elsewhere he declared that no amount of proof would convince those who stubbornly refused to believe in him. In contrast, certain Old Testament Gentiles believed even though they had far less evidence.

¹ thing also in verse 12

²41 Or what you have

³6 Greek two assaris

a certain rich man produced a good crop. ¹⁷He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'

¹⁸"Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry."'

²⁰"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

²¹"This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

Do Not Worry

²²Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. ²³Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. ²⁴Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! ²⁵Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?" ²⁶Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

²⁷"Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ²⁸If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! ²⁹And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. ³⁰For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

³²"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. ³³Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also

Watchfulness

³⁵"Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, ³⁶like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he

comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. ³⁷It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. ³⁸It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night. ³⁹But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁰You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."

⁴¹Peter asked, "Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?"

⁴²The Lord answered, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? ⁴³It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. ⁴⁴I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁵But suppose the servant says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to beat the menservants and maidservants and to eat and drink and get drunk. ⁴⁶The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers

⁴⁷"That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows. ⁴⁸But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

Not Peace but Division

⁴⁹"I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! ⁵⁰But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed! ⁵¹Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. ⁵²From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. ⁵³They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

Interpreting the Times

⁵⁴He said to the crowd: "When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, 'It's going to rain,' and it does. ⁵⁵And when the south wind blows, you say, 'It's going to be hot,' and it is. ⁵⁶Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time?"

⁵⁷"Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right? ⁵⁸As you are going with your adversary to

12:15 When Money Is Useless

Jesus refused to get involved in a family dispute about money. In this statement, he neatly summarized his usual approach to money. He did not condemn the possession of it. But he did warn against putting faith in money to secure the future. The rich man's money did him absolutely no good the night of his death. To emphasize his point, Jesus referred back to King Solomon, the richest man in the Old Testament (verse 27). The lesson: trust in God and his kingdom, and free yourself of worry about money and possessions.

¹⁵ Or single cubit to his height

...try hard to be reconciled to him on
...may drag you off to the judge, and
...you over to the officer, and the
...you into prison. ³⁰I tell you, you will
...until you have paid the last penny."

Repent or Perish

13 Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose land Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. ²Jesus said, "Do you think that these Galileans

were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? ³I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. ⁴Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."

⁶Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. ⁷So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three

INSIGHT

Handling Tough Questions

Why so many stories?

...the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him. ...and any way to do it, because all the people hung on his words. 19:47-48

Suffering strikes like an earthquake without warning, causing sudden devastation. Twenty-nine people die when a village bus plunges off a bridge. A roaring wall of water from a broken dam crashes into a village while people sleep, tossing bodies like branches.

Philosophical tremors follow, often in the form of questions. "Why did God let this happen? Why did something wrong? Why does God permit such suffering?"

Jesus day rumors buzzed about two catastrophes: Pontius Pilate's slaughter of Galileans and the collapse of a tower (13:1-4). Naturally, people around Jesus questioned him about these events, but his answers puzzled them. He refused to be drawn into a discussion of the age-old problem of pain. He merely dismissed the common opinion that tragedies happen to people who deserve them and deflected the issue back to the questioners as a general warning (13:4-5; see

What Job Teaches about Suffering," page 450).

The Heart of the Question

Jesus' response to the questions on suffering illustrate how he dealt with difficult issues.

As leaders and philosophical types were constantly trying to stop him with an arsenal of questions. Usually their tactics backfired as Jesus expertly turned their questions back on

...of the listening crowds, Jesus avoided long arguments, instead emphasizing the need ...to change behavior. His answers cut to the heart of the question, and to the hearts of

...when teaching, Jesus often relied on a parable—a compact short story with a moral. Speaking parables allowed him to continue training his disciples "privately," despite the throngs of onlookers (8:10). He could explain the meaning to the disciples later on when they were alone with him. Parables also helped preserve his message: years later, as people reflected on what Jesus taught, his parables came to mind in vivid detail.

Simple Stories with a Profound Point

Jesus, master storyteller, collected 18 parables that appear nowhere else, and he also retold some of the most familiar. While Matthew emphasizes parables of the kingdom, Luke adds those that focus on people—the good Samaritan, a persistent widow, the lost son. His parables speak to many subjects, but in an unexpectedly disarming way.

Jesus' style of handling tough questions contrasts sharply with Paul's. The apostle Paul wrapped his points in theological words and gave formal explanations. In careful prose he patiently probed with complex words as *forgiveness* and *justification*.

Jesus, speaking to a restless crowd of thousands, communicated the same message in three of the most famous stories—the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Lost Son (15:1-32). Scottish Christians first told that last story "The Wonderful Father." It expresses the heart of Jesus' message about God as well as any ten-volume theological work.

Questions What one question would you most like to ask Jesus in person? Given how he handled questions in Luke, can you imagine how he might respond to yours?

years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?"

⁸"Sir," the man replied, "leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. ⁹If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down."

A Crippled Woman Healed on the Sabbath

¹⁰On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, ¹¹and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. ¹²When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." ¹³Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

¹⁴Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath."

¹⁵The Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? ¹⁶Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?"

¹⁷When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.

The Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast

¹⁸Then Jesus asked, "What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? ¹⁹It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air perched in its branches."

²⁰Again he asked, "What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? ²¹It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount^a of flour until it worked all through the dough."

The Narrow Door

²²Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. ²³Someone asked him, "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?"

He said to them, ²⁴"Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. ²⁵Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, 'Sir, open the door for us.'

"But he will answer, 'I don't know you or where you come from.'

²⁶"Then you will say, 'We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.'

²⁷"But he will reply, 'I don't know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!'

²⁸"There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you

yourself thrown out. ²⁹"People will come from east and west and north and south and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God. ³⁰"Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last."

Jesus' Sorrow for Jerusalem

³¹At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, "Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you."

³²He replied, "Go tell that fox, 'I will drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow and on the third day I will reach my goal.' ³³In any case, I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!"

³⁴"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! ³⁵Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

Jesus at a Pharisee's House

14 One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched. ²There in front of him was a man suffering from dropsy. ³Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in the law, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?" ⁴But they remained silent. So taking hold of the man, he healed him and sent him away.

⁵Then he asked them, "If one of you has a son or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull him out?" ⁶And they had nothing to say.

⁷When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable: ⁸"When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. ⁹If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this man your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. ¹⁰But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests. ¹¹For everyone

13:32 Who Had Real Power?

Jesus was executed by powerful political authorities, among them the Roman official Herod. But this statement, spoken before his arrest, reveals who had the real power. Jesus dismissed Herod as "that fox," a Jewish expression for a worthless or insignificant person. Jesus' death on a cross came as no surprise to him; in fact, here he calls it his "goal."

^a21 Greek three sals (probably about 1/2 bushel or 22 liters)

³⁵ Psalm 118:26

³ Some manuscripts deny

exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Jesus said to his host, "When you give a dinner or banquet, do not invite your friends, neighbors or relatives, or your rich neighbors, for they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the crippled, the lame, the blind, and the poor. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the dead."

The Parable of the Great Banquet

When one of those at the table with him heard he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the man who will be the least in the kingdom of God."

Jesus replied, "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is ready.'

But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go. Please excuse me.'

Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out. Please excuse me.'

Still another said, 'I just got married, so I cannot come.'

Then the servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the crippled, the blind and the lame.'

So the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.'

Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full. I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of the banquet.'

The Cost of Being a Disciple

A large crowd were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."

"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'

Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way,

any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple."

"Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out."

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear him. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

Then Jesus told them this parable: "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."

The Parable of the Lost Coin

"Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

The Parable of the Lost Son

Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them."

"Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything."

"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare,

15:3 Severe and Gentle Stories

The collection of stories in chapters 14 and 15, found only in Luke's Gospel, show the two-edged thrust of Jesus' message. The stern warnings in chapter 14 are directed to the proud, who either see no need for God or refuse to pay the cost of following him. The three stories in the next chapter progressively show the limitless love of God for those in real need. He stands ready to forgive all who turn to him.

and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired men.' So he got up and went to his father.

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what was going on. 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'

The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. And when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'

The Parable of the Shrewd Manager

16 Jesus told his disciples: 'There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. So he called him in and asked him, "What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer."

The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm ashamed to beg—I know what I'll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.'

So he called in each one of his master's debtors. He asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'

'Eight hundred gallons^b of olive oil,' he replied.

The manager told him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred.'

Then he asked the second, 'And how much do you owe?'

'A thousand bushels^c of wheat,' he replied.

'He told him, "Take your bill and make it eight hundred."

¹⁸The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

¹⁹Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. ²⁰So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? ²¹And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?

²²No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."

²³The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. ²⁴He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight."

Additional Teachings

¹⁶The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. ¹⁷It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law.

¹⁸Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

The Rich Man and Lazarus

¹⁹There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. ²⁰At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores ²¹and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

²²The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³In hell,^d where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. ²⁴So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'

²⁵But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. ²⁶And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'

²⁷He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, ²⁸for I have five

^a Some early manuscripts son. Make me like one of your hired men.
^b Greek, one hundred kottous (probably about 35 kiloliters)

^c Greek, one hundred batous (probably about 3 kiloliters)

^d Greek Hades

them. Let him be a sign to them so that they will not believe him. For if they do not believe Moses and the prophets, they will not believe me either. But if some one does not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced even if I should rise from the dead.

See Faith Duty

17 Jesus said to his disciples: Things that are bound to come, but I do not know through whom they come. It is better for you to be thrown into the sea with your neck around his neck than for him to rebuke you. If he sins against you seven times a day and seven times comes back to you, forgive him. Jesus said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." He answered, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be up and planted in the sea,' and it will obey." Jesus said, "If one of you had a servant plowing or taking care of the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'? Would he not rather say, 'Prepare supper, get yourself ready and come here now to eat and drink'? Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'"

Ten Healed of Leprosy

Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy stood at a distance. When they saw him, they said, "Go, show yourself to the priests." And as they went, they were healed.

One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He

threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan.

Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?" "Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

The Coming of the Kingdom of God

Once having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."

Then he said to his disciples, "The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. Men will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!'" Do not go running off after them. For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.

It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. Remember Lot's wife! Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left.

"Where, Lord?" they asked.

He replied, "Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather."

The Parable of the Persistent Widow

18 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said, "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'"

For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, "Even though I don't fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!"

And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice

¹⁷ Used for various diseases affecting the skin—not necessarily leprosy.
¹⁸ In his day.
²¹ Some manuscripts left.

²¹ Or among.

²⁴ Some

²⁵ Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.

for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

⁹To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

¹³"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

¹⁴"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

The Little Children and Jesus

¹⁵People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have him touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. ¹⁶But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁷I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

The Rich Ruler

¹⁸A certain ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

¹⁹"Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. ²⁰You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.'^b"

²¹"All these I have kept since I was a boy," he said.

²²When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

²³When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth. ²⁴Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for the rich to

enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

²⁶Those who heard this asked, "Who then can be saved?"

²⁷Jesus replied, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."

²⁸Peter said to him, "We have left all we had to follow you!"

²⁹"I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God ³⁰will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life."

Jesus Again Predicts His Death

³¹Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. ³²He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. ³³On the third day he will rise again."

³⁴The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about.

A Blind Beggar Receives His Sight

³⁵As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. ³⁶When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. ³⁷They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by."

³⁸He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

³⁹Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

⁴⁰Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, ⁴¹"What do you want me to do for you?"

"Lord, I want to see," he replied.

⁴²Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you." ⁴³Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.

Zacchaeus the Tax Collector

19 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ²A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. ³He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. ⁴So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

⁵When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." ⁶So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

⁷All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.'"

⁸But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my

18:9 Luke and the Underdog

Luke's concern for the humble comes through clearly in the stories he selected, especially in chapters 18 and 19. The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, for example, draws a sharp contrast between the proud and the humble. Stories that follow also feature the humble: little children, a blind beggar, another tax collector.

^a11 Or 10

^b20 Exodus 20:12-16; Deut. 5:16-20

16^a "The first one came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more.'

17^a "Well done, my good servant!" his master replied. "Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities."

18^a "The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned five more.'

19^a "His master answered, 'You take charge of five cities.'

20^a "Then another servant came and said, 'Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. 21I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.'

22^a "His master replied, 'I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? 23Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?'

24^a "Then he said to those standing by, 'Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.'

25^a "Sir," they said, "he already has ten!"

26^a "He replied, 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away. 27But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of me.'"

The Triumphal Entry

28^a After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29^a As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, 30^a "Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 31If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it.'"

32^a Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. 33^a As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?"

34^a They replied, "The Lord needs it."

35^a They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. 36^a As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

37^a When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

38^a "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!"^a

"Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

39^a Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!"

40^a "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."

41^a As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it 42^a and said, "If you, even you, had

only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. 43^a The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. 44^a They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."

Jesus at the Temple

45^a Then he entered the temple area and began driving out those who were selling. 46^a "It is written," he said to them, "My house will be a house of prayer"^b; but you have made it 'a den of robbers.'^c

47^a Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him. 48^a Yet they could not find any way to do it, because all the people hung on his words.

The Authority of Jesus Questioned

20^a One day as he was teaching the people in the temple courts and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, together with the elders, came up to him. 2^a "Tell us by what authority you are doing these things," they said. "Who gave you this authority?"

3^a He replied, "I will also ask you a question. Tell me, 4John's baptism—was it from heaven, or from men?"

5^a They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Why didn't you believe him?' 6But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us, because they are persuaded that John was a prophet."

7^a So they answered, "We don't know where it was from."

8^a Jesus said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

The Parable of the Tenants

9^a He went on to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard, rented it to some farmers and went away for a long time. 10^a At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants so they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 11^a He sent another servant, but that one also they beat and treated shamefully and sent away empty-handed. 12^a He sent still a third, and they wounded him and threw him out.

13^a "Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my son, whom I love; perhaps they will respect him.'

14^a "But when the tenants saw him, they talked the matter over. 'This is the heir,' they said. 'Let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' 15^a So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

"What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? 16^a He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others."

When the people heard this, they said, "May this never be!"

^a38 Psalms 118:26

^a46 Isaiah 56:7

^a46 Jer. 7:11

¹⁷Jesus looked directly at them and asked, "Then what is the meaning of that which is written:

"The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone"^a?

¹⁸Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed."

¹⁹The teachers of the law and the chief priests looked for a way to arrest him immediately, because they knew he had spoken this parable against them. But they were afraid of the people.

Paying Taxes to Caesar

²⁰Keeping a close watch on him, they sent spies, who pretended to be honest. They hoped to catch Jesus in something he said so that they might hand him over to the power and authority of the governor. ²¹So the spies questioned him: "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right, and that you do not show partiality but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. ²²Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

²³He saw through their duplicity and said to them, ²⁴"Show me a denarius. Whose portrait and inscription are on it?"

²⁵"Caesar's," they replied.

He said to them, "Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

²⁶They were unable to trap him in what he had said there in public. And astonished by his answer, they became silent.

The Resurrection and Marriage

²⁷Some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus with a question. ²⁸"Teacher," they said, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother. ²⁹Now there were seven brothers. The first one married a woman and died childless. ³⁰The second ³¹and then the third married her, and in the same way the seven died, leaving no children. ³²Finally, the woman died too. ³³Now then, at the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?"

³⁴Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. ³⁵But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, ³⁶and they can no longer die, for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection. ³⁷But in the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' ³⁸He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive."

³⁹Some of the teachers of the law responded, "Well said, teacher!" ⁴⁰And no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Whose Son Is the Christ?

⁴¹Then Jesus said to them, "How is it that they

say the Christ^d is the Son of David? ⁴²David himself declares in the Book of Psalms:

"The Lord said to my Lord:

"Sit at my right hand

⁴³until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." ^e

⁴⁴David calls him 'Lord.' How then can he be his son?"

⁴⁵While all the people were listening, Jesus said to his disciples, ⁴⁶"Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. ⁴⁷They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely."

The Widow's Offering

21 As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. ²He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins.^f ³"I tell you the truth," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. ⁴All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

Signs of the End of the Age

⁵Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, ⁶"As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down."

⁷"Teacher," they asked, "when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?"

⁸He replied: "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not follow them. ⁹When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away."

¹⁰Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. ¹¹There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.

¹²"But before all this, they will lay hands on you

20:44 Jesus Asks a Question

In the midst of many questions thrown at him, Jesus offers one back. The passage, quoting Psalm 110:1, is difficult to understand, but Jesus may have been trying to clear up a misunderstanding about the Messiah. Nationalistic Jews of that day were expecting a Messiah, or a "Son of David," out of the same mold as the great Jewish king who defeated Israel's enemies. But Jesus shows that David himself acknowledged the Messiah to come as "Lord," or one far greater than a mere earthly king.

^a17 Or cornerstone

^b17 Psalm 118:22

^c37 Exodus 3:6

^d41 Or Messiah

^e43 Psalm 110:1

^f12 Greek two leptas

and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. ¹³This will result in your being witnesses to them. ¹⁴But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. ¹⁵For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. ¹⁶You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. ¹⁷All men will hate you because of me. ¹⁸But not a hair of your head will perish. ¹⁹By standing firm you will gain life.

²⁰"When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. ²¹Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. ²²For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. ²³How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. ²⁴They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

²⁵"There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. ²⁶Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. ²⁷At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

²⁹He told them this parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees. ³⁰When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. ³¹Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.

³²"I tell you the truth, this generation^a will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ³³Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

³⁴"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. ³⁵For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

³⁷Each day Jesus was teaching at the temple, and each evening he went out to spend the night on the hill called the Mount of Olives, ³⁸and all the people came early in the morning to hear him at the temple.

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

22 Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching, ²and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were look-

ing for some way to get rid of Jesus, for they were afraid of the people. ³Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve. ⁴And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. ⁵They were delighted and agreed to give him money. ⁶He consented, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.

The Last Supper

⁷Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover."

⁹"Where do you want us to prepare for it?" they asked.

¹⁰He replied, "As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, ¹¹and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' ¹²He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there."

¹³They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

¹⁴When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. ¹⁵And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."

¹⁷After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. ¹⁸For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

¹⁹And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

²⁰In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. ²¹But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table. ²²The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed, but woe to that man who betrays him." ²³They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this.

²⁴Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. ²⁵Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. ²⁶But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should

22:24 Status-conscious Disciples

Even at the emotional Last Supper scene described here, the disciples fell into their habit of worrying about rank and status. Not until after Jesus had died and returned did they understand the true nature of the kingdom he was setting into motion. It is a kingdom primarily of spiritual, not political, power. And in it, the greatest is the one who serves others.

^a32 Or race

But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times."

Then Jesus asked them, "When I sent you out without purse, bag or sandals, did you not have anything?"

They answered,

"We said to you, 'But now if you have a purse, and also a bag, and if you don't have a cloak, buy one.' It is written,

"And he was numbered with the transgressors and I am sure that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment."

Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives

As usual to the Mount of Olives, his disciples followed him. On the way he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. In anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

When he rose from prayer and went back to his disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."

Jesus Arrested

While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, but Jesus asked him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

"When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they all fled. One of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. And he touched the man's ear and healed him.

Peter Disowns Jesus

After saying this, they all went away and left him alone. He went out to the porch. Peter followed him. But when he had kindled a fire, he sat down to eat. Peter sat down with them. "A certain servant-girl here in the courtyard," she said, "was with me. She was with you."

But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said.

After the later said to him, "You and he," he also said, "I don't know him."

"Man, I am not!" Peter replied.

About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean."

Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you are talking about." Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows, I will disown you three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

The men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. They bound him and demanded, "Prophesy! Who hit you?" And they said many other insulting things to him.

Jesus Before Pilate and Herod

At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. "If you are the Christ," they said, "tell us." Jesus answered, "If I tell you, you will not believe me, and if I asked you, you would not answer." "But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God."

They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?"

He replied, "You are right in saying I am."

Then they said, "Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips."

23 Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Christ, a king."

So Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

"Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied.

Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no basis for a charge against this man."

³¹ The Greek is plural.

³² Isaiah 53:12.

⁴⁴ Some early manuscripts do not have verses 43 and 44.

⁴⁶ Or Messiah.

⁴⁷ Or Messiah, also at verses 35 and 39.

But they insisted. "He stir[s] up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here."

On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. When he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform some miracle. He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate. That day Herod and Pilate became friends—before this they had been enemies.

Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us, as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. Therefore, I will punish him and then release him."

With one voice they cried out, "Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!" (Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city and for murder.)

Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. But they kept shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

For the third time he spoke to them: "Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him."

But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. So Pilate decided to grant their demand. He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will.

The Crucifixion

As they led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. For the time will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the barren women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!'" Then

they will say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!"

For if men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

Two other men, both criminals, were also led

out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others, let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One."

The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself."

There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!"

But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

Jesus' Death

It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man." When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away. But all those who knew him, including the women who had fol-

23:25 Who Should Try Jesus?

The Gospels record a "pass-the-buck" sequence in Jesus' encounter with Roman justice. The Jewish court, or Sanhedrin, judged Jesus guilty of blasphemy, but it had no authority to carry out a death sentence. Therefore, the religious leaders took Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea. Along the way, they changed the religious charge against Jesus to a political one, which alone would call for Roman punishment.

Pilate showed cowardice. First, he deferred the case to Herod, who had jurisdiction over Jesus' home region. Herod taunted and mocked Jesus, and then sent him back. Three times Pilate tried to get the Jewish leaders to release Jesus, but finally he yielded to their demands for capital punishment.

¹⁵ Or over the land of the Jews

10:8 ^{43a} Some early manuscripts do not have this sentence

¹⁶ Some manuscripts him ¹⁷ Now he was obliged to release one man to them at the Feast

⁴² Some manuscripts come with your kingly power

³⁰ Hosea

toward him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

Jesus' Burial

⁴⁰Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, ⁴¹who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and he was waiting for the kingdom of God. ⁴²Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. ⁴³Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. ⁴⁴It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.

⁴⁵The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. ⁴⁶Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

The Resurrection

24 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. ²They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? ⁶He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' " ⁸Then they remembered his words.

⁹When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. ¹⁰It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. ¹²Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

On the Road to Emmaus

¹³Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles^a from Jerusalem. ¹⁴They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. ¹⁵As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; ¹⁶but they were kept from recognizing him.

¹⁷He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"

They stood still, their faces downcast. ¹⁸One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?"

¹⁹"What things?" he asked.

About Jesus of Nazareth, they replied. He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. ²⁰The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; ²¹but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. ²²In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning ²³but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. ²⁴Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see."

²⁵He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶Did not the Christ^b have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" ²⁷And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

²⁸As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. ²⁹But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.

³⁰When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. ³²They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

³³They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together ³⁴and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." ³⁵Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

³⁶While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

³⁷They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. ³⁸He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? ³⁹Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

⁴⁰When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" ⁴²They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³and he took it and ate it in their presence.

⁴⁴He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

⁴⁵Then he opened their minds so they could

^a13 Greek sixty *stades* (about 11 kilometers)

^b26 Or *Messiah*, also in verse 46

JOHN

INTRODUCTION

God Breaks the Silence

He spoke in the only way we could truly understand

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. 1:14

Unless a person communicates to you, in speech or gestures or even facial expressions, you can't get to know him or her. What goes on behind the mask of skin will always remain a mystery.

God, too, was a mystery until he broke his silence. He spoke once, and all creation sprang to life: oceans, whales, giraffes, orchids, and beetles. He spoke again, says John, and this time the Word took the form of a man, Jesus Christ. John's book tells the story of that Word who became flesh.

Different from Other Gospels

It's clear from the first few paragraphs that John broke sharply from the style of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The other Gospel writers focused on events, following Jesus through the bustling marketplaces and villages.

Unlike them, John assumed readers knew the basic facts about Jesus. Instead of focusing on facts, he mulled over the profound meaning of what Jesus had said and done. The book of John reads as if it were written under a great, shady tree by an author who had lots of time for reflection.

In his first sentence, John highlights Christ's nature. There are no Christmas scenes here: no stables, shepherds, or wise men. John tells nothing of Jesus' birth and youth. He introduces him as the adult Son of God. After an eloquent prologue, the book shows John the Baptist humbly pointing to Jesus, "the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie" (1:27).

Jesus Sent with a Mission

John selected vignettes from no more than 20 days in Jesus' life, and arranged them so that they present a Messiah who knows "where I came from and where I am going" (8:14). Jesus was not simply a "man who fell to earth," but God's Son, sent to do the work of the Father. His repeated references to the One "who sent me" give a cadence to the book.

According to John, Christ participated in the original creation act. But later he was sent to earth as the Word, the sum of all that God wanted to say. God spoke in the only way we could truly understand: by becoming one of us.

How to Read John

New Christians often turn to the book of John because it spells out so clearly the basics of the faith. Jesus proves who he is, diagnoses humanity's problems, and bluntly describes what is necessary for conversion. You will likely recognize familiar verses and phrases in this remarkable book (such as Jesus' "I am" sayings).

John selected seven "signs" or miracles (five of which aren't reported elsewhere) and built a story around them. As you read John, note how the author weaves together his story and its meaning.

It's best to read John in units. Don't just read a paragraph or a chapter. Follow the boldface sectional headings and read a complete section, both the action and the commentary on it. John does not primarily relate events; he interprets those events.

Look carefully for the audiences Jesus addresses. Is he talking to his disciples? To his opponents? To the large crowds? He treats each audience differently.

PLANS FOR READING JOHN

PLAN 1: An Overview of John in 8 Days

- Day 1. Read the introduction to John, and then turn to John 3, which contains perhaps the best-known verse in the entire Bible (verse 16). Read Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus.
- Day 2. John 5 and 6 contain Jesus' blunt teaching about who he was and why he came to earth. Read chapter 6, noting how John weaves together a miracle, the crowd's reaction to it, then Jesus' comments on it.
- Day 3. Read chapter 10, another familiar passage.
- Day 4. The next four readings are taken from John's report of the Last Supper. Begin with chapter 14.
- Day 5. Read chapter 15, where Jesus explains the image of a vine and its branches.
- Day 6. Read chapter 16, noting especially what Jesus says about the Holy Spirit. John contains more teaching about the Holy Spirit than any other Gospel.
- Day 7. Read chapter 17, a farewell prayer Jesus prayed for his disciples.
- Day 8. Read John's account of Jesus' resurrection, chapter 20.

PLAN 2: All of John in 21 Days

- 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □ 10 □ 11 □ 12 □ 13 □ 14 □ 15 □ 16
□ 17 □ 18 □ 19 □ 20 □ 21

The Word Became Flesh

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning.

³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood^a it.

⁶There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. ⁸He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.^b

¹⁰He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹²Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—¹³children born not of natural descent,^c nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only,^d who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was

before me.'"¹⁶From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only,^e who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

John the Baptist Denies Being the Christ

¹⁹Now this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. ²⁰He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Christ."^f

²¹They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

He answered, "No."

²²Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

²³John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the desert, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'"^g

²⁴Now some Pharisees who had been sent questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

²⁵"I baptize with^h water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. ²⁷He is the one who comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."

^a Or darkness, and the darkness has not overcome

^b Or This was the true light that gives light to every man who comes into the world

^c 13 Greek, of bloods

^d 14, 18 Or the Only Begotten

^e 18 Some manuscripts but the only (or only begotten) Son

^f 20 Or Messiah

The Christ, Greek, and the Messiah (Hebrew) both mean "the Anointed One", also in verse 25

^g 23 Isaiah 40:3

in, also in verses 31 and 33

^h 26 Or

²⁸This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Jesus the Lamb of God

²⁹The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' ³¹I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel."

³²Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. ³³I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God."

Jesus' First Disciples

The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. ³⁶When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

³⁷When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. ³⁸Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"

They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), where are you staying?"

³⁹"Come," he replied, "and you will see."

So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour.

⁴⁰Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. ⁴¹The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). ⁴²And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter⁴³).

Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael

⁴³The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me."

⁴⁴Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

⁴⁶"Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked.

"Come and see," said Philip.

⁴⁷When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false."

⁴⁸"How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you."

⁴⁹Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel."

⁵⁰Jesus said, "You believe^b because I told you I

saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that." ⁵¹He then added, "I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

Jesus Changes Water to Wine

2 On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, ²and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

⁴"Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."

⁵His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

⁶Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.^d

⁷Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.

⁸Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."

They did so, ⁹and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside ¹⁰and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

¹¹This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

Jesus Clears the Temple

¹²After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days.

¹³When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. ¹⁵So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!"

¹⁷His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me."^e

¹⁸Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"

2:6 Eyewitness Details

Numerous specific details show that an eyewitness wrote the book of John. Here, the author describes stone water jars; elsewhere, he records the exact number of fish caught (21:11).

⁴² Both *Cephus* (Aramaic) and *Peter* (Greek) mean rock two to three metretres (probably about 75 to 115 liters)

⁵⁰ Or *Do you believe . . . ?*
⁴⁷ Psalm 69:9

⁵¹ The Greek is plural.

⁴⁶ Greek

¹Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days."

²The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" ³But the temple he had spoken of was his body. ⁴After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

⁵Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name.⁶ ⁷But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. ⁸He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.

Jesus Teaches Nicodemus

3 Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."

²In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

³"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"

⁴Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. ⁵Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. ⁶You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' ⁷The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

⁸"How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

⁹You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? ¹⁰I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. ¹¹I have spoken to you of

earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? ¹²Who has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man? ¹³Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁴that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."

¹⁵"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁶For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁷Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. ¹⁸This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ¹⁹Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. ²⁰But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

John the Baptist's Testimony About Jesus

²²After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptized. ²³Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were constantly coming to be baptized. ²⁴(This was before John was put in prison.) ²⁵An argument developed between some of John's disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. ²⁶They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—well, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him."

²⁷To this John replied, "A man can receive only what is given him from heaven. ²⁸You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ' but am sent ahead of him.' ²⁹The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. ³⁰He must become greater; I must become less.

³¹"The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. ³²He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. ³³The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. ³⁴For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. ³⁵The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. ³⁶Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

3:2 A Reason for Secrecy

This meeting took place at night, in secret.

Nicodemus was a ruling member of the Pharisees, a group that violently opposed Jesus. He likely risked danger by meeting with Jesus. Two other references to Nicodemus indicate that Jesus must have had a strong effect on him. He stood up for Jesus at the Jewish ruling council (7:50) and helped prepare Jesus' body for burial (19:39).

Jesus' meeting with the Samaritan woman (4:4-42) probably had some of the same tension, although it occurred in daylight. Conversations between a Jew and a Samaritan, let alone between a religious teacher and an adulterer, were taboo.

²³ Or and believed in him

manuscripts: "Man came from heaven"

manuscripts: "Man came from heaven"

manuscripts: "Man came from heaven"

¹⁴ Greek: "he"

¹³ Or born from above; also in verse 7

¹⁵ Or believes may have eternal life in him

some interpreters end the quotation after verse 15

³⁶ Some interpreters end the quotation after verse 30.

⁶ Or but spirit

⁴⁷ The Greek is plural

^{41b} Or his only begotten Son

²⁵ Some manuscripts and certain Jews

¹³ Some

¹⁸ Or God's

²⁸ Or

Jesus Talks With a Samaritan Woman

4 The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John, ²although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. ³When the Lord learned of this, he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

⁴Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁵So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

⁷When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" ⁸(His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a

Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

¹⁰Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

¹¹"Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" ¹²Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?"

¹³Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the

⁴⁹ Or do not use dishes Samaritans have used

INSIGHT

Conversations with Jesus

How did Jesus talk to ordinary people?

The woman said, "I know that Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he." 4:25-26

Water. Where it's plentiful, we tend to take it for granted, like air. Often, we fail to use it carefully. We waste it.

Not so in the desert, where even plants hoard water with bristly defenses. There, water takes on a mythical aura. Taunting visions of pools and streams dance in the heat waves. A craving for water crowds out all other thoughts, and one spoonful, on a parched tongue, is worth gold.

To a woman in a dry land who spent part of each day hauling clay jugs to and from a well, water was the most powerful symbol imaginable. Little wonder that when Jesus offered "living water" that would never run dry (4:14), the Samaritan woman paid attention.

Profoundly Simple Words

A simple word or phrase with a profound meaning: that is the style of Jesus' teaching as presented in John. No biblical author used simpler, more commonplace words: *water, world, light, life, birth, love, truth*. Yet John used them with such depth that hundreds of authors since have tried to plumb their meaning.

Reading John is like sitting in a boat in the middle of a deep, pristine lake. The clarity of the water reveals everything under the surface—you think. Yet, as you gaze deeper, you can never see the bottom. Something always remains hidden.

Those who look for a neat scheme of organization in John usually fail. John's Gospel omits many of the events recorded in Mark, most of the long public speeches of Matthew, and all of the parables of Luke. Its teaching emerges mainly through Jesus' intimate encounters with diverse people.

Listening in on Private Conversations

Jesus uttered some of his most memorable sayings in the midst of very ordinary conversations. The book of John rarely shows him speaking to large crowds. Instead, we see Jesus meeting secretly with a nervous religious leader (3:1-21), or talking with a promiscuous woman (4:5-26) beside a well. Both visitors carried away simple-yet-profound images (a second birth, living water), and today we recall those words as among the most familiar in all the Bible.

John paints close-ups of individuals who responded to Jesus on earth. Some followed him courageously, others remained skeptical, and still others reacted with hostility. Often, John reports people simply "did not understand," despite Jesus' use of visual images. In short, response to the Son of God on earth 2,000 years ago bears a striking resemblance to the world's response to him now.

Life Questions Imagine yourself in a private conversation with Jesus, much like the Samaritan woman's. What would you want to talk about?

water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

¹⁵The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

¹⁶He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

¹⁷"I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

¹⁹"Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

²¹Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²²You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

²⁵The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

²⁶Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."

The Disciples Rejoin Jesus

²⁷Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

²⁸Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ²⁹"Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" ³⁰They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

³¹Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something."

³²But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about."

³³Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?"

³⁴"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. ³⁵Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. ³⁶Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. ³⁷Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. ³⁸I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor."

Many Samaritans Believe

³⁹Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony. "He told me everything I ever did." ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹And because of his words many more became believers.

⁴²They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said, now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

Jesus Heals the Official's Son

⁴³After the two days he left for Galilee. ⁴⁴(Now Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his own country.) ⁴⁵When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, for they also had been there.

⁴⁶Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. ⁴⁷When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death.

⁴⁸"Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders," Jesus told him, "you will never believe."

⁴⁹The royal official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies."

⁵⁰Jesus replied, "You may go. Your son will live."

The man took Jesus at his word and departed. ⁵¹While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. ⁵²When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, "The fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour."

⁵³Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." So he and all his household believed.

⁵⁴This was the second miraculous sign that Jesus performed, having come from Judea to Galilee.

The Healing at the Pool

Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews. ²Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda^a and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. ³Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed.^c ⁵One who was there had been an in-

4:50 A Long-Distance Miracle

This miracle has certain similarities to another performed at the request of a Roman centurion (Luke 7:2-10; Matthew 8:5-13). Of Jesus' two dozen recorded miracles of healing, only these occurred over a distance.

^a29 Or Messiah

^b2 Some manuscripts Bethzatha, other manuscripts Bethesda

^c3 Some less important manuscripts paralyzed—and they waited for the moving of the waters. ^dFrom time to time an angel of the Lord would come down and stir up the waters. The first one into the pool after each such disturbance would be cured of whatever disease he had

valid for thirty-eight years. ⁶When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"

⁷"Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me."

⁸Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." ⁹At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, ¹⁰and so the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat."

¹¹But he replied, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'"

¹²So they asked him, "Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?"

¹³The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

¹⁴Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you." ¹⁵The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

Life Through the Son

¹⁶So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. ¹⁷Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working." ¹⁸For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

¹⁹Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. ²⁰For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these. ²¹For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. ²²Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, ²³that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him

²⁴"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. ²⁵I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. ²⁶For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. ²⁷And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man

²⁸"Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹and come out—those who have done good will

rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. ³⁰By myself I can do nothing. I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me

Testimonies About Jesus

³¹"If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid. ³²There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is valid.

³³"You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. ³⁴Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved. ³⁵John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light.

³⁶"I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me. ³⁷And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, ³⁸nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. ³⁹You diligently study^a the Scriptures, because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, ⁴⁰yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

⁴¹"I do not accept praise from men, ⁴²but I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts. ⁴³I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him. ⁴⁴How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God^b?

⁴⁵"But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. ⁴⁶If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. ⁴⁷But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?"

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

6 Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), ²and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick. ³Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. ⁴The Jewish Passover Feast was near.

⁵When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" ⁶He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

⁷Philip answered him, "Eight months' wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

⁸Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, ⁹"Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"

¹⁰Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and the men sat down, about five thousand of them. ¹¹Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to

¹⁹ Or Study diligently (the imperative)

⁴⁴ Some early manuscripts the Only One

⁴⁷ Greek two hundred denarii

those who were seated as much as those who stood. He did the same with the fish.

13When they had all had an ample meal, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. I don't want anything to be wasted." They did just that and then he filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

14After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." But he knew that they intended to come and make

him king by force, so he withdrew to the mountain by himself.

Jesus Walks on the Water

15When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake to get some food. But Jesus did not yet go to them. "A strong wind was blowing" and the water grew rough. "When they had rowed three or three and a half miles," they saw Jesus walking on the water, and they were terrified. But he said to them, "Get up, come on board," and they went to him and got up on the water, and they were not

INSIGHT

John's Reason for Writing

Handpicked incidents that prove a point

"Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me—or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves." 14:11

John wrote his book about Jesus for a limited purpose, which he states very clearly: "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (20:31). The book is not so much a biography as an argument. Its author has handpicked incidents to demonstrate that Jesus is unlike any man who has ever lived; he is the Son of God.

This purpose shows up, for example, in how John treats Jesus' miracles. Although Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record miracles, John goes one step further and calls them "signs." A sign points to something. In John, supernatural acts are one more proof of Jesus' unique nature. Jesus refused to perform miracles as magic to dazzle the crowds but used them instead as object lessons to teach about himself.

After feeding 5,000 people from one small lunch, Jesus described himself as the bread of life (6:1-59). Just before restoring sight to a blind man, he called himself the light of the world (9:1-7). Nothing just happens in John; everything underscores the author's overall theme.

Merely a Great Man?

Because Jesus is so clear in describing his own nature, a statement like "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God" doesn't hold up. As C. S. Lewis has said, "That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God—or else a madman or something worse."

According to John, not everyone believed Jesus was divine. Who do you think you are? some indignantly demanded (8:33). Doubters had him killed for making such an audacious claim. But it is hardly possible to read John without being convinced that Jesus himself claimed to be God.

Life Questions. Despite what C. S. Lewis says, many people do think of Jesus as "merely a great man." How do they rationalize it?

fied. ²⁰But he said to them, "It is I; don't be afraid." ²¹Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.

²²The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone. ²³Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. ²⁴Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

Jesus the Bread of Life

²⁵When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

²⁶Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. ²⁷Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."

²⁸Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"

²⁹Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

³⁰So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? ³¹Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'^a"

³²Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

³⁴"Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread."

³⁵Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. ³⁷All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. ³⁸For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. ³⁹And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

⁴¹At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." ⁴²They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?"

⁴³"Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus

answered. ⁴⁴"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁴⁵It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.'^b Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. ⁴⁶No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. ⁴⁸I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. ⁵⁰But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. ⁵¹I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

⁵²Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

⁵³Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. ⁵⁶Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. ⁵⁸This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever." ⁵⁹He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

Many Disciples Desert Jesus

⁶⁰On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?"

⁶¹Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you? ⁶²What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! ⁶³The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. ⁶⁴Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. ⁶⁵He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him."

6:60 Words Too Hard to Swallow

Chapter 6 shows the full cycle of people's response to Jesus. At first, excited by his miracle of feeding the 5,000, folk tried to make him king. But Jesus escaped. The next day he rebuked them for having an interest only in physical concerns, not in spiritual truth (verse 26). He used the miracle of the feeding to give an important lesson on the bread of life, using words that were later applied to the Lord's Supper, or the Eucharist. These words, however, so disappointed the sensation-seeking crowd that many turned away from him.

^a31 Exodus 16:4, Neh. 9:15, Psalm 78:24-25

^b45 Isaiah 54:13

^c63 Or Spirit

“From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.”

“You do not want to leave me, do you?” he asked the Twelve.

Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

“Then Jesus replied, ‘Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!’ (He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.)

Jesus Goes to the Feast of Tabernacles

After this, Jesus went around in Galilee, purposely staying away from Judea because the Jews there were waiting to take his life. But when the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was near, Jesus’ brothers said to him, “You ought to leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do. No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world.” For even his own brothers did not believe in him.

Therefore Jesus told them, “The right time for me has not yet come, for you any time is right. The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil. You go to the Feast. I am not yet going up to this Feast, because for me the right time has not yet come.” Having said this, he stayed in Galilee.

However, after his brothers had left for the Feast, he went also, not publicly, but in secret. Now at the Feast the Jews were watching for him and asking, “Where is that man?”

Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, “He is a good man.”

Others replied, “No, he deceives the people.” But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the Jews.

Jesus Teaches at the Feast

Not until halfway through the Feast did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. The Jews were amazed and asked, “How did this man get such learning without having studied?”

Jesus answered, “My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but he who works for the honor of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him. Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?”

“You are demon-possessed,” the crowd answered. “Who is trying to kill you?”

Jesus said to them, “I did one miracle, and you are all astonished. Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a child on the Sabbath. Now if a child can be cir-

cumcised on the Sabbath, then how much more should I break the Sabbath to do the will of the one who sent me, by doing the Father’s work?”

To Jesus the Christ?

At that point many of the people stopped listening to him because he was saying, “I am not only a Jew, but I am also saying that I am the Christ, the Son of God.” They knew where the Feast of Tabernacles was being held, and so they did not go to the Feast.

But Jesus still said to the people who did not believe in him, “I am telling you the truth: Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But whoever does not believe in me will die spiritually.”

At this they tried to seize him, but he slipped away from them because he had not yet come to the right time.

Many in the crowd put their hands over their hearts and said, “When the Christ comes, he will do more miraculous signs than this.”

The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him.

Jesus said, “I am with you for only a short time, and then I go to the one who sent me. And I will look for me, but you will not find me, and where I am, you cannot come.”

The Jews said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? What did he mean when he said, ‘You will look for me, but you will not find me, and where I am, you cannot come’?”

On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” But this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

On hearing his words, some of the people said, “Surely this man is the Prophet.”

Others said, “He is the Christ.”

Still others asked, “How can the Christ come from Galilee? Does not the Scripture say that the Christ will come from David’s family and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?” Thus the people were divided because of Jesus. Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him.

Unbelief of the Jewish Leaders

Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, “Why didn’t you bring him in?”

“No one ever spoke the way this man does,” the guards declared.

⁶⁸ Some early manuscripts do not have yet him come to me, and let him drink. ⁶⁹Who believes in me. ⁷⁰As

⁷¹ Or Messiah, also in verses 27, 31, 41 and 42. ⁷² Greek seed.

⁷³ Or I am the Christ.

10 "You mean he has deceived you also?" the Pharisees retorted. 11 "Has any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? 12 Not! But this mob that knows nothing of the law—there is a curse on them!"

13 Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, 14 "Does our law condemn anyone without first hearing him to find out what he is doing?"

15 They replied, "Are you from Galilee, too? I look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee."

[The earliest and most reliable manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have John 7:53-8:11.]

16 Then each went to his own home.

17 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 18 At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. 19 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. 20 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" 21 They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

22 But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. 23 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them,

"If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." 24 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

25 At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. 26 Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

27 "No one, sir," she said.

28 "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

The Validity of Jesus' Testimony

29 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me

will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

30 The Pharisees challenged him, "Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid."

31 Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. 32 You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. 33 But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. 34 In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two men is valid. 35 I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me."

36 Then they asked him, "Where is your father?"

37 "You do not know me or my Father," Jesus replied. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also." 38 He spoke these words while teaching in the temple area near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his time had not yet come.

39 Once more Jesus said to them, "I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come."

40 This made the Jews ask, "Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, 'Where I go, you cannot come'?"

41 But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. 42 I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am [the one I claim to be], you will indeed die in your sins."

43 "Who are you?" they asked.

44 "Just what I have been claiming all along," Jesus replied. 45 "I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is reliable, and what I have heard from him I tell the world."

46 They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. 47 So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am [the one I claim to be], and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. 48 The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him." 49 Even as he spoke, many put their faith in him.

The Children of Abraham

50 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 51 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

52 They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?"

53 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. 54 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. 55 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. 56 I know you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you are ready to kill me, because you have no room for my word. 57 I am telling you what

8:6 Breaking the Law

According to the story, the Pharisees weren't following Moses' law, which required the woman's partner in crime to appear also. Interestingly, verse 6 records the only scene of Jesus writing.

^a52 Two early manuscripts the Prophet

^b24 Or I am he, also in verse 28

^c33 Greek seed, also in verse 37

I have seen in the Father's presence, and you do what you have heard from your father?"

"Abraham is our father," they answered.

"If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did." "As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things." "You are doing the things your own father does."

"We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself."

The Children of the Devil

Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own, but he sent me. "Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. "Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! "Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? "He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

The Claims of Jesus About Himself

The Jews answered him, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?"

"I am not possessed by a demon," said Jesus, "but I honor my Father and you dishonor me. "I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge. "I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."

"At this the Jews exclaimed, "Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that if anyone keeps your word, he will never taste death. "Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?"

Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. "Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and keep his word. "Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."

"You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!"

"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" "At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, since he is a sinner, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. "As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. "Night is coming, when no one can work. "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" "Some claimed that he was.

Others said, "No, he only looks like him."

But he himself insisted, "I am the man."

"How then were your eyes opened?" they demanded.

He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see."

"Where is this man?" they asked him.

"I don't know," he said.

The Pharisees Investigate the Healing

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. "Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. "Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see."

Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath."

But others asked, "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?" So they were divided.

Finally they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened."

The man replied, "He is a prophet."

The Jews still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for

9:2 Does Suffering Come Because of Sin?

In this story, Jesus corrects a commonly-held notion that suffering comes because of sin. The healed man became a loyal spokesman for Jesus. His testimony, however, failed to convince the Pharisees, who also rejected Jesus' teaching about why the man had been born blind (verse 34). In typical style, John wove together the incident with Jesus' comments about a different kind of blindness.

⁴³⁸ Or presence. Therefore do what you have heard from the Father Jesus, then

⁴³⁹ Some early manuscripts "If you are Abraham's children," said

the man's parents. "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one who was born blind?" They said that man he was not."

"We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind." But how he saw or how or who opened his eyes, we don't know. But when he is of age, he will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue.²³ That was why his parents said, "He is of age and will speak."

And around noon they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God!" they said. "This man is a sinner."

He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I know. The thing I do know, I was blind but now I see."

Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

He replied, "I have told you already and you don't believe. Why do you want to hear it again? I can become his disciples, too?"

Then they started insulting at him and said, "You are not his disciple! We are disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses, but you don't know where he is. We don't even know where he is!"

He answered, "Now that is remarkable! I don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to the godly man who speaks. Jesus has ever heard of opening the eyes of the blind." "If this man were not a sinner, he would do nothing."

Then they replied, "You were steeped in sin and now dare you lecture us?" And they threw him out.

Spiritual Blindness

After they had thrown him out and he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

Then the man asked, "Tell me so that I can believe."

Jesus said, "You have now seen him, in fact, and you don't believe. I am speaking with you."

Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.

Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who claim to see will become blind."

Then those who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?"

Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin, but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains."

The Shepherd and His Flock

10 Jesus told the truth: the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his

sheep. The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger, in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice.²⁴ Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them.

Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep."

"I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

At these words the Jews were again divided. Many of them said, "He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?"

But others said, "These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

The Unbelief of the Jews

Then came the Feast of Dedication²⁵ at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon's Colonnade. The Jews gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ,²⁶ tell us plainly."

Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many

²³ Or Messiah. ²⁴ A solemn charge to tell the truth (see Joshua 7:19).

²⁵ Many early manuscripts that my Father has given me is greater than all.

²⁶ Or kept safe.

²⁷ That is, Hanukkah.

great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?

³³“We are not stoning you for any of these,” replied the Jews, “but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.”

³⁴Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your Law, ‘I have said you are gods’?³⁵ If he called them ‘gods’ to whom the word of God came—and the Scripture cannot be broken—³⁶what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and

sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, ‘I am God’s Son’? ³⁷Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. ³⁸But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.” ³⁹Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp.

⁴⁰Then Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing in the early

³⁵14 Psalm 82:6

INSIGHT

A Good Shepherd

What a “good shepherd” would give to save a life

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” 10:10

As Jesus headed toward final tragedy in Jerusalem, the theme of death, *his* death, kept surfacing in his parables and direct statements. Ironically, his followers were growing in numbers. His popularity had reached a peak with the feeding of 5,000 people on a handful of morsels, a miracle mentioned by all four Gospel writers.

The ground swell of support to make Jesus king deeply impressed his followers, Jesus, however, escaped into the hills (6:15). He would not be a king on the crowd’s terms. He continued on his lonely mission, stirring up controversy and hatred by healing people on the Sabbath and by proclaiming himself equal with God.

Ignoring an Impressive Miracle

Many Jews came over to Jesus after one of his most impressive signs—bringing Lazarus back to life. But simultaneously, religious leaders concluded callously that it was best for one man (Jesus) to die rather than upset the whole world (11:50). Four separate times they tried to seize him.

Jesus came to offer “life”—one of those one-syllable words, swollen with meaning, that John threaded through his narrative. Lazarus received that life in an astonishingly literal way, providing yet another sign of Jesus’ ultimate power. Jesus, though, made preparations to give up his own life, making the ultimate sacrifice of the good shepherd.

Life Questions. What have you sacrificed for the sake of another person?

days. Here he stayed and many people came to him. They said, "Though John never performed a miraculous sign, all that John said about this man was true." And in that place many believed in Jesus.

The Death of Lazarus

11 Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair. So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days.

Then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews tried to stone you, and yet you are going back there."

Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? A man who walks by day will not stumble, for he sees by this world's light. It is when he walks by night that he stumbles, for he has no light."

After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up."

His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural recovery.

So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

Then Thomas (called Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

Jesus Comforts the Sisters

On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Bethany was less than two miles¹⁸ from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

"Yes, Lord," she told him. "But I know that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."

And after she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary and said, "The Teacher is here, and is asking for you." When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.

"Where have you laid him?" he asked.

"Come and see, Lord," they replied.

Jesus wept.

Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead

Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. "Take away the stone," he said.

"But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days."

Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"

So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."

When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

The Plot to Kill Jesus

Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin.

"What are we accomplishing?" they asked. "Here is this man performing many miraculous signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up. "You know nothing at all! You do not realize that it is better for

¹⁸ Greek (fifteen stadia) (about 3 kilometers)

²⁷ Or Messiah

⁴⁰ Or temple

you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish."

⁵¹He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, ⁵²and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. ⁵³So from that day on they plotted to take his life.

⁵⁴Therefore Jesus no longer moved about publicly among the Jews. Instead he withdrew to a region near the desert, to a village called Ephraim, where he stayed with his disciples.

⁵⁵When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, many went up from the country to Jerusalem for their ceremonial cleansing before the Passover. ⁵⁶They kept looking for Jesus, and as they stood in the temple area they asked one another, "What do you think? Isn't he coming to the Feast at all?" ⁵⁷But the chief priests and Pharisees had given orders that if anyone found out where Jesus was, he should report it so that they might arrest him.

Jesus Anointed at Bethany

12 Six days before the Passover, Jesus arrived at Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ²Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. ³Then Mary took about a pint^a of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

⁴But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, ⁵"Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages."^b ⁶He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief, as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

⁷"Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. ⁸You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."

⁹Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ¹⁰So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, ¹¹for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and putting their faith in him.

11:53 Climax of the Drama

John wrote his book with a great sense of drama. The first six chapters reveal the identity of Jesus. The next six chapters (7-12) show the increasingly divided opinions about Jesus. On the one hand, his disciples were won over, and Jesus gained a loyal following among the people. On the other hand, his enemies rejected all the evidence about him. Their opposition culminated in this plot, which finally brought about Jesus' death.

The Triumphal Entry

¹²The next day the great crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. ¹³They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting,

"Hosanna!"^c

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"^d

"Blessed is the King of Israel!"

¹⁴Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is written,

¹⁵"Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt."^e

¹⁶At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him.

¹⁷Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. ¹⁸Many people, because they had heard that he had given this miraculous sign, went out to meet him. ¹⁹So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!"

Jesus Predicts His Death

²⁰Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Feast. ²¹They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." ²²Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

²³Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. ²⁵The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

²⁷"Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name!"

Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." ²⁹The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

³⁰Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. ³¹Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. ³²But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." ³³He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

³⁴The crowd spoke up, "We have heard from the Law that the Christ^f will remain forever, so

^a Greek a litre (probably about 0.5 liter)
became an exclamation of praise

^b Greek three hundred denari
¹³ Psalm 118:25, 26

¹⁵ Zech. 9:9

¹³ A Hebrew expression meaning "save!" which
¹⁴ Or Messiah

how can you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this 'Son of Man'?"

"Then Jesus said to them, 'You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going.' Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light." When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them.

The Jews Continue in Their Unbelief

"Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet:

Lord, who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been
revealed?"³⁹

"For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere,

He has blinded their eyes
and deadened their hearts,
so they can neither see with their eyes,
nor understand with their hearts,
nor turn—and I would heal them."⁴⁰

Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him.

"Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved praise from men more than praise from God.

"Then Jesus cried out, 'When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me. I have come into the world as light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.

As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words, that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day. For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.

Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

13 It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.¹

The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer cloth-

ing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

"He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?'

"Jesus replied, 'You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.'

"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.'

"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

"Jesus answered, 'A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.' For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

"When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord'—and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."

Jesus Predicts His Betrayal

"I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill the scripture: 'He who shares my bread has lifted up his heel against me.'²

"I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am He. I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me."

"After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, 'I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me.'

"His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, 'Ask him which one he means.'

"Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, 'Lord, who is it?'

13:4 The Role of a Servant

Before beginning an intimate meal with his disciples, Jesus gave them a lesson about humility. Normally, slaves performed the act of washing the feet of dinner guests. Here Jesus, the guest of honor, dressed himself like a slave, with a towel around his waist, and insisted on washing the feet of his disciples. Paul comments on Jesus' servanthood in Philippians 2:5-11.

³⁹ Isaiah 53:1

⁴⁰ Isaiah 6:10

¹ Or he loved them to the last

² Psalm 41:9

²⁶Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon. ²⁷As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.

"What you are about to do, do quickly," Jesus told him, ²⁸but no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. ²⁹Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the Feast, or to give something to the poor. ³⁰As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

³¹When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. ³²If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

³² Many early manuscripts do not have *If God is glorified in him*.

³³"My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now. Where I am going, you cannot come.

³⁴"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

³⁶Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?"

Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later."

³⁷Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you."

³⁸Then Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your life for me? I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!

INSIGHT

The Last Meal Together

The longest, most emotional night of Jesus' life

"You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy." 16:20

John devoted one-third of his book to the last 24-hour period Jesus spent on earth. The next five chapters (13-17) describe one of the scenes from that period, and nothing like these chapters exists elsewhere in the Bible. In their slow-motion, realistic detail, they provide an intimate memoir of Jesus' most anguished evening.

Leonardo da Vinci immortalized the setting in his famous painting *The Last Supper*, with the participants arranged on one side of the table as if posing for the artist. But John gives few physical details; instead, he focuses on a whirlpool of emotional currents.

John holds a light to the disciples' faces, and you can almost see the awareness flickering in their eyes. All that Jesus had told them was slowly settling in. As for Jesus, "having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love" (13:1).

Jesus Prepares to Leave

Never before had Jesus been so direct with them. Around the table he avoided parables and painstakingly answered the disciples' redundant questions. Never was he more "theological." He alone fully recognized the significance of this last evening before his death. The world was about to undergo a convulsive trauma, and the 11 fearful men with him were his hope for that world.

"It is for your good that I am going away," Jesus said (16:7), but the disciples were too busy discussing the meaning of "going away" to comprehend the good that would follow.

Nevertheless, Jesus kept explaining until at last the disciples showed signs of understanding. God's Son had entered the world to reside in one body. He was leaving earth to return to the Father. But the Spirit would come and reside in many bodies. Jesus seemed aware that much of what they nodded their heads at now would not sink in until later.

Pain before Joy

Jesus concluded his words with a ringing declaration, "Take heart! I have overcome the world" (16:33). How hollow this statement would seem the next evening, when his pale, abused body hung on an executioner's cross. The disciples' emotions—and faith—would rise and plummet in one unforgettable day. Jesus predicted this, too, likening the pain to the spasms of childbirth before great joy breaks through (16:21, 22).

In his longest recorded prayer, Jesus summed up his feelings and his plans for the tight circle of friends gathered around him. He prayed, too, for the others who would follow them, stretching in an unbroken chain throughout history. And then he led the little band to his appointment with death.

Life Questions Have you ever been around someone facing death? How did he or she act? What does his response to impending death reveal about why Jesus came to earth?

Jesus Comforts His Disciples

14 Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God;¹ trust also in me. ²In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴You know the way to the place where I am going.

Jesus the Way to the Father

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ²If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."

Jesus answered, "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ²Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ³Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. ⁴I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ⁵And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. ⁶You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

¹⁵"If you love me, you will obey what I command. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. ¹⁸I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

²²Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?"

²³Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. ²⁴He who does not love me will not obey my teach-

ing. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

²⁵"All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

²⁸"You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. ²⁹I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. ³⁰I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, ³¹but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

"Come now; let us leave.

The Vine and the Branches

15 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ²He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes³ so that it will be even more fruitful. ³You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. ⁸This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

⁹"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹²My command is this: Love each other as I have

15:1 Jesus as the Vine

Old Testament prophets referred to the Israelites as the "vine of God." But as Jesus often pointed out, the Jews had failed to bear fruit. Here he claims the image for himself, "I am the vine."

John frequently records Jesus' use of the words *I am*: "I am the bread of life," "I am the way, the truth and the life." The phrase stood out sharply to Jewish leaders, because God had been known as the great *I AM* to the Jews (Exodus 3:14). Jewish unbelievers, recognizing that Jesus was claiming to be God, reacted with shock and outrage.

¹ Or You trust in God. ² Some early manuscripts If you really have known me, you will know.
³ The Greek for prunes also means cleans.

¹⁷ Some early manuscripts and is

loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ¹⁷This is my command: **Love each other.**

The World Hates the Disciples

¹⁸"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ¹⁹If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. ²⁰Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' ²¹If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. ²²They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me. ²³If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin. ²⁴He who hates me hates my Father as well. ²⁵If I had not done among them what no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen these miracles, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. ²⁶But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: They hated me without reason."

²⁶"When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. ²⁷And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

16 "All this I have told you so that you will not go astray. ²They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. ³They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. ⁴I have told you this, so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you. I did not tell you this at first because I was with you.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

⁵"Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' ⁶Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. ⁷But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment. ⁹In regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; ¹⁰in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

¹²"I have much more to say to you, more than

you can now bear. ¹³But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. ¹⁵All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

¹⁶"In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me."

The Disciples' Grief Will Turn to Joy

¹⁷Some of his disciples said to one another, "What does he mean by saying, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me' and 'Because I am going to the Father'?" ¹⁸They kept asking, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We don't understand what he is saying."

¹⁹Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, "Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me'?" ²⁰I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. ²¹A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come, but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. ²²So with you. Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. ²³In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ²⁴Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

²⁵"Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. ²⁶In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. ²⁷No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. ²⁸I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father."

²⁹Then Jesus' disciples said, "Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. ³⁰Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God."

³¹"You believe at last!" Jesus answered. ³²"But a time is coming, and has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.

³³"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

²⁰ John 13:16

²⁵ Psalms 35:19, 69:4

¹⁸ Or will expose the guilt of the world

³¹ Or "Do you now believe?"

Jesus Prays for Himself

17 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed

"Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. ²For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. ⁵And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

"I have revealed you^a to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. ⁷Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. ⁸For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. ⁹I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. ¹¹I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one. ¹²While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled

¹³"I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ¹⁴I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷Sanctify^b them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified

Jesus Prays for All Believers

²⁰"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²²I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and

have loved them even as you have loved me

²⁴"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world

²⁵"Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

Jesus Arrested

18 When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was an olive grove, and he and his disciples went into it

²Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. ³So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons

⁴Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?"

⁵"Jesus of Nazareth," they replied.

"I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) ⁶When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.

⁷Again he asked them, "Who is it you want?"

And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

⁸"I told you that I am he," Jesus answered. "If you are looking for me, then let these men go." ⁹This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: "I have not lost one of those you gave me."^c

¹⁰Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)

¹¹Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"

Jesus Taken to Annas

¹²Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him ¹³and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. ¹⁴Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it would be good if one man died for the people.

Peter's First Denial

¹⁵Simon Peter and another disciple were follow-

17:21 Jesus' Longest Prayer

The famous prayer recorded here concludes a kind of commissioning or graduation. In it, Jesus turns over his mission to the disciples and, by extension, to all believers who would follow.

^a6 Greek your name, also in verse 26

^b17 Greek hagiazo (set apart for sacred use or make holy), also in verse 19

^c9 John 6:39

ing Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard, ¹⁶but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the girl on duty there and brought Peter in.

¹⁷"You are not one of his disciples, are you?" the girl at the door asked Peter.

He replied, "I am not."

¹⁸It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself.

The High Priest Questions Jesus

¹⁹Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.

²⁰"I have spoken openly to the world," Jesus replied. "I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. ²¹Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said."

²²When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby struck him in the face. "Is this the way you answer the high priest?" he demanded.

²³"If I said something wrong," Jesus replied, "testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?" ²⁴Then Annas sent him, still bound, to Caiaphas the high priest.^a

^a Or (Now Annas had sent him, still bound, to Caiaphas the high priest.)

Peter's Second and Third Denials

²⁵As Simon Peter stood warming himself, he was asked, "You are not one of his disciples, are you?"

He denied it, saying, "I am not."

²⁶One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, "Didn't I see you with him in the olive grove?" ²⁷Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.

Jesus Before Pilate

²⁸Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness the Jews did not enter the palace; they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. ²⁹So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?"

³⁰"If he were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed him over to you."

³¹Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law."

"But we have no right to execute anyone," the Jews objected. ³²This happened so that the words Jesus had spoken indicating the kind of death he was going to die would be fulfilled.

³³Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

INSIGHT

A Change of Heart and Mind

Whatever happened to the "son of thunder"?

This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. 21:24

The disciple John had been favored to share private moments with Jesus. As part of an inner circle of three, he saw Jesus transfigured, watched him bring Jairus's daughter back to life, and waited for him in the Garden of Gethsemane.

After Jesus was arrested, John witnessed the sequence of his trials. He was the only disciple mentioned as being near the cross at Jesus' death and one of the very first to learn of Christ's resurrection. Somehow, this process changed John.

From Thunder to Love

John wore an amusing nickname, "Son of Thunder," and several incidents in the Gospels hint that this name reflected his stormy personality. John jealously resented competition from rival miracle-workers (Mark 9:38), and he insisted on the best seat in the kingdom of heaven for himself. Once, he wanted to call fire down from heaven to destroy a hostile town (Luke 9:54).

Somewhere in his life, the thunder clouds broke apart. Eventually he got a new nickname: "the apostle of love." John's books—this Gospel and the letters John wrote later—are marked by a recurring emphasis on love.

Naturally, the spiritual pilgrimage of John influenced his written record of Jesus' life. His changed personality may provide a clue to his unique style of telling Jesus' story through a handful of poignant episodes. Perhaps these few scenes are the memories of Jesus that finally convinced John himself that Jesus was, indeed, the Son of God.

Life Questions Getting to know Jesus changes a person. How have you been changed?

³⁴"Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?"

³⁵"Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?"

³⁶Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."

³⁷"You are a king, then!" said Pilate.

Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

³⁸"What is truth?" Pilate asked. With this he went out again to the Jews and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him. ³⁹But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release the king of the Jews?"

⁴⁰They shouted back, "No, not him! Give us Barabbas!" Now Barabbas had taken part in a rebellion.

Jesus Sentenced to be Crucified

19 Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. ²The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe ³and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they struck him in the face.

⁴Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him."

⁵When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!"

⁶As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!"

But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him."

The Jews insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God."

⁸When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, ⁹and he went back inside the palace.

Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰"Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?"

¹¹Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."

¹²From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jews kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar."

¹³When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). ¹⁴It was the day of Preparation of Passover Week, about the sixth hour.

"Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews.

¹⁵But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!"

"Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked.

"We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered.

¹⁶Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

The Crucifixion

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. ¹Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). ²Here they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

³Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ⁴Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. ⁵The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews."

⁶Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

⁷When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.

⁸"Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it."

This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said,

"They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing."

So this is what the soldiers did.

⁹Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ¹⁰When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," ¹¹and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

The Death of Jesus

¹Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." ²A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. ³When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

⁴Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. ⁵The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. ⁶But when they came to Jesus

and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. ³⁵The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. ³⁶These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled:

“Not one of his bones will be broken.” ³⁷And, as another scripture says, “They will look on the one they have pierced.” ³⁸

The Burial of Jesus

³⁹Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, because he feared the Jews. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. ⁴⁰He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. ⁴¹Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. ⁴²At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴³Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

The Empty Tomb

20 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. ²So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him.”

³So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁴He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. ⁵Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. ⁶Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)

19:31 Speeding up Death

Soldiers broke the bones of crucified men to speed up their dying, here so the bodies could be removed before the holy day that followed. Jesus had already died, so his bones were left intact. This fulfilled Old Testament promises that the Messiah's bones would not be broken and that his side would be pierced with a spear (Exodus 12:46; Zechariah 12:10).

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

¹⁰Then the disciples went back to their homes. But Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb. ¹¹And she saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

¹²They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?”

“They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don't know where they have put him.” ¹³At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

¹⁴“Woman,” he said, “why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?”

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.”

¹⁵Jesus said to her, “Mary.”

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher).

¹⁶Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

¹⁷Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news. “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

¹⁸On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ¹⁹After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²⁰Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” ²¹And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²²If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

Jesus Appears to Thomas

²³Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁴So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.”

²⁵A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁶Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

²⁷Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

²⁸Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

²⁹Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the

presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Jesus and the Miraculous Catch of Fish

21 Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Tiberias.^a It happened this way. ²Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. ³"I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

⁴Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.

⁵He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?"

"No," they answered.

⁶He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

⁷Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. ⁸The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.^c ⁹When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.

¹⁰Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught."

¹¹Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. ¹²Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. ¹³Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. ¹⁴This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Jesus Reinstates Peter

¹⁵When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?"

Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

¹⁶Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?"

He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

¹⁷The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. ¹⁸I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." ¹⁹Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"

²⁰Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?") ²¹When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?"

²²Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me." ²³Because of this, the rumor spread among the brothers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?"

²⁴This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.

²⁵Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

21:15 Special Treatment for Peter

John ends his book with a moving scene in which Jesus spoke to Peter and "the disciple whom Jesus loved," presumably John himself. Jesus asked Peter the same question three times, a painful reminder of Peter's three denials of him. But this reinstatement helped embolden Peter to become one of the early church's most fearless spokesmen.

^a31 Some manuscripts may continue to

^b1 That is, Sea of Galilee

^c8 Greek about two hundred cubits (about 90 meters)

ACTS

INTRODUCTION

The Linking Book

Imagine a Bible without the book of Acts

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses."
1:8

The New Testament divides neatly into two nearly equal sections. The first consists of four Gospels that tell about Jesus' life on earth. The second section, beginning with Romans, concerns churches that sprang up after Jesus left. In between stands the book of Acts.

The best way to appreciate Acts is to imagine a Bible without it. You have just read the life of Jesus, underscored by four different authors, and you turn to Romans: "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus . . . to all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints." Rome? How did the story get there from Jerusalem?

Next you'd find two books, also from Paul (who's he?), addressed to "the church of God in Corinth ." Another book follows, written to the church in Galatia, then one to Ephesus, and so on with more letters to other exotic locales. Obviously, something is missing. Without Acts, the New Testament leaps from an orderly history of one man, Jesus, to a collection of unexplained personal correspondence.

A Plan Revealed by Jesus

With Acts, everything fits into place. This book gives a transition from the life of Christ to the new church. It introduces Paul, and explains how a minority religion crossed the sea to Rome, the capital of the Empire. A reader of Acts visits key cities sprinkled around the Mediterranean, meets the principal leaders of the new movement, and gets a strong scent of the problems that will occupy Paul's letters.

Luke, a physician, had written the third Gospel as an account of "all that Jesus began to do and to teach" (Acts 1:1). The book of Acts resumes the story, hinting that this history, too, will show Jesus at work, but in a quite different form. "I will build my church," Jesus had promised (Matthew 16:18), and Acts graphically shows how that process began.

Jesus himself had laid out the plot in his last recorded words on earth: "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (1:8). Acts faithfully follows that outline: the first seven chapters show the church in Jerusalem, the next five focus on Judea and Samaria, and the rest of the book follows the spread of the gospel to the outposts of Roman civilization.

Boisterous Beginnings

The book opens in Jerusalem, during the Pentecost holiday. Over a million pilgrims were milling about the city when suddenly a group of 120 believers came alive. Jesus' followers hit the streets with a bold new style, and 3,000 joined up on the first day alone. Starting with that boisterous scene, Luke spins a historical-adventure tale.

Due to Luke's writing skill, Acts reads like a novel, skipping from one exhilarating scene to the next. Wherever the apostles went, action swirled, riots erupted, and a small church took root. In an era when new religions were spreading quickly, the Christian faith became a worldwide phenomenon. Acts tells how.

How to Read Acts

Acts reads like well-written history. It follows a logical plan, includes fascinating details, and focuses on the most dramatic events. In that sense, it is self-explanatory.

The first twelve chapters concentrate mainly on the apostle Peter. The rest of Acts features Paul, and the book explains how he became accepted as the first and foremost Christian missionary.

Paul made three extensive trips in Acts, then a final voyage in chains to Rome (see the two maps on Paul's missionary journeys at the back of this Bible).

Acts records the early history of relations between the church and the Roman empire. It also gives important background information on such cities as Corinth, Ephesus, and Philippi—cities Paul later wrote letters to. The material in Acts will help you understand what Paul is writing about in 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, and the other letters.

Acts also summarizes 18 different speeches by Paul, Peter, and a few others. These speeches make a fascinating study in themselves: the apostles were beginning to interpret the facts of Jesus' life in light of their spiritual significance. As you read them, note how the speakers chose their words and content with the audience in mind, and then note audience reaction.

PLANS FOR READING ACTS

PLAN 1: An Overview of Acts in 9 Days

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to Acts, and then Acts 1, which describes Jesus' last appearance to the disciples.
- ☐ Day 2. Read about the remarkable events of Pentecost in chapter 2.
- ☐ Day 3. Chapter 5 gives a glimpse of life in the early Christian church—some good parts and also a tragic scene of failure.
- ☐ Day 4. Read Acts 9 to learn the details of Saul's conversion.
- ☐ Day 5. Chapter 16 tells of Paul's dramatic experiences in Philippi, a city that produced one of Paul's favorite churches.
- ☐ Day 6. Chapter 17 shows Paul on some of the most difficult assignments of his missionary journeys.
- ☐ Day 7. Read chapter 26, Paul's recounting of his personal story to a king.
- ☐ Day 8. Read chapter 27, which tells of Paul's shipwreck on the way to Rome.
- ☐ Day 9. Read chapter 28, which describes Paul's last setting, under house arrest in Rome, where he probably wrote some of his New Testament letters.

PLAN 2: All of Acts in 28 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16
☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐ 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28

Jesus Taken Up Into Heaven

1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach ²until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. ⁴On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵For John baptized with^a water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

⁶So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

⁷He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

⁹After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

¹⁰They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas

¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk^b from the city. ¹³When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

¹⁵In those days Peter stood up among the believers^c (a group numbering about a hundred and

^a5 Or in

^b12 That is, about 3/4 mile (about 1,100 meters)

^c15 Greek brothers

twenty) ¹⁶and said, "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus: "He was one of our number and shared in this ministry."

¹⁷(With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. ¹⁸Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

²⁰"For," said Peter, "it is written in the book of Psalms,

" 'May his place be deserted,
let there be no one to dwell in it,'^a

and,

" 'May another take his place of leadership.'^b

²¹Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²²beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."

²³So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. ²⁴Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen ²⁵to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." ²⁶Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost

2 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ²Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues^c as the Spirit enabled them.

⁵Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. ⁷Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹(both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" ¹²Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

¹³Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

Peter Addresses the Crowd

¹⁴Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you, listen carefully to what I say: "These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! ¹⁶No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷" 'In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams.

¹⁸Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy.

¹⁹I will show wonders in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood and fire and billows of smoke

²⁰The sun will be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood
before the coming of the great and glorious
day of the Lord.

²¹And everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord will be saved.'^e

²²"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. ²³This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men,^f put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ²⁴But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. ²⁵David said about him:

" 'I saw the Lord always before me.
Because he is at my right hand,
I will not be shaken.

²⁶Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue
rejoices;

my body also will live in hope,

²⁷because you will not abandon me to the grave,
nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

²⁸You have made known to me the paths of life,
you will fill me with joy in your presence.'^g

²⁹"Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. ³⁰But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ,^h that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. ³²God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. ³³Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit

^a20 Psalm 69:25
of those not having the law (that is, Gentiles)
(Hebrew) both mean "the Anointed One", also in verse 36

^b20 Psalm 109:8

^c4 Or languages, also in verse 11
^e28 Psalm 16:8-11

^d13 Or sweet wine

^e21 Joel 2:28-32

^f24 Or

^g31 Or Messiah "The Christ" (Greek) and "the Messiah

and has poured out what you now see and hear.⁴² For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said

“The Lord said to my Lord
“Sit at my right hand
“Until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet.”⁴³

⁴⁴Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

⁴⁵When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

⁴⁶Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ⁴⁷The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

⁴⁸With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” ⁴⁹Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

The Fellowship of the Believers

⁵⁰They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁵¹Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. ⁵²All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁵³Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. ⁵⁴Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁵⁵praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Peter Heals the Crippled Beggar

3 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. ²Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. ³When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. ⁴Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” ⁵So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

⁶Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” ⁷Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. ⁸He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. ⁹When all the people saw

him walking and praising God, ¹⁰they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Peter Speaks to the Onlookers

¹¹While the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon’s Colonnade. ¹²When Peter saw this, he said to them: “Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ¹³The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. ¹⁴You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. ¹⁵You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. ¹⁶By faith in the name of Jesus; this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.

¹⁷Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. ¹⁸But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ^b would suffer. ¹⁹Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, ²⁰and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. ²¹He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. ²²For Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. ²³Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people.’^c

²⁴Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days. ²⁵And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, ‘Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.’^d ²⁶When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways.”

3:12 Knowing the Audience

Peter’s speeches in chapters 2 and 3 offer excellent examples of adapting the gospel message to a particular audience. Preaching to Jews gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost, he relied heavily on quotations from the Old Testament. Although his main intent was to introduce Jesus to them, he referred to Joel, David, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Samuel. His words proved so effective that 3,000 people were converted the first day. Jewish leaders soon arrested Peter and John.

^a35 Psalm 110:1

^b18 Or Messiah, also in verse 20

^c23 Deut 18:15, 18, 19

^d25 Gen. 22:18, 26-4

Peter and John Before the Sanhedrin

4 The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John

4:1 Alarmed Sadducees

The religious group called Pharisees opposed Jesus most strenuously while he was on earth. But reports of his resurrection from the dead especially alarmed the Sadducees, a party of priests who denied there would ever be a resurrection from the dead (see also 5:17 and 23:6–8).

while they were speaking to the people. They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening they put them in jail until the next day. But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.

The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest's family. They had Peter and John brought before them

INSIGHT**More than a Ghost**

The best proof that Jesus is alive

"You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this." 3:15

He looks as if he's seen a ghost!" What image comes to mind when you hear that? A face drained of blood, a trembling jaw, pasty skin and thin lips—a look of terror.

Seeing a ghost doesn't make a person stronger and more confident. The witness is usually reluctant to talk about the experience. Self-doubt attacks in waves. *Was it real? Maybe I was hallucinating...it was so dark and eerie.*

A Convincing Change

When Jesus showed up after his death, his disciples went through a did-we-see-a-ghost? phase, complete with terror, disbelief, and wild rumors. But it didn't last long. In 40 days Jesus made enough undeniable appearances to convince each of his disciples—even skeptical Thomas—that he had indeed overthrown death.

As Acts shows, the disciples began acting the opposite of people who think they've seen a ghost. Rather, they acted like people who had just witnessed the most astounding event in all history. They couldn't wait to tell the world about it.

Exuberance, not fear, lit up the disciples' faces. In the streets of Jerusalem and in the temple, to anyone who would listen, they cried out the news that couldn't be true, but was. "Jesus is alive! The man who died has come back—he's the Messiah we've been waiting for!"

If you're ever tempted to doubt Jesus' resurrection, take a sober look at his changed followers in Acts. Consider Peter, for instance. He had cowered in the shadows at the trial scene, trying to look inconspicuous. Out of fear of arrest, he had even cursed and denied knowing Jesus. Could this be the same man, standing before the most distinguished religious leaders in the land, blasting them as murderers (chapter 3)? Something ignited Peter that would not easily be snuffed out.

Response to a New Message

When Jesus was on earth he mostly preached "the kingdom," sometimes even warning his followers not to mention he was the Messiah. In Acts, the word is out. Jesus is the theme of every speech, whether delivered in the temple square or in the luxurious setting of a royal palace, to working-class pagans or cultured Greek philosophers. Reports of his resurrection resound throughout Acts.

To those who heard, the message sounded like the first note of music to people born deaf. Five thousand men believed (4:4), as did many priests (6:7) and many thousands of Jews (21:20). The scanty band of followers Jesus had left behind was soon organizing and electing officers to handle the needs of a growing church.

Acts follows the core of leaders from place to place, as a remarkable drama unfolds. A few men, mostly unlearned, were setting into motion a worldwide outreach that would ultimately reshape civilization. A revolution was underway—but not one with weapons. This one was powered by the work of God in simple men who had seen a miracle. As Peter said, "We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" (4:20).

Life Questions The disciples led mass movements to Christ. What made them such effective spokesmen?

and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

⁸Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! ⁹If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, ¹⁰then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. ¹¹He is

"the stone you builders rejected,
which has become the capstone."^b

¹²Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

¹³When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. ¹⁴But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. ¹⁵So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. ¹⁶"What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men to speak no longer to anyone in this name."

¹⁸Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. ²⁰For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

²¹After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. ²²For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

The Believers' Prayer

²³On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. ²⁴When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. ²⁵You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David

"Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?

²⁶The kings of the earth take their stand
and the rulers gather together
against the Lord
and against his Anointed One."^d

²⁷Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus,

whom you anointed. ²⁸They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. ²⁹Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. ³⁰Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

³¹After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

The Believers Share Their Possessions

³²All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. ³³With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. ³⁴There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

³⁶Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), ³⁷sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

Ananias and Sapphira

5 Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. ²With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.

³Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? ⁴Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God."

⁵When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. ⁶Then the young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.

⁷About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?"

"Yes," she said, "that is the price."

⁹Peter said to her, "How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also."

¹⁰At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.

The Apostles Heal Many

¹²The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the

^a11 Or cornerstone

^b11 Psalm 118:22

^c26 That is, Christ or Messiah

^d26 Psalm 2:1,2

^e27 The Greek is plural

believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade. No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. More and more men and women were coming to the Lord and were added to their number. People brought the sick into the streets and beds and mats so that at least they could touch the hem of Peter's garment. Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those troubled by evil spirits, and all of them

The Apostles Persecuted

The high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. But during the night the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. "Go," he said, "and tell the people the full message of this new life."

As they entered the temple courts, as they were teaching and began to teach the people.

The high priest and his associates arrived, and they gathered together the Sanhedrin—the full assembly of the elders of Israel—and sent to the jail for the apostles. But on arriving at the jail, the officers found them there. So they went back and reported. "We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside." The captain of the temple guard and the priests were puzzled, wondering what this might mean.

Then someone came and said, "Look! The men are standing in the temple courts, teaching the people." At that, the captain and his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them.

When they brought the apostles, they made them stand before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. "We gave you strict orders not to teach," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to shed the blood of this man's blood."

Then the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men! The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead—whom you had hanged on a tree. God exalted him with his right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to all people. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death. But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was respected by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a while. Then he addressed them: "Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. Some time ago Theudas appeared,

claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered. Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."

His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.^b

The Choosing of the Seven

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles

5:34 Paul's Old Teacher

Gamaliel was a revered rabbi in his day, a follower of the progressive branch of Judaism that originated with the rabbi Hillel. Paul mentions in Acts (22:3) that he once studied under Gamaliel.

6:5 A Cure for Discrimination

Early on, the church ran into complaints from a neglected minority, the Hellenists. This branch of Jews retained many Greek customs and chose to speak Greek rather than Hebrew. The disciples' response in creating a new church office shows considerable diplomacy. The names of the seven appointees indicate they were all Grecian Jews. In other words, the disciples entrusted the minority with full authority to solve their own problems. The first Christian martyr, Stephen, came out of that group of seven.

ties, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

⁷So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

Stephen Seized

⁸Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people. ⁹Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia. These men began to argue with Stephen, ¹⁰but they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke.

Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak words of blasphemy against Moses and against God."

¹¹They stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen

and brought him before the Sanhedrin. ¹²They produced false witnesses, who testified, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. ¹³For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us."

¹⁴All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Stephen's Speech to the Sanhedrin

¹⁵Then the high priest asked him, "Are these charges true?"

¹⁶To this he replied: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran. ¹⁷'Leave your country and your people,' God said, 'and go to the land I will show you.'"

¹⁸"So he left the land of the Chaldeans and set-

INSIGHT

The Secret to the Early Church

The real power at work in Acts

"Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God." 5:38-39

Author J. B. Phillips, after spending 14 years translating the New Testament, sat back and reflected on his most lasting impressions. He kept returning to the book of Acts and its portrait of an infant church. "The sick are not merely prayed about," said Phillips, "they are healed—often suddenly and dramatically... Human nature is changed. The fresh air of Heaven blows gustily through these pages."

The early church lived dangerously, but never before has such a handful of people exerted such widespread influence. To put it shortly, the lasting excitement which follows the reading of the book is this: *the thing works!*

Who Was behind the Success?

Why did it work? Acts points decisively to the power of God, through his Holy Spirit. Luke carefully notes that every major decision of the young church was made under his guidance. Indeed, some have suggested Acts should really be titled *Acts of the Holy Spirit* because of his dominant role. Luke mentions the Holy Spirit 57 times in Acts.

The disciples waited on the Spirit in Jerusalem before beginning to preach (2:4). According to Luke, the Holy Spirit fell on each new group of believers: on Jews (4:31), then on Samaritans (8:17), then Gentiles (10:44), and finally John the Baptist's disciples (19:6).

For Their Good

As the church grew, the disciples gradually began to understand what Jesus had meant when he said, "It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you" (John 16:7). Although Jesus himself departed, God became present in each one of them, making his activity in the world more widespread than ever before.

The Spirit personally directed each major advance of the church. He sent Philip into the desert to meet an Ethiopian (8:29), set apart missionaries in Antioch (13:2), guided the first big church council (15:1-28) and helped plan Paul's itinerary (13:4; 16:6). As presented in Acts, the Spirit was no vague mist but a living person, who spoke, guided in decisions, and fueled the church with the energy of faith.

Life Questions. How is the Holy Spirit active in your life?

tled in Haran. After the death of his father, God sent him to this land where you are now living.⁵ He gave him no inheritance here, not even a foot of ground. But God promised him that he and his descendants after him would possess the land, even though at that time Abraham had no child.⁶ God spoke to him in this way: 'Your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years.⁷ But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves,' God said, 'and afterward they will come out of that country and worship me in this place.'⁸ Then he gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision. And Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him eight days after his birth. Later Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob became the father of the twelve patriarchs.

⁹"Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But God was with him¹⁰ and rescued him from all his troubles. He gave Joseph wisdom and enabled him to gain the goodwill of Pharaoh king of Egypt; so he made him ruler over Egypt and all his palace.

¹¹"Then a famine struck all Egypt and Canaan, bringing great suffering, and our fathers could not find food.¹² When Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers on their first visit.¹³ On their second visit, Joseph told his brothers who he was, and Pharaoh learned about Joseph's family.¹⁴ After this, Joseph sent for his father Jacob and his whole family, seventy-five in all.¹⁵ Then Jacob went down to Egypt, where he and our fathers died.¹⁶ Their bodies were brought back to Shechem and placed in the tomb that Abraham had bought from the sons of Hamor at Shechem for a certain sum of money.

¹⁷"As the time drew near for God to fulfill his promise to Abraham, the number of our people in Egypt greatly increased.¹⁸ Then another king, who knew nothing about Joseph, became ruler of Egypt.¹⁹ He dealt treacherously with our people and oppressed our forefathers by forcing them to throw out their newborn babies so that they would die

²⁰"At that time Moses was born, and he was no ordinary child.^b For three months he was cared for in his father's house.²¹ When he was placed outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him and brought him up as her own son.²² Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.

²³"When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his fellow Israelites.²⁴ He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian.²⁵ Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not.²⁶ The next day Moses came upon two Israelites who were fighting. He tried to reconcile them by saying, 'Men, you are brothers; why do you want to hurt each other?'

²⁷"But the man who was mistreating the other pushed Moses aside and said, 'Who made you

ruler and judge over us?'²⁸ Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?'^c ²⁹When Moses heard this, he fled to Midian, where he settled as a foreigner and had two sons.

³⁰"After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai.³¹ When he saw this, he was amazed at the sight. As he went over to look more closely, he heard the Lord's voice:³² 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.'^d Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look.

³³"Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off your sandals; the place where you are standing is holy ground.'^e I have indeed seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groaning and have come down to set them free. Now come, I will send you back to Egypt.'^f

³⁵"This is the same Moses whom they had rejected with the words, 'Who made you ruler and judge?' He was sent to be their ruler and deliverer by God himself, through the angel who appeared to him in the bush.³⁶ He led them out of Egypt and did wonders and miraculous signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea^g and for forty years in the desert.

³⁷"This is that Moses who told the Israelites, 'God will send you a prophet like me from your own people.'^h ³⁸He was in the assembly in the desert, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; and he received living words to pass on to us.

³⁹"But our fathers refused to obey him. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt.⁴⁰ They told Aaron, 'Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who led us out of Egypt—we don't know what has happened to him!'ⁱ ⁴¹That was the time they made an idol in the form of a calf. They brought sacrifices to it and held a celebration in honor of what their hands had made.⁴² But God turned away and gave them over to the worship of the heavenly bodies. This agrees with what is written in the book of the prophets:

" 'Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings forty years in the desert, O house of Israel?

⁴³ You have lifted up the shrine of Molech and the star of your god Rephan, the idols you made to worship.

Therefore I will send you into exile'^j beyond Babylon.

7:35 Provocative Words

Stephen directly confronted the Jewish establishment with this bold speech that led to his death. He compared their treatment of Jesus with earlier Jewish rejection of God's messengers such as Joseph, Moses, and the prophets. He also called into question Jewish temple worship, claiming that "the Most High does not live in houses made by men (verse 48)." He ended the speech by calling them traitors and murderers.

^a7 Gen 15:13, 14

^b20 Or was fair in the sight of God

^c28 Exodus 2:14

^d32 Exodus 3:6

^e34 Exodus 3:5, 7, 8, 10

^f36 That is, Sea of Reeds

^g37 Deut 18:15

^h40 Exodus 32:1

ⁱ43 Amos 5:25-27

40 "Our forefathers had the tabernacle of the testimony with them in the desert. It had been made according to the pattern he had seen. Having received the tabernacle, our fathers under Joshua brought it with them when they took the land from the nations God drove out before them. It remained in the land until the time of David, who enjoyed God's favor and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. 41 But it was Solomon who built the house for him.

42 "However, the Most High does not live in houses made by men. As the prophet says

43 "Heaven is my throne,
and the earth is my footstool.
What kind of house will you build for me?
says the Lord

Or where will my resting place be?

44 "Has not my hand made all these things?"

45 "You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers. You always resist the Holy Spirit! 46 Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— 47 you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it!"

The Stoning of Stephen

48 When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. 49 But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 50 "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

51 At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, 52 dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

53 While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 54 Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

8 And Saul was there, giving approval to his death.

The Church Persecuted and Scattered

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. 2 Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. 3 But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.

Philip in Samaria

4 Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. 5 Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. 6 When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to

what he said. 7 With shrills, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed. 8 So there was great joy in that city.

Simon the Sorcerer

9 Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, "This man is the divine power known as the Great Power." 10 They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his magic. 11 But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.

12 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. 13 When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 14 because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. 15 Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

16 When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money 17 and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

18 Peter answered: "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! 19 You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. 20 Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. 21 For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin."

22 Then Simon answered, "Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me."

23 When they had testified and proclaimed the word of the Lord, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages.

Philip and the Ethiopian

24 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." 25 So he started

8:5 Crossing Racial Barriers

Philip's visit to Samaria was quite remarkable in its day. Jewish people had little to do with the Samaritans, whom they considered heretics. Later, Philip met with an Ethiopian official on a mission that crossed racial barriers. The modern Christian church in Ethiopia claims an uninterrupted descent from the conversion described in chapter 8.

46 Some early manuscripts the house of Jacob

50 Isaiah 66:1,2

5 Or Messiah

67 Greek unclear

16 Or in

out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian^a eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship,²⁸ and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

³⁰Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked.

³¹"How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

³²The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture:

"He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth."

³³In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth."^b

³⁴The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" ³⁵Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

³⁶As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?"^c ³⁸And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

Saul's Conversion

9 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. ³As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around

him. ⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

⁵"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. ⁶"Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

⁷The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. ⁸Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. ⁹For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

¹⁰In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!"

"Yes, Lord," he answered.

¹¹The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. ¹²In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

¹³"Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. ¹⁴And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

¹⁵But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. ¹⁶I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

¹⁷Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, ¹⁹and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Saul in Damascus and Jerusalem

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. ²⁰At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. ²¹All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?"^d ²²Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ.^e

²³After many days had gone by, the Jews conspired to kill him, ²⁴but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. ²⁵But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.

²⁶When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. ²⁷But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the

9:2 Naming the New Religion

In the early days of the church, its believers were given a variety of labels. Here, they are called members of "the Way"; elsewhere, "the brothers" (9:30), "all the believers" (2:44), and "the Nazarene sect" (24:5). Luke reports (11:26) that in the city of Antioch they were first called 'Christians,' a name that stuck. Roman writers often used the word *Christian* in a derisive sense, reflecting the hostility that greeted the first believers.

^{a27} That is, from the upper Nile region

^{b33} Isaiah 53:7,8

^{c36} Some late manuscripts baptize? ^{d37} Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." The eunuch answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

^{e42} Or Messiah

Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. ²⁸So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. ²⁹He talked and debated with the Grecian Jews, but they tried to kill him. ³⁰When the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

³¹Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened, and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.

Aeneas and Dorcas

³²As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the saints in Lydda. ³³There he found a man named Aeneas, a paralytic who had been bedridden for eight years. ³⁴"Aeneas," Peter said to him,

"Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and take care of your mat." Immediately Aeneas got up. ³⁵All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

³⁶In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas) who was always doing good and helping the poor. ³⁷About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room.

³⁸Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!"

³⁹Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

⁴⁰Peter sent them all out of the room, then he got

16 Both Tabitha (Aramaic) and Dorcas (Greek) mean gazelle.

INSIGHT

The Danger in Being a Christian

It began as a Jewish sect; fierce persecution only helped it spread

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. 8:1

In some countries, a person who becomes a Christian forfeits a good education and job. And in a few countries, a person who converts risks his life. One church historian estimates more Christians have been martyred in this century than in all preceding centuries put together.

Yet, strangely, more often than not, intense persecution of Christians leads to a spurt of growth in the church. An ancient saying expresses this phenomenon, "The blood of martyrs is the seed of the church."

The First Big Advance

For a while the new faith enjoyed popular favor. But very soon it involved grave risk. In the book of Acts the persecution that produced the first Christian martyr, Stephen, ironically brought about the advance of Christianity outside its Jewish base. Forced out of stormy Jerusalem, the scattering Jewish Christians turned to other races and ethnic groups. Philip preached first to the despised Samaritans, and then crossed racial barriers by helping to convert an official from Ethiopia.

Acts documents a dramatic change in the faith. What had been viewed as an offshoot of the Jewish religion, a "sect of the Nazarenes," began to encompass people from other religions, races, and cultures. Before long, the center of church activity moved from Jerusalem to the city of Antioch. There, people coined the word *Christian*, indicating how separate the new faith had become. Never again would it be considered "just a Jewish thing."

Breaking the Jewish Mold

As Luke tells it, the transition to other ethnic groups required some adjustments. Jewish disciples fought against letting go of their centuries-old traditions and allowing the church to be flooded with non-Jews.

Peter, one of the most loyal Jews, explained his dilemma this way: "Who was I to think that I could oppose God?" (11:17). A direct, unmistakable vision from God (10:9-23) overcame Peter's resistance to accepting non-Jews, and later a decisive church council settled on a policy toward them (15:1-21).

As the pages of Acts turn, whole provinces and cultures open up to the gospel. The faith that had been guarded by a small knot of intimates, all Jews who knew Jesus personally, broke out into a rough world of soldiers, sorcerers, merchants, and antagonists from other religions. This process was not without its bloody and frightening moments.

Life Questions If severe persecution came to the church in your region today, what would happen to your faith?

down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. ⁴¹He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called the believers and the widows and presented her to them alive. ⁴²This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. ⁴³Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.

Cornelius Calls for Peter

10 At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. ²He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. ³One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!"

⁴Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked.

The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. ⁵Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. ⁶He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea."

⁷When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. ⁸He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

Peter's Vision

⁹About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹²It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. ¹³Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

¹⁴"Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean."

¹⁵The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."

¹⁶This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

¹⁷While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found

out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. ¹⁸They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.

¹⁹While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three^a men are looking for you. ²⁰So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

²¹Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?"

²²The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to have you come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say." ²³Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

Peter at Cornelius' House

The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went along. ²⁴The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. ²⁶But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."

²⁷Talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. ²⁸He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean. ²⁹So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?"

³⁰Cornelius answered: "Four days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me ³¹and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. ³²Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' ³³So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."

³⁴Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism ³⁵but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. ³⁶You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ³⁷You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached—³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

³⁹"We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. ⁴¹He was not seen by all the

10:9 A Shift from Peter to Paul

The first part of Acts, especially chapters 9-12, concentrates on the life of Peter. He represented the conservative Jewish contingent, and Acts reports that God gave him direct revelation to understand his plan of outreach to the Gentiles. But a man named Saul had been converted, and beginning with chapter 13, Acts follows his story almost exclusively.

^a19 One early manuscript two, other manuscripts do not have the number

people—but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.”⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles.⁴⁶ For they heard them speaking in tongues^a and praising God.

Then Peter said, ⁴⁷“Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.”⁴⁸ So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Peter Explains His Actions

11 The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.² So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him³ and said, “You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them.”

⁴Peter began and explained everything to them precisely as it had happened:⁵ “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was.⁶ I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds of the air.⁷ Then I heard a voice telling me, ‘Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.’

⁸“I replied, ‘Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’

⁹“The voice spoke from heaven a second time, ‘Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.’¹⁰ This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again.

¹¹“Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying.¹² The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man’s house.¹³ He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter.¹⁴ He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.’

¹⁵“As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning.¹⁶ Then I remembered what the Lord had said: ‘John baptized with^b water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’¹⁷ So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?”

¹⁸When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, “So then, God

has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life.”

The Church in Antioch

¹⁹Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews.²⁰ Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus.²¹ The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

²²News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch.²³ When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.²⁴ He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

²⁵Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul,²⁶ and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.²⁸ One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.)²⁹ The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea.³⁰ This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

Peter’s Miraculous Escape From Prison

12 It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them.² He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.³ When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.⁴ After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover.

⁵So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

⁶The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance.⁷ Suddenly an angel of the Lord

11:28 During the Reign of...

The historian Luke is the only New Testament author who dates his books by referring to Roman emperors. He refers to Claudius three times in Acts; the events in Luke’s Gospel occur during the reigns of Tiberius and Augustus.

^aOr in other languages

^bOr in

appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.

⁸Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. ⁹Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

¹¹Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating."

¹²When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. ¹³Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer the door. ¹⁴When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!"

¹⁵"You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel."

¹⁶But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. ¹⁷Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison. "Tell James and the brothers about this," he said, and then he left for another place.

¹⁸In the morning, there was no small commotion among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter. ¹⁹After Herod had a thorough search made for him and did not find him, he cross-examined the guards and ordered that they be executed.

Herod's Death

Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there a while. ²⁰He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they now joined together and sought an audience with him. Having secured the support of Blastus, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king's country for their food supply.

²¹On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. ²²They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man." ²³Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

²⁴But the word of God continued to increase and spread.

²⁵When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from^a Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark.

Barnabas and Saul Sent Off

13 In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon, also called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manassah (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said: "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

On Cyprus

⁴The two of them went on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.

They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, who was an attendant of the proconsul Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said: "You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord?" ¹¹Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun.

Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. ¹²When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

In Pisidian Antioch

¹From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem. From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue rulers sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have a message of encouragement for the people, please speak."

Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: "Men of Israel and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! ¹ The God of the people of Israel chose our fathers, he made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt, with mighty power he led them out of that country, he endured their conduct^b for about forty years in the desert, he overthrew seven nations in Canaan and gave their land to his people as their inheritance. ² All this took about 430 years.

After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel, the prophet. ³ Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years. ⁴ At

^a25 Some manuscripts to

^b18 Some manuscripts and cared for them

INSIGHT

Recruiting from the Opposition

A former persecutor breaks through to the Gentiles

All those who heard him [Saul] were astonished and asked: "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name?" (9:21)

The history of the church is full of examples of notorious criminals whose lives were transformed by the Good News. In our own day we hear testimonies from murderers, members of street gangs, former terrorists, and criminals of every variety.

These converts tell of a Lord who dramatically rescued them from their rebellion against God and of the Holy Spirit who remarkably transformed their lives. Their conversions and powerful testimonies often bring wonderful growth to Christ's church.

A Complete Turnaround

None of these miraculous turnarounds can compare to the story of Saul. When the book of Acts introduces the most effective missionary of all time, he turns out to be a former persecutor of Christians.

How did a tiny Jewish sect become the largest Gentile religion? The answer traces back to the remarkable career of Paul, apostle to the Gentiles.

The personal conversion of Paul also became a kind of conversion for the early Christian church. Before Paul, the church was a struggling Jewish sect with a few committed followers but little or no impact on the world outside of Palestine. After Paul's amazing career, the church was extended into every corner of the Roman Empire. People from the lowest slaves to the emperor himself had been touched by the message of Jesus.

Before Paul, the leaders of the church were unsure whether redemption could even be offered to those who were outside of Jewish law. After Paul, the church had become a thoroughly Gentile community, proud of its Jewish heritage, but offering full partnership in the covenant community to every Gentile who believed.

Paul (formerly called Saul) made his first appearance in Acts (8:1), assisting at the brutal stoning of Stephen. Later, he led a gang of persecutors on a violent campaign against Christian believers. But then came a miraculous turnabout on the road to Damascus (9:1-9).

A Courageous Career

Acts is constructed like a drama that delays introducing the hero until the stage is finally set. Beginning in chapter 13, the spotlight in Acts moves from Peter to Paul and follows him throughout the rest of the book. Other Christians, knowing Paul's old reputation, were initially skeptical about his conversion. But he soon proved to be as fiery and intense in preaching Christ as he had been in working against him.

Paul spearheaded the campaign to grant Gentiles full acceptance without subjecting them to Jewish law. He had himself been liberated from bondage to confining laws, and he insisted on a life based on God's free forgiveness, not legalism.

During his journeys Paul wrote half the New Testament books, and in them he laid the groundwork for much of Christian theology. All the while, he carried on a courageous career despite jailings, beatings, and riots. He was perhaps the most thoroughly converted man who ever lived.

Life Questions: Has your life changed quickly and dramatically, as Paul's did, or slowly and gradually?

ter removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'

²³"From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised. ²⁴Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel. ²⁵As John was completing his work, he said: 'Who do you think I am? I am not that one. No, but he is coming after me, whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.'

²⁶"Brothers, children of Abraham, and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. ²⁷The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. ²⁸Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed. ²⁹When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. ³⁰But God raised him from the dead, ³¹and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people.

³²"We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers ³³he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm

" 'You are my Son;
today I have become your Father.'^a

³⁴The fact that God raised him from the dead, never to decay, is stated in these words:

" 'I will give you the holy and sure blessings
promised to David.'^c

³⁵So it is stated elsewhere

" 'You will not let your Holy One see decay.'^d

³⁶"For when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed. ³⁷But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay

³⁸"Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. ³⁹Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses. ⁴⁰Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you

⁴¹" 'Look, you scoffers,
wonder and perish,
for I am going to do something in your days
that you would never believe,
even if someone told you.'^e

⁴²As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath. ⁴³When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and

Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.

⁴⁴On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁵When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying.

⁴⁶Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷For this is what the Lord has commanded us:

" 'I have made you^f a light for the Gentiles,
that you^f may bring salvation to the ends of
the earth.'^g

⁴⁸When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

⁴⁹The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. ⁵⁰But the Jews incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. ⁵¹So they shook the dust from their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium. ⁵²And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

In Iconium

14 At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a **great number** of Jews and Gentiles believed. ²But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. ³So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders. ⁴The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. ⁵There was a plot afoot among the Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. ⁶But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, ⁷where they continued to preach the good news.

In Lystra and Derbe

⁸In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked. ⁹He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be

13:46 Apostle to the Gentiles

This incident is the first of several occasions in Acts showing Paul turning away from the Jews (see 18:6; 19:9). When the Jews rejected his message, he went to the Gentiles. Eventually he became known as the "apostle to the Gentiles," even though he maintained a deep love for his own people (see Romans 9:1-5).

¹³ Or have begotten you ³³ Psalm 27 ³⁴ Isaiah 55:3 singular ⁴⁷ Isaiah 49:6

⁴⁵ Psalm 16:10

⁴¹ Hab 1:5

⁴⁷ The Greek is

healed ¹⁰and called out, "Stand up on your feet!"

At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

¹¹When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!"

¹²Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker. ¹³The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them.

¹⁴But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: ¹⁵"Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. ¹⁶In the past, he let all nations go their own way. ¹⁷Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy." ¹⁸Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them.

Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe.

The Return to Antioch in Syria

²¹They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, ²²strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. ²³Paul and Barnabas appointed elders^a for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. ²⁴After going through Pisidia, they came into Pamphylia, ²⁵and when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia.

²⁶From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. ²⁷On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. ²⁸And they stayed there a long time with the disciples.

The Council at Jerusalem

15 Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." ²This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about

this question. The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the brothers very glad. ⁴When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.

⁵Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses."

⁶The apostles and elders met to consider this question. After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. ⁸God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. ⁹He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. ¹⁰Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? ¹¹No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."

¹²The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. ¹³When they finished, James spoke up: "Brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴Simon^b has described to us how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself. ¹⁵The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:

¹⁶"After this I will return
and rebuild David's fallen tent.

Its ruins I will rebuild,
and I will restore it,

¹⁷that the remnant of men may seek the Lord,
and all the Gentiles who bear my name,
says the Lord, who does these things^c

¹⁸that have been known for ages.^d

¹⁹"It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. ²⁰Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of stran-

15:6 The First Church Council

Chapter 15 gives a fascinating glimpse into issues of the early church, as such leaders as Peter, Paul, and James debated Jewish/Gentile issues. They agreed on a compromise position and issued a formal position paper, reproduced here, in which Jewish Christians asked the Gentiles to honor four of their practices. The two on food relate to a "kosher" method of food preparation designed to keep people from ingesting any animal blood.

²³ Or Barnabas ordained elders, or Barnabas had elders elected

9-11, 12

⁴¹⁷ 18 Some manuscripts things — ¹⁸known to the Lord for ages is his work

¹⁴ Greek Simeon, a variant of Simon, that is, Peter

¹⁷ Amos

gled animals and from blood. ²¹For Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath."

The Council's Letter to Gentile Believers

²²Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, two men who were leaders among the brothers. ²³With them they sent the following letter.

The apostles and elders, your brothers,

To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia

Greetings

²⁴We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. ²⁵So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul—²⁶men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. ²⁸It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: ²⁹You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things

Farewell

³⁰The men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. ³¹The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message. ³²Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers. ³³After spending some time there, they were sent off by the brothers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them.³⁴ But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.

Disagreement Between Paul and Barnabas

³⁵Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." ³⁷Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, ³⁸but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. ³⁹They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, ⁴⁰but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. ⁴¹He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Timothy Joins Paul and Silas

16 He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek. ²The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. ³Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. ⁴As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. ⁵So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

Paul's Vision of the Man of Macedonia

⁶Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. ⁷When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. ⁸So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. ⁹During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Lydia's Conversion in Philippi

¹¹From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day on to Neapolis. ¹²From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

¹³On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. ¹⁵When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

Paul and Silas in Prison

¹⁶Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. ¹⁷This girl followed Paul and the

16:10 Firsthand Report

In Acts 16, 21, and 28, Luke uses "we" in writing, for he accompanied the apostle Paul on some of his trips. His close association with Paul meant he had immediate access to the central character in Acts 13-28.

³³ Some manuscripts *them*. ³⁴but Silas decided to remain there

rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." 18:18 He kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.

18:19 When the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. 20 They brought them before the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar 21 by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice."

22 The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be

stripped and beaten. 23 After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. 24 Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose. 27 The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

29 The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell

INSIGHT

On the Road with the Apostle Paul

Paul, both Jewish and Roman, took the gospel into the melting pot

But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." 18:6

The book of Acts follows Paul on three distinct missionary journeys along the northeastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Normally in the ancient world, travel posed great hazards, with pirates, barbarian armies, and hostile border guards clogging up the roads. But by Paul's lifetime, Rome had established absolute mastery over a vast territory. Empire-wide peace, the famous *Pax Romana*—a condition that existed only twice in 700 years—prevailed.

Roman engineers had crisscrossed the empire with a network of roads (built so well that many still survive) and as a Roman citizen Paul had a passport to any destination. Language, too, was unified. The Greek tongue, as well as the Greek style of thinking, crossed ethnic barriers.

Paul's Strategy

In his missionary ventures, Paul focused primarily on chief trade towns, capital cities, and Roman colonies. Like modern cities today, these comprised a melting pot of diverse cultures. From these places, the gospel message would be carried across the globe.

Usually, Paul began with a visit to a local synagogue, establishing contact with fellow Jews. If they rejected his message—as often happened, he quickly turned to a non-Jewish audience.

When a promising church was established, Paul stayed on, sometimes as long as three years, to teach and to direct its spiritual growth. His letters glow with affection for the friends he developed in this way. (Acts 20 gives a glimpse of the intimacy he shared with one such group.) On his second and third journeys Paul revisited many of the churches he had founded.

Unusual Qualifications, Impressive Results

Paul's background uniquely qualified him for his adventures. A Pharisee who had studied with the famous teacher Gamaliel, he fully understood the Jewish mind. Roman citizenship gave him the status and respect he needed to gain official recognition and to survive threatening legal scrapes.

Paul's mastery of languages helped him also. He used Aramaic to relate to the early church leaders in Jerusalem, and fluency in Greek made possible a speech before philosophers in Athens.

Sometimes Paul was used by God to work miracles. In one tragicomic episode, a sleepy listener succumbed to Paul's all-night sermon and fell out a third-story window (20:7-12); Paul raised him from the dead.

By the end of his eventful life, Paul had left a ring of burgeoning churches around the eastern Mediterranean. To make sure his work would go on, he trained such leaders as Silas, Titus, Timothy, and the man who recorded much of what we know about Paul's life: Luke himself.

Life Questions Why did God choose Paul to lead the early church? What special qualifications do you have that God could use?

trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

³¹They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."

³²Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. ³³At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. ³⁴The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family.

³⁵When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: "Release those men." ³⁶The jailer told Paul, "The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace."

³⁷But Paul said to the officers: "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out."

³⁸The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. ³⁹They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. ⁴⁰After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and encouraged them. Then they left.

In Thessalonica

17 When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. ²As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³explaining and proving that the Christ^a had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ,"^a he said. ⁴Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.

⁵But the Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd.^b ⁶But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, ⁷and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus."^c ⁸When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. ⁹Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.

In Berea

¹⁰As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they

went to the Jewish synagogue. ¹¹The Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. ¹²Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.

¹³When the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, they went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up. ¹⁴The brothers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. ¹⁵The men who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

In Athens

¹⁶While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to dispute with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babbler trying to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we want to know what they mean." (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

²²Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "Men of Athens, I see that in every way you are very religious. ²³For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.

²⁴"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. ²⁵And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. ²⁶From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth, and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. ²⁷God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸For in him we live and move and have our being. As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

²⁹"Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by man's design and skill. ³⁰In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people every-

^a Or Messiah

^b Or the assembly of the people

where to repent. ³¹For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."

³²When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject." ³³At that, Paul left the Council. ³⁴A few men became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

In Corinth

18 After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. ²There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, ³and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. ⁴Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks

⁵When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. ⁶But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

⁷Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. ⁸Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized

⁹One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. ¹⁰For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city." ¹¹So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

¹²While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him into court. ¹³"This man," they charged, "is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law."

¹⁴Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, "If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanor or serious crime, it

would be reasonable for me to listen to you. ¹⁵But since it involves questions about words and names and your own law—settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things." ¹⁶So he had them ejected from the court. ¹⁷Then they all turned on Sosthenes the synagogue ruler and beat him in front of the court. But Gallio showed no concern whatever.

Priscilla, Aquila and Apollos

¹⁸Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the brothers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cenchrea because of a vow he had taken. ¹⁹They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. ²⁰When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined. ²¹But as he left, he promised, "I will come back if it is God's will." Then he set sail from Ephesus. ²²When he landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church and then went down to Antioch.

²³After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out from there and traveled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

²⁴Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. ²⁵He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

²⁷When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. On arriving, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. ²⁸For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

Paul in Ephesus

19 While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples ²and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

³So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?"

"John's baptism," they replied.

⁴Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." ⁵On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. ⁷There were about twelve men in all.

17:32 Athens: A Difficult Audience

Paul gave a remarkable speech to a gathering of philosophers and thinkers in the sophisticated university city of Athens. It appears he met with little success, and the results may have troubled him greatly. Acts 18:5 hints at a shift in his approach. Some scholars believe that the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians, reflecting on this period of time, may describe the strong impact of his experience in Athens.

¹ Or Messiah, also in verse 28

²⁵ Or with fervor in the Spirit

² Or after

⁴⁵ Or in

⁴⁶ Or other languages

⁸Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. ⁹But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. ¹⁰This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

¹¹God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

¹²Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." ¹³Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. ¹⁴One day, the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" ¹⁵Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

¹⁶When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. ¹⁷Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. ¹⁸A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas.^a ¹⁹In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

²⁰After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. "After I have been there," he said, "I must visit Rome also." ²¹He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.

The Riot in Ephesus

²²About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. ²³A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in no little business for the craftsmen. ²⁴He called them together, along with the workmen in related

trades, and said: "Men, you know we receive a good income from this business. ²⁵And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that man-made gods are no gods at all. ²⁶There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited, and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty."

²⁷When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" ²⁸Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia, and rushed as one man into the theater. ²⁹Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. ³⁰Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater.

³¹The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. ³²The Jews pushed Alexander to the front, and some of the crowd shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. ³³But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

³⁴The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: "Men of Ephesus, doesn't all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? ³⁵Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to be quiet and not do anything rash. ³⁶You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess. ³⁷If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. ³⁸If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly. ³⁹As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of today's events. In that case we would not be able to account for this commotion, since there is no reason for it." ⁴⁰After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

Through Macedonia and Greece

20 When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said good-by and set out for Macedonia. ²He traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece, ³where he stayed three months. Because the Jews made a plot against him just as he was about to sail for Syria, he decided to go back through Macedonia. ⁴He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia. ⁵These men went on ahead

19:24 Commercialized Religion

Ephesus was devoted to idolatry and to profit, and Paul's message threatened both. The citizens took great pride in their temple, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, and were outraged at anyone who might interfere with their profitable businesses dependent on religious pilgrims. The story presents a clear case of mob psychology. Paul started a riot, but he also founded one of his strongest churches, a community that later inspired the book of Ephesians.

^a19 A drachma was a silver coin worth about a day's wages.

Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'"

¹²When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem.

¹³Then Paul answered, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." ¹⁴When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done."

¹⁵After this, we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁶Some of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied us and brought us to the home of Mnason, where we were to stay. He was a man from Cyprus and one of the early disciples.

Paul's Arrival at Jerusalem

¹⁷When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers received us warmly. The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present. ¹⁸Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

¹⁹When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul, "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law. They have been instructed that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs. —What shall we do? They will certainly

INSIGHT

Paul's Legal Battles

470 Roman soldiers protected him from an angry mob

"And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me." (20:22-23)

The drumbeat starts with the last verse in chapter 20: "What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again." After this, wherever he went, Paul's friends begged him not to go to Jerusalem. One of them bound his own hands and feet with Paul's belt, publicly role-playing what was in store for Paul (21:10-11).

But Paul had survived shipwrecks, a stoning, beatings, and long nights in jail, and tear had never stopped him. Besides, he knew that God wanted him to take his word to Rome, and no disaster in Jerusalem could prevent that.

A Dangerous Revolutionary?

Thus, against all advice Paul went to Jerusalem. His reputation as a Christian missionary had spread, to such an extent that it took a brigade of 470 Roman soldiers to protect him from a Jewish mob who planned to kill him.

Luke details the process of Roman justice so thoroughly that some have speculated he wrote Acts as a legal brief for Paul's defense. Was Paul a violent terrorist intent on inciting revolt? Luke meticulously records that, no, Paul had no political ambitions and consistently worked within Roman law.

Most of the time, Roman law found Paul innocent. An official in Corinth dismissed charges against him (18:15), as did the town clerk at Ephesus (19:35-41). In Judea Governor Festus and King Agrippa both concluded Paul might have been freed outright had he not appealed to Caesar (26:32).

The Beginning of the End

Paul's last days of freedom summarize his turbulent life. His friends' fears regarding Jerusalem proved well-founded. A murderous mob there assailed him with false charges, and he had to be rescued bodily by soldiers.

In typical brazen style, Paul asked to address the unruly crowd, using the chance to confront them with his life's testimony. The crowd listened until he got to the part about a mission to the Gentiles; then it erupted.

In his speech (22:3-21), Paul referred back to the day he stood on the sidelines cheering as Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was killed. That violent scene was forever etched in Paul's mind as a reminder of his former life. But another memory was even more powerful: the blinding light on the road to Damascus. Ever after that event in Damascus, Paul seemed determined to save the human race as he had been stunned on that desert road. No matter how many nights in jail it cost him.

Life Questions Acts 20 shows Paul's closeness to other Christians. What produced such intense feelings? What could increase your closeness with others?

hear that you have come, ²⁴do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow.

²⁵Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everybody will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law. ²⁶As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality."

²⁷The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them.

Paul Arrested

When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, ²⁸shouting, "Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against our people and our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple area and defiled this holy place." ²⁹(They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple area.)

³⁰The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut. ³¹While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar. ³²He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

³³The commander came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. Then he asked who he was and what he had done. ³⁴Some in the crowd shouted one thing and some another, and since the commander could not get at the truth because of the uproar, he ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks. ³⁵When Paul reached the steps, the violence of the mob was so great he had to be carried by the soldiers. ³⁶The crowd that followed kept shouting, "Away with him!"

21:28 A Trumped-up Charge

Ironically, the arrest that led to Paul's final imprisonment came about because of a misunderstanding. He was actually trying to reassure the Jerusalem church of his loyalty by agreeing to take Jewish vows. But a rumor spread that Paul had illegally taken an "unclean" Gentile into a forbidden part of the temple, and a mob scene ensued. The remainder of Acts reports on various stages of Paul's legal appeals.

Paul Speaks to the Crowd

¹As the soldiers were about to take Paul into the barracks, he asked the commander, "May I say something to you?"

"Do you speak Greek?" he replied. ²"Aren't you the Egyptian who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists out into the desert some time ago?"

³Paul answered, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people."

⁴Having received the commander's permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. When they were all silent, he said to them **22** in Aramaic: "Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense."

⁵When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet.

Then Paul said: ⁶"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. ⁷I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, ⁸as also the high priest and all the Council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.

⁹About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. ¹⁰I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?'

¹¹"Who are you, Lord?" I asked.

"I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting," he replied. ¹²My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.

¹³"What shall I do, Lord?" I asked.

"Get up," the Lord said, "and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do." ¹⁴My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.

¹⁵A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. ¹⁶He stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I was able to see him.

¹⁷Then he said: 'The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. ¹⁸You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. ¹⁹And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

²⁰When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance ²¹and saw the Lord speaking. 'Quick!' he said to me. 'Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.'

²²"Lord," I replied, 'these men know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison

and beat those who believe in you. ²⁰And when the blood of your martyr^a Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him."

²¹"Then the Lord said to me, 'Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'"

Paul the Roman Citizen

²²The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, "Rid the earth of him! He's not fit to live!"

²³As they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, ²⁴the commander ordered Paul to be taken into the barracks. He directed that he be flogged and questioned in order to find out why the people were shouting at him like this. ²⁵As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, "Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?"

²⁶When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and reported it. "What are you going to do?" he asked. "This man is a Roman citizen."

²⁷The commander went to Paul and asked, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?"

"Yes, I am," he answered.

²⁸Then the commander said, "I had to pay a big price for my citizenship."

"But I was born a citizen," Paul replied.

²⁹Those who were about to question him withdrew immediately. The commander himself was alarmed when he realized that he had put Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains.

Before the Sanhedrin

³⁰The next day, since the commander wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the Sanhedrin to assemble. Then he brought Paul and had him stand before them.

23 Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, "My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day." ²At this the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth. ³Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you white-washed wall! You sit there to judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck!"

⁴Those who were standing near Paul said, "You dare to insult God's high priest?"

⁵Paul replied, "Brothers, I did not realize that he was the high priest; for it is written: 'Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.'^b"

⁶Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead." ⁷When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. ⁸(The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor

spirits, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.)

⁹There was a great uproar, and some of the teachers of the law who were Pharisees stood up and argued vigorously. "We find nothing wrong with this man," they said. "What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?" ¹⁰The dispute became so violent that the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them. He ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force and bring him into the barracks.

¹¹The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."

The Plot to Kill Paul

¹²The next morning the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. ¹³More than forty men were involved in this plot. ¹⁴They went to the chief priests and elders and said, "We have taken a solemn oath not to eat anything until we have killed Paul. ¹⁵Now then, you and the Sanhedrin petition the commander to bring him before you on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about his case. We are ready to kill him before he gets here."

¹⁶But when the son of Paul's sister heard of this plot, he went into the barracks and told Paul.

¹⁷Then Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the commander; he has something to tell him." ¹⁸So he took him to the commander.

The centurion said, "Paul, the prisoner, sent for me and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell you."

¹⁹The commander took the young man by the hand, drew him aside and asked, "What is it you want to tell me?"

²⁰He said: "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul before the Sanhedrin tomorrow on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about him. ²¹Don't give in to them, because more than forty of them are waiting in ambush for him. They have taken an oath not to eat or drink until they have killed him. They are ready now, waiting for your consent to their request."

²²The commander dismissed the young man and cautioned him, "Don't tell anyone that you have reported this to me."

23:6 Paul under Attack

Under pressure, Paul proved to be a formidable opponent. In this scene, he spoke back to a priest who struck him on the mouth. Using great skill, Paul divided his accusers by exploiting the differences between two Jewish sects, the Pharisees and Sadducees (see note on 4:1). Paul managed to arouse such intense opposition that a group of 40 conspirators vowed not to eat or drink until they had killed him.

^a20 Or witness

^b5 Exodus 22:28

Paul Transferred to Caesarea

²³Then he called two of his centurions and ordered them, "Get ready a detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at nine tonight.
²⁴Provide mounts for Paul so that he may be taken safely to Governor Felix."

²⁵He wrote a letter as follows:

To Claudius Lysias,

To His Excellency, Governor Felix:

Greetings

²⁷This man was seized by the Jews and they were about to kill him, but I came with my troops and rescued him, for I had learned that he is a Roman citizen. ²⁸I wanted to know why they were accusing him, so I brought him to their Sanhedrin. ²⁹I found that the accusation had to do with questions about their law, but there was no charge against him that deserved death or imprisonment. ³⁰When I was informed of a plot to be carried out against the man, I sent him to you at once. I also ordered his accusers to present to you their case against him.

³¹So the soldiers, carrying out their orders, took Paul with them during the night and brought him as far as Antipatris. ³²The next day they let the cavalry go on with him, while they returned to the barracks. ³³When the cavalry arrived in Caesarea, they delivered the letter to the governor and handed Paul over to him. ³⁴The governor read the letter and asked what province he was from. Learning that he was from Cilicia, ³⁵he said, "I will hear your case when your accusers get here." Then he ordered that Paul be kept under guard in Herod's palace.

The Trial Before Felix

24 Five days later the high priest Ananias went down to Caesarea with some of the elders and a lawyer named Tertullus, and they brought their charges against Paul before the governor. When Paul was called in, Tertullus presented his case before Felix: "We have enjoyed a long period of peace under you, and your foresight has brought about reforms in this nation. ³Everywhere and in every way, most excellent Felix, we acknowledge this with profound gratitude. ⁴But in order not to weary you further, I would request that you be kind enough to hear us briefly.

⁵"We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect and even tried to desecrate the temple; so we seized him. ⁶By examining him yourself you will be able to learn the truth about all these charges we are bringing against him."

⁷The Jews joined in the accusation, asserting that these things were true.

¹⁰When the governor motioned for him to speak Paul replied "I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation, so I gladly make my defense. ¹¹You can easily verify that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. ¹²My accusers did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple, or stirring up a crowd in the synagogues or anywhere else in the city. ¹³And they cannot prove to you the charges they are now making against me. ¹⁴However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, ¹⁵and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. ¹⁶So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.

¹⁷"After an absence of several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings. ¹⁸I was ceremonially clean when they found me in the temple courts doing this. There was no crowd with me, nor was I involved in any disturbance. ¹⁹But there are some Jews from the province of Asia, who ought to be here before you and bring charges if they have anything against me. ²⁰Or these who are here should state what crime they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin— ²¹unless it was this one thing I shouted as I stood in their presence: 'It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.'"

²²Then Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way, adjourned the proceedings. "When Lysias the commander comes," he said, "I will decide your case." ²³He ordered the centurion to keep Paul under guard but to give him some freedom and permit his friends to take care of his needs.

²⁴Several days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess. He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁵As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, "That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you." ²⁶At the same time he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him.

²⁷When two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, but because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison.

24:27 Left in Chains

Felix was unpopular with the Jews of Palestine. The brief report in Acts shows him to be shrewd and even corrupt (verse 26). Recalled by Rome because of his troubles with the Jews, Felix left Paul in chains for a period of two years. When the new Roman ruler arrived, the controversy over Paul hadn't died down. Jewish leaders immediately confronted Festus with their charges against Paul.

²³ The meaning of the Greek for this word is uncertain.

²⁶⁻⁸ Some manuscripts him and wanted to judge him according to our law.

But the commander Lysias came and with the use of much force snatched him from our hands and ordered his accusers to come before you. By

The Trial Before Festus

25 Three days after arriving in the province, Festus went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem, where the chief priests and Jewish leaders appeared before him and presented the charges against Paul. They urgently requested Festus, as a favor to them, to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem, for they were preparing an ambush to kill him along the way. Festus answered, "Paul is being held at Caesarea, and I myself am going there soon. Let some of your leaders come with me and press charges against the man there, if he has done anything wrong."

After spending eight or ten days with them, he went down to Caesarea, and the next day he convened the court and ordered that Paul be brought before him. When Paul appeared, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many serious charges against him, which they could not prove.

Then Paul made his defense: "I have done nothing wrong against the law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar."

Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there on these charges?"

Paul answered: "I am now standing before Caesar's court, where I ought to be tried. I have not done any wrong to the Jews, as you yourself know very well. If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!"

After Festus had conferred with his council, he declared: "You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!"

Festus Consults King Agrippa

A few days later King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to pay their respects to Festus. Since they were spending many days there, Festus discussed Paul's case with the king. He said: "There is a man here whom Felix left as a prisoner. When I went to Jerusalem, the chief priests and elders of the Jews brought charges against him and asked that he be condemned."

"I told them that it is not the Roman custom to hand over any man before he has faced his accusers and has had an opportunity to defend himself against their charges. When they came here with me, I did not delay the case, but convened the court the next day and ordered the man to be brought in. When his accusers got up to speak, they did not charge him with any of the crimes I had expected. Instead, they had some points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a dead man named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive. I was at a loss how to investigate such matters; so I asked if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem and stand trial there on these charges. When Paul made his appeal to be held over for

the Emperor's decision, I ordered him held until I could send him to Caesar."

Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I would like to hear this man myself."

He replied, "Tomorrow you will hear him."

Paul Before Agrippa

The next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and entered the audience room with the high ranking officers and the leading men of the city. At the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. Festus said, "King Agrippa, and all who are present with us, you see this man? The whole Jewish community has petitioned me about him in Jerusalem and here in Caesarea, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. I found he had done nothing deserving of death, but because he made his appeal to the Emperor I decided to send him to Rome. But I have nothing definite to write to His Majesty about him. Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that as a result of this investigation I may have something to write. For I think it is unreasonable to send on a prisoner without specifying the charges against him."

26 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself."

So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense: "King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews, and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently."

"The Jews all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem. They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that according to the strictest sect of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee. And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our fathers that I am on trial today. This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. O king, it is because of this hope that the Jews are accusing me. Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?"

"I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them."

"On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. About noon, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you

persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.

Then I asked, "Who are you, Lord?"

I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. The Lord replied. "Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. "I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them "to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.

So then King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. "First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also. I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds. "That is why the

Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing to you that the prophets and Moses said would happen. "That the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles.

"At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. "You are out of your mind, Paul," he shouted. "Your great learning is driving you insane."

"I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. "What I am saying is true and reasonable. "The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner. "King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do."

"Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?"

"Paul replied, "Short time or long, I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains."

"The king rose, and with him the governor and Bernice and those sitting with them. "They left the room, and while talking with one another, they

26:14 Kicking the Oxgoads

The proverb comes from a sharp "goad" farmers used to control their oxen hitched to a plough. It means something like "You are only hurting yourself."

INSIGHT

Rome at Last

Paul finally made it to the capital—in chains

From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. 28:23

Acts records 18 speeches in all, the last three of which were delivered before a very select audience. Roman officials, intrigued by the most talked-about prisoner in their corner of the empire, brought Paul out and asked him to perform, like a trained bear. As a result of their inquisition, he got his long-awaited trip to Rome.

It is hard for us today to realize how completely the city of Rome then dominated the world.

"All roads lead to Rome" was more than a figure of speech. Like a center of gravity, the city attracted all the roads and commerce, all the leaders and thinkers and fortune-seekers of the empire. Political and military power fanned out from Rome. It was the indisputable capital of the world. If Christianity was to gain a foothold anywhere, it had to be in Rome.

A Missionary in Chains

Ironically, Paul, the greatest spokesman for the Christian faith, arrived in Rome as a prisoner. He was exhausted, having just survived a harrowing shipwreck. In Rome, Paul got hours of quiet solitude to work on fond letters to the churches he had left behind.

In one sense, Acts ends anticlimactically, for Luke leaves Paul's life dangling. Most scholars believe Paul was released from this imprisonment and expanded his ministry into new frontiers. Luke records nothing of this period, and nothing about the trial of Paul or his eventual fate. He ends with a single memory, frozen in time: Paul, confined to his house, welcoming and preaching to all who come.

Paul could no longer choose his audience; they had to seek him. But boldly, in the heart of mighty Rome, he talked of a new kingdom and a new king. Christianity had made the journey, and the transition, from Jerusalem to Rome.

Life Questions: Is it better for Christianity to be popular or unpopular?

said, "This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment."

³²Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

Paul Sails for Rome

27 When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment. ²We boarded a ship from Adramyttum about to sail for ports along the coast of the province of Asia, and we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us.

³The next day we landed at Sidon; and Julius, in kindness to Paul, allowed him to go to his friends so they might provide for his needs. ⁴From there we put out to sea again and passed to the lee of Cyprus because the winds were against us. ⁵When we had sailed across the open sea off the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia. ⁶There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy and put us on board. ⁷We made slow headway for many days and had difficulty arriving off Cnidus. When the wind did not allow us to hold our course, we sailed to the lee of Crete, opposite Salmone. ⁸We moved along the coast with difficulty and came to a place called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea.

⁹Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was after the Fast.^a So Paul warned them, ¹⁰"Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also." ¹¹But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship. ¹²Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided that we should sail on, hoping to reach Phoenix and winter there. This was a harbor in Crete, facing both southwest and northwest.

The Storm

¹³When a gentle south wind began to blow, they thought they had obtained what they wanted; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. ¹⁴Before very long, a wind of hurricane force, called the "northeaster," swept down from the island. ¹⁵The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along. ¹⁶As we passed to the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were hardly able to make the lifeboat secure. ¹⁷When the men had hoisted it aboard, they passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. Fearing that they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along. ¹⁸We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. ¹⁹On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. ²⁰When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.

²¹After the men had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete, then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. ²²But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost, only the ship will be destroyed. ²³Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me ²⁴and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' ²⁵So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. ²⁶Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island."

The Shipwreck

²⁷On the fourteenth night we were still being driven across the Adriatic^b Sea, when about midnight the sailors sensed they were approaching land. ²⁸They took soundings and found that the water was a hundred and twenty feet^c deep. A short time later they took soundings again and found it was ninety feet^d deep. ²⁹Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight. ³⁰In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow. ³¹Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved." ³²So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it fall away.

³³Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. "For the last fourteen days," he said, "you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food—you haven't eaten anything. ³⁴Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head." ³⁵After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. ³⁶They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. ³⁷Altogether there were 276 of us on board. ³⁸When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.

³⁹When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship aground if they could. ⁴⁰Cutting loose the anchors, they left them in the sea and at the same time untied the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach. ⁴¹But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf.

⁴²The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping. ⁴³But the centurion wanted to spare Paul's life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. ⁴⁴The rest were to get there on planks or on pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land in safety.

^a9 That is, the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)

²⁸ Greek twenty orguans (about 37 meters)

^b27 In ancient times the name referred to an area extending well north of Italy.

^d28 Greek fifteen orguans (about 27 meters)

Letter on Malta

28 The next day we went on to the island of Malta. There Paul a fire and was wetted in all his body. It was raining and cold. Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and as he put the fire on a log, driven out by the heat, he said to his friends. When the islanders came under his wings from his hand, they said to him. This man must be a murderer. He has killed a man. But Paul shook the snake off his hand and suffered no ill effects. The people were so afraid of snakes that they called him a murderer. After a long time and seeing nothing happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his house and for three days entertained us in his house. His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in and after prayer placed his hands on him and healed him. When this had happened, he and all the sick on the island came and were cured. We remained on the island for three months.

Arrival at Rome

After three months we put out to sea in a ship of the Alexandrian trade. It was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux. We put out at Syracuse and sailed for three days. When there we got sail from a Tarentine. The next day the south wind came up and on the following day we landed at Rome. There we found some brothers and stayed with them a week. And so we came to Rome. The brothers there had heard of our coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appian and the Three Taverns to meet us. At the sight of these men Paul thanked God and was encouraged. When we got to

Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself with a soldier to guard him.

Paul Preaches at Rome Under Guard

Three days later he called together the leaders of the Jews. When they had assembled, Paul said to them. My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death. But when the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar - not that I had any charge to bring against my own people. After this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain.

They replied. We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of the brothers who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you. But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect.

They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement. The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet

29 "Go to this people and say,

"You will be ever hearing but never understanding,
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving."

30 For this people's heart has become calloused;
they hardly hear with their ears,
and they have closed their eyes.
Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts
and turn, and I would heal them."

31 Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!"

32 For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.

28:16 Time on His Hands

Luke reports that controversy about the Christian sect had preceded Paul to Rome (verse 22). The apostle put his time of house arrest to good use, evangelizing all who came to see him and writing to the churches he had founded along the way. Such New Testament books as Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon came out of this period of protective custody, which may have lasted four years.

ROMANS

INTRODUCTION

A Most Demanding Audience

Romans summarizes the Christian faith

I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. 1:8

Imagine yourself in a college speech course. Your assignment: a brief speech on "the meaning of life." Over late-night cups of coffee, you outline the Christian faith and what it means to you. You devote a lot of time to this assignment—after all, this speech may be the only clear expression of faith your classmates will ever hear.

But what if you were asked to write up the speech for your local paper? Instead of a few dozen listeners, you would have thousands of readers. Undoubtedly, you would devote even more time and care to preparation.

Letter to the Center of the World

Let your imagination run even further. How would you react if you were asked to adapt this same speech for a front-page story in a newspaper? This newspaper has sophisticated, demanding readers. In writing for them, you would meticulously pore over every word, polishing phrases and making sure your thoughts were complete and well-expressed.

You can see a similar process at work in the apostle Paul's various letters. Some of his letters were, like a college speech, addressed to a small cluster of people he knew by name. Often they consisted of warm, personal words of advice or even fatherly scolding.

But, *Romans*...the very title of this book conjures up images of the powerful empire that ruled the western world. To people of Paul's day, Rome was the center of the world in every way: law, culture, power, and learning. A letter to this sophisticated audience had to be impressive indeed.

In *Romans*, Paul brilliantly set down the whole scope of Christian doctrine, which, at that time, was still being passed along orally from town to town. Paul wanted to convince those demanding readers that Christ held the answers to all of life's important questions.

One-Volume Summary

People who love to read are often asked questions like this: "What one book would you most want along if you were stranded on a deserted island?" (G.K. Chesterton gave a classic reply: "Thomas's *Guide to Practical Shipbuilding*"!) If asked the same question about a single book of the Bible, many Christians would choose *Romans*. Compact, yet all-encompassing, it summarizes the Christian faith.

Despite its thoroughness, however, *Romans* does not read like a dry book of theology. Great revivals in church history have been spawned by a study of this book. Augustine, Martin Luther, and John Wesley all trace their spiritual renewals to a reading of *Romans*. It gives the apostle Paul's final answer to questions about the "meaning of life."

How to Read Romans

Romans is a book to savor, slowly and carefully. Paul is developing an argument, and his logic unfolds thought by thought from the very first chapter. You may recognize many well-known verses in *Romans*; note these in their context as a part of Paul's overall presentation.

Romans divides into a clear outline. Chapters 1-3 introduce the book and give the need for the good news of the gospel. The end of chapter 3, called the "central theological passage in the Bible," compresses the core message in a brief paragraph. Chapters 4 and 5 expand on that message.

Romans 6-8 discuss the working out of the gospel in a Christian's life. Paul then pauses for

three chapters (9-11) to link his argument to the Old Testament history of the Jews. From there, he proceeds to give practical advice on specific problems (12-16).

It will require time and concentration to grasp fully the teachings of Romans; few people would claim to have "mastered" this book. But it has no equal as a concise, reasonable statement of the Christian faith.

PLANS FOR READING ROMANS

PLAN 1: An Overview of Romans in 4 Days

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to Romans, and then read chapter 3 as an summary of the whole book. Take your time as you read the end, verses 21-31.
- ☐ Day 2. Read of Paul's struggles against sin in chapter 7.
- ☐ Day 3. Paul concludes this great section on the Christian life with the triumphant message of chapter 8.
- ☐ Day 4. Paul gets practical toward the end of the book. Read his direct instructions on how to live in chapter 12.

PLAN 2: All of Romans in 14 Days

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12-13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15-16

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, ^aand who through the Spirit^b of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God^b by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. ^cThrough him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. ^dAnd you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

^eTo all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's Longing to Visit Rome

^fFirst, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. ^gGod, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you ^hin my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.

ⁱI long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—^jthat is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. ^kI do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest

among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.

^lI am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. ^mThat is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome.

ⁿI am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ^oFor in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last,^p just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."^q

God's Wrath Against Mankind

^rThe wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, ^ssince what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. ^tFor since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine

1:17 Luther's Gateway to Heaven

Verses 16-17, a capsule summary of Paul's message to the Romans, changed Martin Luther forever.

After he finally understood the phrase "righteousness from God," Luther said,

"Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning. . . . This passage of Paul became to me a gateway to heaven."

^a4 Or who as to his spirit

^b4 Or was appointed to be the Son of God with power

^c17 Or is from faith to faith

^d17 Hab. 2:4

nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse

²¹For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

²⁴Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

²⁶Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

²⁸Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. ²⁹They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. ³²Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

God's Righteous Judgment

2 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. ²Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. ³So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? ⁴Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?

⁵But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. ⁶God "will give to each person according to what he has done."^a ⁷To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. ⁸But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. ⁹There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first

for the Jew, then for the Gentile; ¹⁰but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good—first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ¹¹For God does not show favoritism.

¹²All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. ¹⁴(Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) ¹⁶This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

The Jews and the Law

¹⁷Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and brag about your relationship to God; ¹⁸if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law; ¹⁹if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, ²⁰an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— ²¹you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? ²²You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? ²³You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? ²⁴As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."^b

²⁵Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised. ²⁶If those who are not circumcised keep the law's requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? ²⁷The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker.

²⁸A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. ²⁹No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.

God's Faithfulness

3 What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? ²Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God.

³What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? ⁴Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written:

"So that you may be proved right when you speak

^a6 Psalm 62:12, Prov. 24:12

^b24 Isaiah 52:5, Ezek. 36:22

^c27 Or *who, by means of a*

and prevail when you judge."^a

⁵But if our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.) ⁶Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world? ⁷Someone might argue, "If my falsehood enhances God's truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?" ⁸Why not say—as we are being slanderously reported as saying and as some claim that we say—"Let us do evil that good may result"? Their condemnation is deserved.

No One Is Righteous

⁹What shall we conclude then? Are we any better?^b Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. ¹⁰As it is written

- "There is no one righteous, not even one;
¹¹ there is no one who understands,
 no one who seeks God.
¹²All have turned away,
 they have together become worthless;
 there is no one who does good,
 not even one."^c
¹³"Their throats are open graves;
 their tongues practice deceit."^d
 "The poison of vipers is on their lips."^e
¹⁴"Their mouths are full of cursing and
 bitterness."^f
¹⁵"Their feet are swift to shed blood;
¹⁶ ruin and misery mark their ways,
¹⁷and the way of peace they do not know."^g
¹⁸"There is no fear of God before their eyes."^h

¹⁹Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. ²⁰Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

3:10 Need for a Cure

If a doctor announced, in an excited voice, a cure for the Paraguayan flu, who would notice? For his discovery to impress us so deeply that we would seek vaccination, he would first need to prove the terrible danger of the unknown virus.

Paul's message in Romans is the great news about God's amazing grace: a complete cure is available to all. But people won't seek a cure until they know they are ill. Thus, Romans begins with one of the darkest descriptions in the Bible. Paul concludes, "There is no one righteous, not even one" (3:10). The entire world is doomed to spiritual death unless a cure can be found.

Righteousness Through Faith

²¹But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²²This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement,ⁱ through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—²⁶he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

²⁷Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. ²⁸For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. ²⁹Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, ³⁰since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. ³¹Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

Abraham Justified by Faith

⁴What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? ²If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. ³What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."^j

⁴Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. ⁵However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. ⁶David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

- ⁷"Blessed are they
 whose transgressions are forgiven,
 whose sins are covered.
⁸Blessed is the man
 whose sin the Lord will never count against
 him."^k

⁹Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. ¹⁰Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! ¹¹And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. ¹²And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are

^a4 Psalm 51:4 ^b9 Or worse ¹² Psalms 14:3, 53:13, Eccles 7:20 ⁴¹³ Psalm 5:9 ⁴¹³ Psalm 140:3
¹⁴ Psalm 10:7 ⁴¹⁷ Isaiah 59:2-8 ⁴¹⁸ Psalm 36:1 ²⁵ Or as the one who would turn aside his wrath, taking away sin
¹ Gen 15:6, also in verse 22 ⁴⁸ Psalm 32:1,2

A Modern Peace Child

God spans the gulf

Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 5:7-8

Don Richardson spent several frustrating years among the Sawi tribe in New Guinea. He had come from America as an anthropologist/missionary, hoping to bring the Christian message to a nearly stone-age tribe. But his message kept colliding with the tribe's unusual beliefs.

Christian values of love and forgiveness had no appeal to the Sawi, for they held up deceit as the highest virtue. They saw no reason to change their patterns of cruelty and cannibalism. In fact, when Richardson told them the story of Jesus, only one incident sparked their interest: the story of Judas's betrayal! To the Sawi, Judas was a genuine hero; he had shrewdly penetrated the trusted inner circle of disciples before turning against Jesus.

A Mysterious Ceremony

Every time Richardson tried to share Christ with the Sawi, the attempt miscarried. Finally, after watching the fourteenth bloody battle fought outside his home, Richardson reached the end of his patience. How could he ever break through to such violent people? He decided to leave New Guinea, despite the Sawi's pleas that he stay.

Just before Richardson left, the Sawi and their deadly enemies, the Haenam tribe, staged an elaborate ceremony in front of his home. It was their final effort to convince the missionary to stay.

The entire village gathered to watch the event. All were silent except the Sawi chief's wife. She screamed loudly as the chief seized their six-month-old baby from her arms and held him high in the air. The chief then carried his son to the enemy chief and gave him to his enemies. A member of the tribe explained to Richardson that the Haenam tribe would rename the baby and rear him as one of its own.

Breakthrough

Richardson knew that no Sawi could be fully trusted, since any action might be part of an elaborate deception. But that memorable day he learned of the one great exception: the peace child. A chief's giving his own son to his enemies—that profound, painful act would overcome all suspicion. By mutual agreement, as long as the peace child lived, no wars could be fought between the two tribes.

Something clicked in Don Richardson's mind as he watched the spectacle. At last he had found an analogy—a parallel story—built into the Sawi's culture that could convey the message of a forgiving God. He gathered members of the tribe around him and, with a pounding heart and dry throat, told them of God's peace child. God had sent his own Son, Jesus, to live among enemies, to make peace with humankind.

A Key Passage

Perhaps Paul felt that same pounding heart and dry throat as he presented in 11 concise verses, Romans 3:21-31, the meaning of God's offering of his peace child Jesus. The first part of Romans spelled out the vast gulf between God and people. Now Paul describes how God spanned this gulf. Some have called this section "the central theological passage in the Bible."

After stating the facts, Paul backs them up with historical proofs in chapters 4 and 5. Keeping his Jewish audience in mind, Paul supports his concepts by citing Abraham, Moses, and even Adam.

Christ's death, says Paul, was not a new idea, an addition to the Old Testament law. Rather, it was the completion of the law, what the Old Testament implied and foreshadowed. Like the Sawi, the Jewish culture had its own "redemptive analogies"; and they all found true fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

Life Questions Have you ever felt far from God? Does Romans 3-5 say anything that might help during those times?

circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised

¹³It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. ¹⁴For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless, ¹⁵because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression

¹⁶Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. ¹⁷As it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations."^a He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.

¹⁸Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be."^b ¹⁹Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. ²⁰Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, ²¹being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. ²²This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness."^c ²³The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, ²⁴but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. ²⁵He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification

Peace and Joy

5 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. ³Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into

our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

⁶You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! ¹¹Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Death Through Adam, Life Through Christ

¹²Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—¹³for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. ¹⁴Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

¹⁵But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! ¹⁶Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. ¹⁷For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

¹⁸Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. ¹⁹For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

²⁰The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, ²¹so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ

6 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ²By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

4:13 How to Please God

Paul goes to great lengths in chapter 4 to make a theological point. He traces the Jewish heritage back to Abraham, who lived hundreds of years before Moses and the Old Testament law. Abraham, says Paul, pleased God exactly as we do: through faith. The Old Testament law was never meant to bridge the gap between God and people. Only Jesus Christ could do that. Paul stresses that the law was given not to bring about redemption, but to point up the need for it (5:20).

^a17 Gen. 17:5

^b18 Gen. 15:5

^c1,2,3 Or let us

⁵If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. ⁶For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with,^a that we should no longer be slaves to sin—⁷because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

⁸Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again, death no longer has mastery over him. ¹⁰The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

¹¹In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹²Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. ¹³Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. ¹⁴For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

Slaves to Righteousness

¹⁵What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. ¹⁸You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

¹⁹I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness. ²⁰When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. ²¹What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! ²²But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in^b Christ Jesus our Lord.

6:1 More Sin, More Forgiveness?

Paul often uses this writing technique: he pauses in the middle of an argument to answer objections or questions that may be occurring to the reader. Some people have actually reached the conclusion that horrifies Paul in this passage. The Russian monk Rasputin, for example, concluded, "I'll sin more to earn more forgiveness." He lived a bizarre life of immorality.

An Illustration From Marriage

⁷Do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to men who know the law—that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives? ²For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. ³So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man.

⁴So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. ⁵For when we were controlled by the sinful nature,^c the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. ⁶But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

Struggling With Sin

⁷What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet."^d ⁸But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead. ⁹Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. ¹⁰I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. ¹¹For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. ¹²So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

¹³Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

¹⁴We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. ¹⁵I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ¹⁶And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.^e For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ²⁰Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

²¹So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²²For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war

^a Or removed passions

^b Or through

^c Or the flesh, also in verse 25

^d Exodus 20:17, Deut. 5:21

^e Or my

against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. ²⁴What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ²⁵Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Life Through the Spirit

8 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,^a ²because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. ³For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature,^b God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.^c And so he condemned sin in sinful man,^d ⁴in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

⁵Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires;

but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; ⁷the sinful mind^e is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

⁹You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. ¹¹And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

¹²Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. ¹³For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, ¹⁴because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit that makes

^a Some later manuscripts Jesus who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit, 5, 8, 9, 12 and 13

^b Or man for sin

^c Or in the flesh

^d Or mind set on the flesh

^e Or the flesh, also in verses 4,

^f Or the mind set on the flesh

INSIGHT

Inner Struggles

Paul wanted to do right, but failed

So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 7:21

The first part of Romans paints a grand picture of God's grace and forgiveness, so grand that Paul opens himself up to some tricky questions. Someone might say: "The more I sin, the more opportunity God has to forgive me, right? Then I can live any way I want!"

In chapter 6, Paul reacts to the "Now I have an excuse to sin" line of thinking with shock and outrage. And then he turns to practical issues in the Christian life. Why is it that somehow even the best Christians keep on sinning? Does God forgive every sin, no matter how bad? What really happens when we become Christians? Do we change or don't we?

Illustrations from Life

To explain how the Christian life works, Paul uses three analogies: death, slavery, and marriage. Each reveals something about the forces at work inside a Christian, and the three together offer an ever-deepening view of the new relationship of freedom in Christ.

The very best illustration of the Christian life, though, is a believer who bares personal struggles. And in chapter 7 Paul offers himself as an example of the struggle involved when an imperfect person commits himself to a perfect God. Paul admits his own anguish and despair at failing even when he has good intentions (7:7-25). Any Christian who wonders, "How can I ever get rid of my nagging sins?" will find comfort in Paul's frank confession in chapter 7.

A Final Answer One Day

Then, like a gust of fresh air, chapter 8 follows with one of the most hopeful passages in the Bible. The Holy Spirit is its theme, and Paul defines the Spirit's role in our lives. The Spirit works alongside us as we relate to God, even praying for us when we don't know what to ask (8:26). Mainly, the Spirit teaches us the full benefits of being a child of God.

The inner conflict won't disappear completely yet, says Paul, for we are part of a "groaning," imperfect creation (8:18-25). But one day all of creation will be made perfect again. That promise of ultimate victory should assure us that nothing can ever separate us from God's love (8:38-39).

Life Questions With which chapter do you identify more closely, Romans 7 or 8?

you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship.^a And by him we cry, "Abba,^b Father." ¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Future Glory

¹⁸I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

²⁶In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. ²⁷And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

More Than Conquerors

²⁸And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him,^c who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brothers. ³⁰And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

³¹What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³Who will bring any charge

against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶As it is written

"For your sake we face death all day long,
we are considered as sheep to be
slaughtered."

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God's Sovereign Choice

⁹I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit— ²I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, ⁴the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons, theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. ⁵Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised!^d Amen.

⁶It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. ⁷Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."^e ⁸In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring. ⁹For this was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son."^f

¹⁰Not only that, but Rebekah's children had one and the same father, our father Isaac. ¹¹Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand ¹²not by works but by him who calls—she was told, "The older will serve the younger."^g ¹³Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."^h

¹⁴What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! ¹⁵For he says to Moses,

"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy,
and I will have compassion on whom I have
compassion."

¹⁶It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy. ¹⁷For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose,

8:28 Only Good Things?

This famous verse is often misquoted or stretched to mean more than it says. It should be read along with the next two paragraphs. Paul doesn't promise that only good, or pleasurable, things will come to the Christian. What he does say is that even the difficult experiences described in verses 35-39 can be used in God's overall plan for good. And nothing can separate us from the love of God.

^a Aramaic for Father

²⁰ 21 Or subjected it in hope ²¹ For

⁴²⁸ Some manuscripts And we know that all

things will be good for those who love God

³⁸ Or we are, together with those who love him, being about what is good with those

who love him 44 22

³⁶ Or our heavenly rulers

³⁵ Or Christ, who is over all God be forever praised! Or Christ, and who is

et al. be forever praised!

¹⁷ Gen 21:12

⁹ Gen 18:10-14

¹² Gen 28:21

¹¹ Mal 1:2-3

¹³ Exod 33:18

that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."^a
¹⁸Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

¹⁹One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?" ²⁰But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" ^b²¹Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?

²²What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? ²³What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory—²⁴even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? ²⁵As he says in Hosea:

"I will call them 'my people' who are not my people;
 and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one,"^c

²⁶and,

"It will happen that in the very place where it was said to them,
 'You are not my people,'
 they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"^d

²⁷Isaiah cries out concerning Israel:

"Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea,
 only the remnant will be saved.

²⁸For the Lord will carry out his sentence on earth with speed and finality."^e

²⁹It is just as Isaiah said previously

"Unless the Lord Almighty
 had left us descendants,
 we would have become like Sodom,
 we would have been like Gomorrah."^f

Israel's Unbelief

³⁰What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; ³¹but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. ³²Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone." ³³As it is written:

"See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble
 and a rock that makes them fall,
 and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."^g

10 Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. ²For I can testify about them that they are

zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. ³Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. ⁴Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

⁵Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: "The man who does these things will live by them."^h ⁶But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'"ⁱ (that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷or "Who will descend into the deep?"^j (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,"^k that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: ⁹That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. ¹¹As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."^l ¹²For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."^m

¹⁴How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"ⁿ

¹⁶But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?"^o ¹⁷Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. ¹⁸But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did:

"Their voice has gone out into all the earth,
 their words to the ends of the world."^p

¹⁹Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says,

"I will make you envious by those who are not a nation;
 I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding."^q

²⁰And Isaiah boldly says,

"I was found by those who did not seek me;
 I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me."^r

²¹But concerning Israel he says,

"All day long I have held out my hands
 to a disobedient and obstinate people."^s

The Remnant of Israel

11 I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descend-

^a Exodus 9:16 ²⁰ Isaiah 29:16, 45:9 ²⁵ Hosea 2:23 ²⁶ Hosea 1:10 ²⁸ Isaiah 10:22, 23 ²⁹ Isaiah 4:9
³⁰ Isaiah 8:14, 28:16 ³¹ Lev. 18:5 ³² Deut. 30:12 ³³ Deut. 30:13 ³⁴ Deut. 30:14 ³⁵ Isaiah 28:16 ³⁶ Joel 2:32
³⁷ Isaiah 52:1 ³⁸ Isaiah 5:1 ³⁹ Psalm 14:4 ⁴⁰ Deut. 32:21 ⁴¹ Isaiah 65:1 ⁴² Isaiah 65:2

and at Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what the Scripture says in the message about Elijah—he appeared to God saying that, "Lord, they have killed your prophets and now down your altar, I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me." And what was God's answer to him? "I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal." So even at the present time there are a remnant chosen by grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer by works, if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

"What then?" What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened. As it is written:

God gave them a spirit of stupor,
eyes so that they could not see
and ears so that they could not hear
to this very day.¹⁸

¹⁹And David says:

May their base become a snare and a trap,
a stumbling block and a retribution for them;
May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see,
and their backs be bent forever.²⁰

Ingrafted Branches

"Again I ask. Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring!"

"I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry, in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them."

11:11 The Future of the Jews

In chapters 9 and 10, Paul painfully admits that, on the whole, the Jews did not believe on Christ. Despite all the advantages of Old Testament history, they "stumbled over the 'stumbling stone'" (9:33). In chapter 11, Paul goes back over that history and asks whether it was futile. Will the Jews come to believe in Christ some day? Did their tragic experience produce any advantage for the rest of the world? This chapter clearly shows God's eternal love for his chosen people. Paul concludes with a poetic outburst, celebrating God's mysterious ways of working on earth.

¹⁸ Rom 1:23; ¹⁹ Ps 135:4; ²⁰ Some manuscripts by grace. But if by works, then it is no longer grace; if it were, work would be due to merit. ¹⁸ Deut. 29:4; Isaiah 29:10. ¹⁹ Psalm 69:22,23.

INSIGHT

A Crushing Blow to Paul

Does God break his promises?

have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 9:2

Does anything bring more pain to a new Christian than family rejection? A teenager converts to Christianity. Her parents overreact. They push away all her attempts to present the appealing faith of the gospel. What a good news for her is seen as bad news by the family.

Some new Christians can meet down the walls of suspicion and hostility. But others are treated as diseased persons by family members and forced to live in a state of emotional quarantine.

Anyone who has lived through such an experience can understand the agonizing dilemma Paul faced. Members of his own race, the Jews, were rejecting the gospel he had committed his life to.

Can God Be Trusted?

Rejection by the Jews was a crushing blow to Paul, and he interrupted his letter to the Romans to consider the dilemma. These three chapters (9-11) contain some of his strongest words ever, including an interlude to reflect his own relationship with Christ for the sake of his race (9:3).

The issues discussed here apply to non-Jews as well, for they raise basic questions about God. How can God uphold the Jewish people, ignoring the promises he made to them in Old Testament times? Or is it possible he also break promises made to us today?

For Paul, a Jew who called himself an apostle to the Gentiles, no other issue was so important as the future of his people. So he linked the brilliant theology set forth in Romans to God's past promises and future activity among the Jews.

In Romans 9:11, Paul explains how God worked with people disappointed in him: the Jews were deeply disappointed in God. What does Paul say that might help answer your questions?

¹⁵For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? ¹⁶If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy, if the root is holy, so are the branches.

¹⁷If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, ¹⁸do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root but the root supports you. ¹⁹You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." ²⁰Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. ²¹For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

²²Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. ²³And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

All Israel Will Be Saved

²⁵I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:

"The deliverer will come from Zion;
he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.

²⁷And this is ^amy covenant with them
when I take away their sins."^b

²⁸As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, ²⁹for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. ³⁰Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, ³¹so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. ³²For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

Doxology

³³Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom
and ^dknowledge of God!

How unsearchable his judgments,
and his paths beyond tracing out!

³⁴"Who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?"^e

³⁵"Who has ever given to God,
that God should repay him?"^f

³⁶For from him and through him and to him are
all things

To him be the glory forever! Amen

Living Sacrifices

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. ²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

³For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. ⁴Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. ⁷If it is serving, let him serve, if it is teaching, let him teach; ⁸if it is encouraging, let him encourage, if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously, if it is leadership, let him govern diligently, if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

Love

⁹Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹²Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. ¹⁷Do not be conceited.

¹⁸Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. ¹⁹If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ²⁰Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay,"^g says the Lord. ²¹On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.
In doing this, you will heap burning coals on
his head."^h

²²Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Submission to the Authorities

13 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The au-

^a27 Or will be
^bwisdom and the
moral work
^c27 Isaiah 59:20, 21; 27:9; Jer. 31:33, 34
^d34 Isaiah 40:13
^e35 Job 41:11
^f19 Deut. 32:35
^g20 Prov. 25:21, 22

^h31 Some manuscripts do not have *nor*
ⁱ1 Or reasonable
^j43 Or riches and the
^k16 Or willing to do

thorities that exist have been established by God. ²Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. ³For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. ⁴For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. ⁵Therefore it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience

⁶This is also why you pay taxes, for the authori-

ties are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. ⁷Give everyone what you owe him. If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor

Love, for the Day Is Near

⁸Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet,"^a and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself."^b ¹⁰Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

¹¹And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹²The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. ¹⁴Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.^c

The Weak and the Strong

14 Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.

^a Exodus 20:13-15, 17; Deut. 5:17-19, 21

^b Lev. 19:18

^c 14 Or the flesh

INSIGHT

Down-to-Earth Problems

When Christians disagree about what's right and wrong

Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 12:9

Too often religion is viewed as something for those who retreat from the real world. When there's nothing else to do, *then* is the time to ask abstract questions about God.

Such a notion would surely have exasperated the apostle Paul. To him, religion was worthless unless it made a difference in how people lived. Therefore, he concluded the most concise theological book in the Bible with a down-to-earth discussion of contemporary problems.

Revolutionaries and Weaker Brothers

The issue of politics surfaces in Romans (13:1-7). How should a Christian relate to government? In Paul's day, when Christians were living under Nero's tyrannical regime, that question was hotly debated, as it still is in our revolution-oriented era.

Christians in Rome were also disagreeing on what was proper behavior for a Christian. 14:1-15:4: One person was sure another was sinning, but that "offender" was convinced his accuser was hopelessly narrow-minded. Who was right? The specific issues change with each culture, but Paul's guidelines on the proper attitudes apply to all.

Paul did not live as an intellectual recluse. He applied his theology to life, practicing what he preached. In fact, the lotty book of Romans was written while he was out raising money for famine victims in Jerusalem (15:25-27).

Life Questions: Christians in Paul's day hotly debated such issues as eating meat, celebrating holidays, and drinking wine. What issues do Christians debate today? What attitude should we have toward Christians we differ with?

31One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. 32The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. 33Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

34One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. 35He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. 36For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. 37If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

38For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. 39You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. 40It is written

"As surely as I live," says the Lord,
'every knee will bow before me,
every tongue will confess to God.'"

41So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

42Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. 43As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. 44If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died. 45Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil. 46For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, 47because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.

14:2 Who Is Weak and Who Is Strong?

According to Paul, a weaker brother is a new believer who needs many rules and regulations. Christians in Paul's day debated such issues as vegetarianism, eating meat sacrificed to idols, and celebrating pagan festival days. Paul's advice to both weak and strong Christians of his day applies to people in all cultures who debate questionable issues. Elsewhere, Paul speaks to legalists: "strong" Christians who nevertheless insist on many rules and regulations (see Colossians 2:16-23).

19Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. 20Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. 21It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.

22So whatever you believe about these things, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. 23But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith, and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

15 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. 2Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. 3For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written, "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." 4For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

5May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, 6so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. 8For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews^d on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs 9so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written:

"Therefore I will praise you among the
Gentiles;

I will sing hymns to your name."

10Again, it says,

"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people."

11And again,

"Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,
and sing praises to him, all you peoples."

12And again, Isaiah says,

"The Root of Jesse will spring up,
one who will arise to rule over the nations;
the Gentiles will hope in him."

13May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul the Minister to the Gentiles

14I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another. 15I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me 16to be a minister of Christ

^a11 Isaiah 45:23

^b14 Or that nothing

^c3 Psalm 69:9

^d16 Deut. 32:43

^e11 Psalm 117:1

^f12 Isaiah 11:10

^g8 Greek circumcision

^h9 2 Samuel 22:50; Psalm 18:49

Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

¹⁷Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. ¹⁸I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done— ¹⁹by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. ²⁰It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. ²¹Rather, as it is written:

"Those who were not told about him will see,
and those who have not heard will
understand."^a

²²This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you.

Paul's Plan to Visit Rome

²³But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been long-ing for many years to see you, ²⁴I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while pass-ing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while. ²⁵Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there. ²⁶For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. ²⁷They were pleased to do it, and in-deed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material bless-ings. ²⁸So after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this fruit, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way. ²⁹I know that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ.

³⁰I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. ³¹Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there, ³²so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and together with you be re-freshed. ³³The God of peace be with you all. Amen.

15:26 Paul the Fundraiser

Paul wrote Romans while traveling to raise funds for famine relief. Another letter (2 Corinthians 8) gives more details on this mercy mission on behalf of the Jews in Jerusalem. Paul's actions set an example of unity for a church composed of both Jews and Gentiles—unity sorely needed by groups racked by the divisions described in chapter 14.

Personal Greetings

16 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a ser-vant^b of the church in Cenchrea. ²I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many people, including me.

³Greet Priscilla^c and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. ⁴They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them.

⁵Greet also the church that meets at their house. Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia.

⁶Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you.

⁷Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.

⁸Greet Ampliatus, whom I love in the Lord.

⁹Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys.

¹⁰Greet Apelles, tested and approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus.

¹¹Greet Herodion, my relative.

Greet those in the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.

¹²Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord.

Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord.

¹³Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me, too.

¹⁴Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brothers with them.

¹⁵Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the saints with them.

¹⁶Greet one another with a holy kiss.

All the churches of Christ send greetings.

¹⁷I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. ¹⁸For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. ¹⁹Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I am full of joy over you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.

²⁰The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

²¹Timothy, my fellow worker, sends his greet-ings to you, as do Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my relatives.

²²I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter, greet you in the Lord.

²³Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy, sends you his greetings.

Erastus, who is the city's director of public

^a21 Isaiah 52:15

^b1 Or *deaconess*

^c3 Greek *Prisca*, a variant of *Priscilla*

works, and our brother Quartus send you their greetings.”

“Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for

long ages past, ²⁶but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him— ²⁷to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

*11 Some manuscripts then greetings. ²⁴May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen

INSIGHT

The Greatest Missionary Prayer Letter Ever Written

Paul asks for support

I hope to visit you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while. 15:24

As any world traveler knows, a journey of thousands of miles requires careful planning and preparation. The traveler needs to prepare the funds that will be needed to meet expenses, plan the itinerary, communicate with those people who will meet him in faraway places, and do this all far in advance of the trip itself. If such preparations are important for someone who is traveling for a few weeks, how much more critical for the missionary or immigrant who plans to live for months or years in a strange land.

A Plea for Help from the World Traveler

Paul was not only the greatest missionary of his day, but also an experienced world traveler. In Romans 15:19 he states that he has already traveled through the greater part of the Roman Empire, communicating the Good News to everyone who would hear. In the beginning of his letter to the Roman Christians (1:10-15) and again at the end (15:22-29), Paul reveals to them that an important purpose for writing is to prepare the way for his planned visit to Rome.

Paul is concerned not only that the Romans are prepared to receive him and his declaration of the Good News, but even more that the Roman Christians are ready to help him on his proposed mission to Spain. The entire letter can be read as an argument to convince the Roman Christians to support Paul's new work as an apostle to the Spaniards.

By explaining the basic system of salvation in such detail, Paul presents the need for the natives of Spain to hear the gospel, to put their trust in Christ, and to receive the righteousness of God. By emphasizing the relationship of the Gentiles to the promises that God made to the Jewish people, Paul presents the need for the Spanish Gentiles to hear the Good News just as the Romans have heard it.

“How can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’ ” (10:14-15).

So, in the book of Romans, Paul the world traveler, the missionary, the fund raiser, and the theological scholar, becomes Paul the *recruiter*, recruiting the church of Rome to join him in his task. He asks them to assist him (15:24), to pray for him (15:30), and to refresh him (15:32). Until this point in his ministry, Paul had been commissioned and supported by the church in Antioch. However, with Spain located at the farthest western edge of the known civilized world, Paul knew that he needed the partnership of those believers living in the heart of the empire.

Life Questions: Do those who carry the gospel to far-off places today still need Christian partners as Paul did? How does the book of Romans today help us to support those who communicate the Good News in faraway places?

1 CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION

The Last Place to Start a Church

Few expected much from crazy Corinth

Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. 1:26,27

Every large city has one pocket where prostitutes, strippers, gamblers, and drug dealers hang out. Tourists stroll by to gawk at the sights. In the ancient world, the whole city of Corinth was known for that kind of lifestyle. Romans made the Corinthians the butt of dirty jokes, and playwrights consistently portrayed them as drunken brawlers. The Greek verb "to Corinthianize" meant to live shamelessly and immorally.

A Wide-Open City

Everyone knew what the Corinthians worshiped: money and the evil things it could buy. Money flowed freely, for Corinth straddled one of the Roman Empire's most vital trade routes. When a ship wrecked nearby, salvage companies housed the hapless sailors at inflated prices while they scrambled to auction off the ship's cargo. The city was a sprawling open-air market, filled with slaves, Orientals, Jews, Greeks, Egyptians, sailors, athletes, gamblers, and charioteers.

Yet Corinth was no small town. It had a population of 700,000, second only to Rome's, and as the capital of a large province, the city hosted a parade of Roman diplomats and dignitaries. Its clever citizens showcased new "Corinthian" architecture and prided themselves on having a cosmopolitan outlook.

For their religious ideal, the fun-loving Corinthians adopted Venus, the goddess of love. A temple built in her honor employed more than 1,000 prostitutes.

Paul Takes on the Corinthians

Due to all these influences, Corinth loomed as the one city "least likely to convert" to the Christian faith. What crazy cults and new religions did spring up there quickly gave in to the prevailing good-time atmosphere.

The mighty Paul, reeling from one of his most difficult missionary assignments in Athens, came to Corinth "in weakness and fear, and with much trembling" (2:3). He knew its strategic importance: if the gospel could take root there, it could transplant anywhere—and probably would, considering Corinth's crossroads location.

Paul worked in Corinth for 18 months. To everyone's surprise, the church he founded became one of the largest in the first century. But several years later he heard reports that the church, true to its city's heritage, had broken out in a series of spiritual ills. The distressing news prompted the letter known as 1 Corinthians.

The tone of this letter differs drastically from the one that precedes it. If Romans was stylistically carved in stone, 1 Corinthians was dashed off in tears and anger. One of Paul's longest letters, it covers the greatest variety of topics, partly because the Corinthians added bizarre new twists to ethical issues. In it, Paul gives practical advice on a series of church problems as well as a fascinating glimpse into the personal lives of early Christians.

How to Read 1 Corinthians

To fully appreciate Paul's letters, keep in mind that they are personal correspondence. We are actually reading someone else's mail.

In 1 Corinthians an angry apostle gives direct, forthright advice to a troubled local church. Paul

saw alarming trends at work, and he used his full literary powers to set its members on the right course. He tried sarcasm, emotional pleas, autobiography, poetry, and lengthy arguments.

First, you will encounter the problems that had been reported to Paul: divisions in the church, a case of incest, court cases, the abuse of Christian freedom, chaos in the worship services. Paul lunges into these problems early in the book. Then, beginning with chapter 7, he takes up some other problems the Corinthians had written him about: marriage and the single life, pagan festivals, behavior of women, spiritual gifts, and the resurrection of the dead.

This first letter to the Corinthians presents a foundation for practical Christian ethics. Use the boldface subtitles throughout the book to locate those issues that especially trouble you. Not all the problems discussed will apply directly to modern situations. But the general principles underlying Paul's advice do apply. As you read, look for those principles behind Paul's arguments.

PLANS FOR READING 1 CORINTHIANS

PLAN 1: An Overview of 1 Corinthians in 2 Days

The emotional tone of 1 Corinthians makes for exciting reading throughout, but two chapters especially can't be missed.

Day 1 Read the Introduction to 1 Corinthians, then chapter 13. Paul is at the top of his literary form as he defines love in one of the most famous passages in all of literature.

Day 2 Read chapter 15, a crucial passage on life after death and resurrection from the dead.

PLAN 2: All of 1 Corinthians in 14 Days

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4-5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8-9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16

1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

²To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours

³Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving

⁴I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. ⁵For in him you have been enriched in every way—in all your speaking and in all your knowledge—⁶because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. ⁷Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. ⁸He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

Divisions in the Church

¹⁰I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. ¹¹My brothers, some from Chloe's

household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. ¹²What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."

¹³Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into^b the name of Paul? ¹⁴I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵so no one can say that you were baptized into my name. ¹⁶(Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.) ¹⁷For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

Christ the Wisdom and Power of God

¹⁸For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written:

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate."^c

²⁰Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wis-

^a12 That is, Peter

^b13 Or in, also in verse 15

^c19 Isaiah 29:14

man did not know him. God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. ²³Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom. ²⁴But we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles. ²⁵But to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁶For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

²⁷Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. ²⁸But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁹He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, ³⁰so that no one may boast before him. ³¹It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. ³²Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."^a

2 When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God.^b ²For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. ⁴My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, ⁵so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

Wisdom From the Spirit

⁶We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. ⁷No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. ⁸None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹However, as it is written

No eye has seen
no ear has heard
no mind has conceived

2:3 Paul at a Crossroads

This brief paragraph hints at a grave personal crisis in the apostle Paul's ministry, and Acts 16-18 gives important background. In three cities Paul saw a promising beginning crushed by fanatical Jews. Then in Athens he met little success in communicating to the intelligentsia. Many scholars believe that he reached Corinth shaken and discouraged and that he resolved to make Christ the sole subject of his teaching and preaching while there.

what God has prepared for those who love him. —

¹⁰But God has revealed it to us by his Spirit

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. ¹¹For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹²We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. ¹³This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. ¹⁴The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment:

¹⁶"For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?"^c

But we have the mind of Christ.

On Divisions in the Church

3 Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. ²I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. ³You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? ⁴For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men?

⁵What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. ⁶I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. ⁷So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. ⁸The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. ⁹For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

¹⁰By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how

3:5 Personality Cults

In this chapter, Paul expands on a theme first introduced in chapter 1 (verse 12). Converts were lining up behind various church leaders. Peter, who had walked and talked with Christ on earth; Apollos, with his sophisticated, cultivated style; Paul, the famous missionary; and Christ himself. Paul had no tolerance for that kind of hero worship. He stressed vigorously that the Corinthians belonged only to God, not to any human worker.

^a31 Jer 9:4 ^b1 Some manuscripts as I proclaimed to you God's mystery

^c16 Isaiah 64:4

^d13 Or Spirit interpreting spiritual

truths to spiritual men ^e16 Isaiah 40:13

he builds. ¹¹For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, ¹³this work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. ¹⁵If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

¹⁶Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? ¹⁷If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.

¹⁸Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a "fool" so that he may become wise. ¹⁹For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"; ²⁰and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile." ²¹So then, no more boasting about men! All things are yours, ²²whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the

future—all are yours, ²³and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

Apostles of Christ

4 So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. ²Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. ³I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. ⁴My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. ⁵Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

⁶Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written." Then you will not take pride in one man over against another. ⁷For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?

¹⁹ Job 5:13

²⁰ Psalm 94:11

²² That is, Peter

INSIGHT

Like an Angry Letter from Home

A well-deserved scolding from a grieving "parent"

I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children. 4:14

Imagine a young girl in her first year of college, standing alone in a corridor amid a swirl of chattering students. In two minutes the next class will begin. But, for her, time has stopped. She has just opened a tear-stained, 12-page letter from her parents.

The tone of the letter takes her by surprise. Her parents are normally reserved, not given to emotional outbursts. Their letters are warm and friendly. Not this time. Somehow they have heard about her recent behavior while living away from home at school, and they are very hurt. In a torrent of words, they pour out their feelings for her and their deep disappointment.

First Corinthians reflects the same tone: it is an intimate, well-deserved scolding from a grieved parent. "I am not writing this to shame you," says Paul, "but to warn you, as my dear children" (4:14).

Paul's Shifting Moods

No other letter in the New Testament reveals such a wide range of Paul's emotions. At his own financial expense, he had invested 18 risk-filled months in Corinth. But afterwards his rebellious "children" had launched personal attacks against him. Paul reacted like any parent first informed of his child's shocking behavior. His moods in 1 Corinthians bounce from anger to shame, from sorrow to indignation.

Chapter 3, for example, begins with a stern lecture to "mere infants in Christ." This leads to biting sarcasm (4:8), which melts into the tender pleas of a spiritual father. Six times in chapter 6 Paul asks, "Do you not know . . . ?" Finally, in chapter 7, he gets to the practical questions that had prompted his letter in the first place.

The apostle Paul was a superbly educated logician who could skillfully weave together history and philosophy. But he also brooded over his missionary churches like a parent. He asked the Corinthians pointedly, "Shall I come to you with a whip, or in love and with a gentle spirit?" (4:21). In this letter, we see a little of both.

Life Questions How do you react when someone—a parent, teacher, boss, pastor—tries to straighten you out?

⁸Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! You have become kings—and that without us! How I wish that you really had become kings so that we might be kings with you! ⁹For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men. ¹⁰We are fools for Christ, but you are so wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are honored, we are dishonored! ¹¹To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless. ¹²We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; ¹³when we are slandered, we answer kindly. Up to this moment we have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world.

¹⁴I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children. ¹⁵Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. ¹⁶Therefore I urge you to imitate me. ¹⁷For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.

¹⁸Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you. ¹⁹But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have. ²⁰For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. ²¹What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a whip, or in love and with a gentle spirit?

Expel the Immoral Brother!

5 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. ²And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? ³Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present. ⁴When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, ⁵hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature^a may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

⁶Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that

a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? ⁷Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. ⁸Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.

⁹I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—¹⁰not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. ¹¹But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

¹²What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? ¹³God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."^b

Lawsuits Among Believers

6 If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints? ²Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? ³Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! ⁴Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church!^c ⁵I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? ⁶But instead, one brother goes to law against another—and this in front of unbelievers!

⁷The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? ⁸Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers.

⁹Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders ¹⁰nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified,

4:8 A Hint of Trials to Come

Paul's intense feelings come to the surface in this paragraph, as sharply worded as any in the New Testament. He alludes (verse 9) to the Roman practice of parading the gladiators condemned to death—a poignant reference in light of the martyr's fate that awaited him and other apostles.

5:5 Handed Over to Satan

The strong phrase used in this verse has a biblical parallel in 1 Timothy 1:20. To Paul, expelling someone from the church and Christian privileges meant pushing them out into the world ruled by Satan. In both references, however, Paul stresses that the action was designed to teach the offender a lesson.

^a5 Or that his body; or that the flesh account in the church?

^b13 Deut. 17:7; 19:19; 21:21; 22:21,24; 24:7

^c4 Or matters, do you appoint as judges men of little

you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God

Sexual Immorality

¹² Everything is permissible for me^a—but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible for me”—but I will not be mastered by anything. ¹³“Food for the stomach and the stomach for food”—but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. ¹⁵Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.”^a ¹⁷But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

¹⁸Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. ¹⁹Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Marriage

⁷ Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry.^b ²But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. ³The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. ⁴The wife’s body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband’s body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. ⁵Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. ⁶I say this as a concession, not as a command. ⁷I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.

⁸Now to the unmarried and the widows I say. It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. ⁹But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

¹⁰To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her hus-

band. ¹¹But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.

¹²To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord). If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. ¹³And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. ¹⁴For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.

¹⁵But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. ¹⁶How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

¹⁷Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches. ¹⁸Was a man already circumcised when he was called? He should not become uncircumcised. Was a man uncircumcised when he was called? He should not be circumcised. ¹⁹Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God’s commands is what counts. ²⁰Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him. ²¹Were you a slave when you were called? Don’t let it trouble you—although if you can gain your freedom, do so. ²²For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord’s freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ’s slave. ²³You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. ²⁴Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called him to.

²⁵Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord’s mercy is trustworthy. ²⁶Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for you to remain as you are. ²⁷Are you married? Do not seek a divorce. Are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife. ²⁸But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this.

²⁹What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they had none; ³⁰those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; ³¹those who use the things of the

6:12 Corinthian Slogans

The phrases given here in quotes (“Everything is permissible for me”) appear to be slogans the Corinthians had used in justifying their loose behavior. Paul doesn’t refute their ideas outright, but rather points to the ultimate effect of their excesses.

7:25 Paul’s Personal Opinions

In discussing the thorny issue of singleness and marriage, Paul carefully distinguishes what is his personal opinion and what is a clear revelation from God. He explains in verse 29 why he reached these conclusions.

^a Gen. 2:24

^b Cf. “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.”

world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.

³²I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord. ³³But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—³⁴and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband. ³⁵I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

³⁶If anyone thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if she is getting along in years and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married. ³⁷But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin—this man also does the right thing. ³⁸So

*36-38 Or "If anyone thinks he is not treating his daughter properly, and if she is getting along in years, and he feels she ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. He should let her get married." *37 But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, if he is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind to keep the virgin unmarried—this man also does the right thing. *38 So then, he who gives his virgin in marriage does right, but he who does not give her in marriage does even better. *39 Or "We all possess knowledge," as you say.

then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does even better.*

³⁹A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord. ⁴⁰In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is—and I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

Food Sacrificed to Idols

8 Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that we all possess knowledge.^b Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. ²The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. ³But the man who loves God is known by God.

⁴So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one. ⁵For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), ⁶yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ,

INSIGHT

When Everything Goes Wrong

A church of former idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, thieves, and drunkards

Now for the matters you wrote about... 7:1

"If anything can go wrong, it will." This tongue-in-cheek principle, known as Murphy's Law, is cited by economists, sports teams, and big-city mayors. Human nature somehow guarantees that nothing turns out quite the way it's supposed to. And the church at Corinth provides a darkly shining example of Murphy's Law.

To be sure, Corinthian Christians started out with the odds stacked against them. Imagine a church composed of converted idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, thieves, drunkards, and swindlers (6:9-11). The church, made up of people from such backgrounds, soon encountered great problems. Paul faced a huge challenge: for one thing, he had to convince these people of the immorality of sexual activities that had been a part of everyday worship under their old religion.

Local and Universal Issues

First Corinthians is Paul's careful response to those problems, some of which had been posed to him as questions in a letter (7:1). Many of his answers relate directly to Corinth's local situation. In that culture, as in Muslim countries today, whether or not to wear a veil was a major issue for women (11:3-10). Eating meat sacrificed to pagan idols also disturbed some new Christians (10:18-33).

But other problems discussed here turn up in every culture: divisions in the church, lawsuits, immorality, the single life, the extent of Christian freedoms, differing views of worship, and the place of tongues-speaking and other spiritual gifts. Not every breakdown in Corinth will recur in churches today, but Paul's principles apply to our own unpredictable experiences with Murphy's Law.

Life Questions. Think of the most "Corinthian" people you know. Then imagine: If some of them became Christians, what problems would they encounter?

through whom all things came and through whom we live.

But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. ⁸Food does not bring us near to God, we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.

Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? ¹¹So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. ¹²When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. ¹³Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.

The Rights of an Apostle

9 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not the result of my work in the Lord? ²Even though I may not be an apostle to others, surely I am to you! For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

³Now my defense to those who sit in judgment: ⁴Don't we have the right to food and drink? ⁵Don't we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas? ⁶Or is it only I and Barnabas who must work for a living?

⁷Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? ⁸Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? ⁹Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk? ¹⁰Do I say this merely from a human point of view? Doesn't the Law say the same thing? ¹¹For it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain."^a Is it about oxen that God is concerned? ¹²Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because when the plowman plows and the threshing threshes, they ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. ¹³If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? ¹⁴If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more?

But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ. ¹⁵Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? ¹⁶In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

¹⁷But I have not used any of these rights. And I am not writing this in the hope that you will do such things for me. I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of this boast. ¹⁸Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the

gospel! ¹⁷If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me. ¹⁸What then is my reward? Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not make use of my rights in preaching it.

¹⁹Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. ²⁰To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. ²¹To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. ²²To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. ²³I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

²⁴Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ²⁶Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. ²⁷No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Warnings From Israel's History

10 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. ²They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. ³They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. ⁴Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert.

⁵Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. ⁶Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revel-

9:22 A Positive and a Negative Example

After discussing the specific questions that had surfaced in the church at Corinth, Paul gives two examples from life. The first, a positive one, points to the actions of the apostles. Although they had certain "rights" and freedoms, they didn't insist on them. Rather, they adapted to the practices of people around them to win them over. In contrast, the ancient Israelites (chapter 10) had consistently given in to their own weaknesses. Paul urges the Corinthians to follow his example, not that of the Israelites (11:1).

^a That is, Peter.

¹⁹ Deut. 25:4.

⁴⁶ Or types, also in verse 11.

rv "4 We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. 9 We should not test the Lord, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. 10 And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.

11 These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. 12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! 13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

Idol Feasts and the Lord's Supper

4 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. 5 I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. 6 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? 7 Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

8 Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? 9 Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. 22 Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

The Believer's Freedom

23 "Everything is permissible"—but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible"—but not everything is constructive. 24 Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.

25 Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, 26 for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."^b

27 If some unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience. 28 But if anyone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the man who told you and for conscience' sake—for other man's conscience, I mean, not yours. For why should my freedom be judged by another's conscience? 30 If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?

31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 32 Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God—33 even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own

good but the good of many, so that they may be

11 saved. 1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

Propriety in Worship

2 I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teachings,^d just as I passed them on to you.

3 Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. 4 Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. 5 And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is just as though her head were shaved. 6 If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head. 7 A man ought not to cover his head,^e since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. 8 For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; 9 neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. 10 For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head.

11 In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. 12 For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God. 13 Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? 14 Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, 15 but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering. 16 If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God.

The Lord's Supper

17 In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. 18 In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. 19 No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. 20 When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, 21 for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk. 22 Don't you have homes to eat

11:5 Women in Corinth

In the Middle East, a woman who appeared in public barefaced, without a veil, showed loose morals. Some Muslim countries today still retain that custom. Paul's advice applied directly to the cultural situation in Corinth, where unruly women were disrupting the worship services.

^a Psalm 24:1

^b 28 Some manuscripts conscience' sake, for "the earth is the Lord's and everything in it"

^c Or "Every man who prays or prophesies with long hair dishonors his head." 5 And every woman who prays or prophesies with long hair on her head dishonors her head—she is just like one of the shorn women. 6 If a woman has no covering, let her be for now as if she had her hair cut off, and grace for a woman to have her hair shorn or shaved, she should grow it again. A man ought not to have long hair

and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not!

²³For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you. The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you, do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, do this whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

²⁷Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. ²⁹For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. ³⁰That is why many among you are weak

and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. ³¹But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. ³²When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

³³So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other. ³⁴If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment.

And when I come I will give further directions.

Spiritual Gifts

12 Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. ²You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. ³Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶There are different kinds of working,

INSIGHT

Lessons from the Human Body

The body needs an eye, and the eye needs a body

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 12:12

Can you get along in life without eyes? Of course, but you must make adjustments. You must rely more on other senses and depend on friends, or perhaps a seeing-eye dog, for extra help. Regardless of what adjustments you make, however, your body will remain incomplete without eyes. You will miss out on color and design and all the visual delights this world offers.

An eyeless body can cope, but a bodyless eye is unimaginable. The most beautiful eyes in the world, when detached from a body, are lifeless and worthless. Eyes need a body that will bring them blood and receive their nerve impulses.

Many Parts, All Working Together

In chapter 12 Paul gives a clever anatomy lesson, with a purpose. By comparing members of the church of Christ to parts of a human body, he neatly explains two complementary truths the Corinthians had failed to comprehend. Any part of a body, he says—such as an eye, or a foot—makes a valuable contribution to the whole body. Whenever a single member is missing, the entire body suffers.

And, he continues, no member can survive if isolated from the rest. Alone, an eye is useless. All parts must cooperate to form a single, unified body.

Paul relied on body images to explain both the diversity and unity of God's followers. The body analogy fit so well that he referred to it two dozen times in his various letters. It became his favorite way of portraying the church.

An Emphasis on Unity

A church as diverse as Corinth knew about the differences among various members, so Paul's letter to them stressed the unity part of the analogy. How can diverse people work together in a spiritual body? He answered that question with the famous lyrical description of love in chapter 13. After that eloquent statement, he went on to discuss the Corinthians' various spiritual gifts.

Chapters 12-14 address issues that troubled the patchwork Corinthian church and that still disturb the church today. The solution, in our time as well as Paul's, is for each person to respect other members of the body and to take direction from Jesus Christ, the head.

Life Questions. Of Paul's list of spiritual gifts, which are prominent in your church? Are any overlooked? How do you fit in?

but the same God works all of them in all men.

⁷Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues,^a and to still another the interpretation of tongues.^a ¹¹All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines

One Body, Many Parts

¹²The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. ¹³For we were all baptized by^b one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

¹⁴Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. ¹⁵If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" ²²On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

²⁷Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. ²⁸And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. ²⁹Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹But eagerly desire^d the greater gifts.

Love

And now I will show you the most excellent way.

13 If I speak in the tongues^e of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ²If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames,^f but have not love, I gain nothing.

⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

⁸Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. ¹¹When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. ¹²Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

¹³And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Gifts of Prophecy and Tongues

14 Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. ²For anyone who speaks in a tongue^e does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit.^h ³But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort. ⁴He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. ⁵I would like every one of you to speak in tongues,ⁱ but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in

14:2 Speaking in Tongues

1 Corinthians 12-14 gives the New Testament's most complete teaching on supernatural gifts such as healing and speaking in tongues. Paul stresses two concerns: (1) "Sensational" gifts must not be given higher rank than they deserve (chapter 13 stresses the superiority of simple love). (2) These gifts should contribute to orderly and proper worship, not confusion. The Corinthians seemed to take everything to excess—whether practicing immorality, celebrating the Lord's Supper, or exercising spiritual gifts.

^a10 Or languages, also in verse 28

^b13 Or with or in

^c30 Or other languages

^d31 Or But you are eagerly desiring

^e1 Or

languages ^f13 Some early manuscripts body that I may boast

^g12 Or another language, also in verses 4, 13, 14, 19, 26 and 27

^h1 Or by the Spirit

ⁱ5 Or other languages, also in verses 6, 18, 22, 23 and 39

tongues,^a unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified.

⁶Now, brothers, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction? ⁷Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the flute or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes? ⁸Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle? ⁹So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air. ¹⁰Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. ¹¹If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me. ¹²So it is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church

¹³For this reason anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret what he says.

¹⁴For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. ¹⁵So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind. ¹⁶If you are praising God with your spirit, how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand^b say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? ¹⁷You may be giving thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified.

¹⁸I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. ¹⁹But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue

²⁰Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults. In the Law it is written.

"Through men of strange tongues
and through the lips of foreigners
I will speak to this people,
but even then they will not listen to me,"^c
says the Lord

²²Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is for believers, not for unbelievers. ²³So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who do not understand^d or some unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind? ²⁴But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand^e comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, ²⁵and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!"

Orderly Worship

²⁶What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of

instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church. ²⁷If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. ²⁸If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God

²⁹Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. ³⁰And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. ³¹For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. ³²The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. ³³For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.

As in all the congregations of the saints, ³⁴women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. ³⁵If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home, for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.

³⁶Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? ³⁷If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. ³⁸If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored.^f

³⁹Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. ⁴⁰But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

The Resurrection of Christ

15 Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ²By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

³For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Peter,^g and then to the Twelve. ⁶After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

⁹For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. ¹¹Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

The Resurrection of the Dead

¹²But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there

^a Or other languages, also in verses 6, 18, 22, 23 and 39
^b Or among the inquirers
^c Or or some inquirers
^d Greek Cepha-

^e 16 Or among the inquirers

^f 21 Isaiah 28 11, 12

^g 23 Or some

^h 38 Some manuscripts If he is ignorant of this, let him be ignorant

ⁱ 13 Or you at the first

is no resurrection of the dead? 13If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 15More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him. In fact the dead are not raised. 16For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. 17And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. 18Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. 19If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

20But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 22For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. 24Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. 25For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27For he has put everything under his feet. Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. 28When he has done this, then the Son will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

29Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them? 30And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? 31I die every day—I mean that, brothers—just as surely as I glory over you in Christ Jesus our Lord. 32If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised,

"Let us eat and drink,
for tomorrow we die,"^b

33Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." 34Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame.

The Resurrection Body

35But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" 36How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. 38But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. 39All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. 40There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. 41The sun has one kind of splendor, the

INSIGHT

The Worst Danger of All

Why believe in life after death?

"There is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 15:13-14"

Most of the problems raised by the church at Corinth concerned personal behavior. After tackling each of those problems, Paul turned to one last question, a matter of doctrine. Some people in the church were challenging the Christian belief in an afterlife. Death, they said, is the end.

Many people have questioned the afterlife. In Jesus' day, a Jewish sect called Sadducees denied the resurrection from the dead. Doubters persist today (among them: many Black Muslims, Buddhists, and Marxists and most atheists). But Paul saw the matter of life after death as the most explosive issue in the Corinthian church.

Pitiable Christians

If there's no future life, he thundered, the entire Christian message would be a lie. He, Paul, would have no reason to continue as a minister; Christ's death would have merely wasted blood; and Christians would be the most pitiable of all people.

Chapter 15 weaves together the threads of Christian belief about death. It shows how death is finally conquered and becomes, not an end, but a beginning. Cheered by such a triumphant note, the apostle Paul sums up his counsel to the Corinthians with a ringing challenge to "stand firm."

Life Questions Which of Paul's arguments in chapter 15 do you find most convincing? How does belief in an afterlife affect you?

moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.

⁴²So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; ⁴³it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory, it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; ⁴⁴it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. ⁴⁷The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. ⁴⁸As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we^b bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

⁵⁰I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— ⁵²in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. ⁵⁴When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

⁵⁵"Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?"^d

⁵⁶The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

The Collection for God's People

16 Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do.

16:1 Remembering the Poor

Paul's deep concern for the poor in Jerusalem comes up often in the New Testament. He mentions taking a collection here, as well as in Romans and 2 Corinthians. He knew that widespread concern for the mother church in Jerusalem would do much to further unity between Jewish and Gentile Christians.

²⁰On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. ²¹Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. ²²If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me.

Personal Requests

²³After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you—for I will be going through Macedonia. ²⁴Perhaps I will stay with you awhile, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go. ²⁵I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. ²⁶But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, ²⁷because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.

²⁸If Timothy comes, see to it that he has nothing to fear while he is with you, for he is carrying on the work of the Lord, just as I am. ²⁹No one, then, should refuse to accept him. Send him on his way in peace so that he may return to me. I am expecting him along with the brothers.

³⁰Now about our brother Apollos: I strongly urged him to go to you with the brothers. He was quite unwilling to go now, but he will go when he has the opportunity.

³¹Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. ³²Do everything in love.

³³You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints. I urge you, brothers, ³⁴to submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work, and labors at it. ³⁵I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived, because they have supplied what was lacking from you. ³⁶For they refreshed my spirit and yours also. Such men deserve recognition.

Final Greetings

¹⁹The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla^a greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house. ²⁰All the brothers here send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

²¹I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand.

²²If anyone does not love the Lord—a curse be on him. Come, O Lord!

²³The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

²⁴My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen.^e

^a4 Gen 27
Priscilla

^b Some early manuscripts so let us
in Aramaic the expression Come, O Lord is Marana tha

^c54 Isaiah 25:8

^d55 Hosea 13:14

^e19 Greek Prisca, a variant of

^f24 Some manuscripts do not have Amen

2 CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION

A Book of Joy and Sadness

Why isn't Paul celebrating his victory?

Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. 1:9

Athletes sometimes have a strange reaction to a great victory. Some call it "winner's sickness." An Olympic gymnast who has trained for 15 years wakes up the day after her gold medal performance feeling oddly depressed. Paradoxically, the sweet taste of victory can take on a bitter edge.

An even more pungent feeling may hit those who prevail in personal disputes. The man who wins a crucial court case is stabbed by sympathy for those he defeated. The politician who marches jubilantly to a cheering crowd on election night winces inwardly at the bruises suffered—and inflicted—during the campaign.

Lingering Pain

Something like that bittersweet state must have plagued the apostle Paul when he wrote 2 Corinthians. He had just won a great victory in convincing the Corinthians to come over to his side. His spirit had surged upon Titus's news of their wave of support for him. To his previous letter, a personal risk, had paid off. Reflecting Paul's triumph, this letter spontaneously breaks out in jubilant praise and thanksgiving.

And yet, in no other letter does Paul so openly admit his frustrations. Immediately after a spare greeting he mentions hardships so severe that "we despaired even of life." Numerous references crop up regarding the tense relations he and the Corinthians have had. Too sounders aloud if he has been too hard on them; he acknowledges his own lingering pain.

A Diary for Two Audiences

Second Corinthians, full of allusions and personal references, reads more like a diary than a public document. If 1 Corinthians analyzes the problems of the Corinthian church, this sequel reveals the problems Paul himself experienced.

He doesn't gloat over his victory in getting the Corinthians' support. Rather, he makes himself vulnerable and opens a window into his inner self. He summarizes his state as "hard pressed on every side, but not crushed, perplexed, but not in despair, persecuted, but not abandoned, struck down, but not destroyed" (4:8-9).

Although random selections from 2 Corinthians demonstrate the author's seesawing moods, the book as a whole reveals a tenacious man on the rebound. Paul expresses relief that the Corinthians' problems are being resolved, even as he points out new danger signs in the church. Always he keeps in mind a dual readership: the majority who support him, for whom he has warm, loving words, and the minority of dissenters who pose a grave threat to church unity.

How to Read 2 Corinthians

Of all Paul's letters, 2 Corinthians reads most like a personal letter and least like a public document. He wrote it when an intense struggle with the Corinthian church was coming to a head. As a result, it reveals much about Paul's troubled state. He half-apologized for speaking so freely, for appearing to be boasting, and for spending time on "foolishness."

Read 2 Corinthians like you would read any personal letter. Try to visualize the mood of the apostle Paul as he was writing, and look between the lines for clues that would help explain his relationship with the church at Corinth. What were his enemies accusing him of? Watch especially for Paul's spirited reply to criticism, especially in the last four chapters. He tells about certain events in his life that are recorded nowhere else.

You will likely notice that Paul is tying up loose ends in this letter: for example, he is preparing for a third visit to Corinth and asking them to get a collection ready. Yet amid these practical matters he pauses to write profound words on such topics as suffering, giving, and personal ministry.

PLANS FOR READING 2 CORINTHIANS

PLAN 1: An Overview of 2 Corinthians in 2 Days

Day 1 Read the Introduction to 2 Corinthians, then chapter 4. It helps explain how Paul kept going despite all his hardships.

Day 2 Read chapter 12, which includes a brief description of Paul's "out-of-the-body" experience and his mysterious "thorn in the flesh."

PLAN 2: All of 2 Corinthians in 10 Days

1, 2-3, 14 5 6 7 8-9 10 11 12-13

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God and Timothy our brother,

To the church of God in Corinth, together with all the saints throughout Achaia:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The God of All Comfort

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

Paul's Change of Plans

Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies

that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace. For we do not write you anything you cannot read or understand. And I hope that, as you have understood us in part, you will come to understand fully that you can boast of us just as we will boast of you in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Because I was confident of this, I planned to visit you first so that you might benefit twice. I planned to visit you on my way to Macedonia and to come back to you from Macedonia, and then to have you send me on my way to Judea. When I planned this, did I do it lightly? Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath I say, "Yes, yes" and "No, no"?

But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No." For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes." For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

I call God as my witness that it was in order to spare you that I did not return to Corinth. Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm. So I made up my mind that I would not make another painful visit to you. For if I grieve you, who is left to make me glad but you whom I have grieved? I wrote as I did so that when I came I should not be distressed by those

*11 Many manuscripts omit

*19 Greek Titanus, a variant of Silas

who ought to make me rejoice. I had confidence in all of you, that you would all share my joy. ⁴For I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you.

Forgiveness for the Sinner

⁵If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you, to some extent—not to put it too severely. ⁶The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. ⁷Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. ⁸I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. ⁹The reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. ¹⁰If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, ¹¹in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

Ministers of the New Covenant

¹²Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord had opened a door for me, ¹³I still had no peace of mind, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said good-by to them and went on to Macedonia.

¹⁴But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. ¹⁵For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. ¹⁶To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. And who is equal to such a task? ¹⁷Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God.

3 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you? ²You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. ³You show that

INSIGHT

A Mysterious Visit

Paul's break with the Corinthians

So I made up my mind that I would not make another painful visit to you. 2:1

Those who try to piece together Paul's life story from fragments in the two Corinthian letters and the book of Acts usually come away puzzled. Paul, addressing friends who knew that history intimately, saw no need to review every stage of their relationship. Yet for us, reading centuries later, some chronology would help explain his allusions and his emotional state.

Many scholars believe two events occurred to which Paul refers only in passing: "the painful visit" and "the painful letter."

A Change in Plans

In the first two chapters Paul explains a change of plans whereby he decided not to visit Corinth because he didn't want to make "another painful visit" (2:1). What visit was he referring to?

During his first visit to Corinth, spanning 18 months, the church took shape (Acts 18:11). Paul probably would not have described that time as a "painful visit." Evidently he made a second visit to Corinth, not recorded in Acts, that included a painful confrontation.

Paul planned a third visit to Corinth, but postponed it because he didn't want to stir up the conflict. Later, he wondered about rescheduling that third visit (12:14; 13:1).

The Longed-for Reconciliation

Second Corinthians also mentions a letter written out of great distress and with many tears (2:4; 7:8). This letter, coming after Paul's unsettling second visit, contained such strong wording that he feared the Corinthians' response. He fleetingly regretted having written the letter. Had it ruptured their relationship? While he preached in the seaport town of Troas, Paul anxiously awaited some report of their reaction, through Titus.

One can imagine Paul rushing to the dock as ships from Macedonia came to unload, fervently scanning the vessels for some sign of Titus. Finally, unable to find peace of mind, he left his ministry in Troas to seek out Titus in Macedonia.

News from Titus at last calmed Paul. The Corinthians had indeed repented (7:7-9) and wanted to restore ties with him. Feeling encouraged, Paul contemplated a third visit as he wrote 2 Corinthians. He used the letter to rebuild his relationship with them and to spell out his reasons for coming.

Life Questions Have you ever experienced a tear in a relationship like the one described here? How have you found healing?

you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

⁴Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. ⁵Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. ⁶He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

The Glory of the New Covenant

⁷Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was, ⁸will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? ⁹If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! ¹⁰For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. ¹¹And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!

¹²Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. ¹³We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. ¹⁴But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Treasures in Jars of Clay

⁴Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. ²Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's

3:2 A Human Letter

Chapters 3-5 form one of the Bible's great passages on professional ministry: what is involved in representing Christ on earth. Responding to attacks, Paul defends his "style" of ministry. He discusses the ultimate goal of ministry and the grace of God in using mere "jars of clay" to accomplish his work. But the final proof of effectiveness, he says, is people's lives. In this way, the Corinthians themselves are his best letter of recommendation, for he brought them the gospel in the first place.

conscience in the sight of God. ³And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness,"^a made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

⁷But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. ⁸We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed, perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. ¹²So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

¹³It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken."^c With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, ¹⁴because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence. ¹⁵All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

¹⁶Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

4:7 A Picture of Human Weakness

Where would you keep expensive jewelry? You would want a safe, secure place. You wouldn't put valuables in, say, an old broken box. Yet this image comes close to the one Paul used to describe his ministry: "jars of clay." In his day jars were about as common—and as safe—as boxes are today.

The treasure Paul refers to is the incredible message of the gospel: God's good news of forgiveness and the promise of life forever. Yet, amazingly, God chose to enclose that treasure in people who are like "jars of clay." Clay jars are ordinary and highly breakable, and Paul tells us he is both. An immortal God chooses mere humans as his personal representatives. "And who is equal to such a task?" Paul asks (2:16). He determines to draw attention to the treasure inside him, not to himself.

^a18 Or *contemplate*

^b6 Gen 1:3

^c13 Psalm 116:10

Our Heavenly Dwelling

5 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. ²Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, ³because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. ⁴For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

⁶Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. ⁷We live by faith, not by sight. ⁸We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. ¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

The Ministry of Reconciliation

¹¹Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. ¹²We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. ¹³If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

¹⁶So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! ¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as

though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

6 As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. ²For he says,

"In the time of my favor I heard you,
and in the day of salvation I helped you."¹⁶

I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

Paul's Hardships

³We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. ⁴Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; ⁵in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; ⁶in purity, understanding, patience and kindness, in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love, ⁷in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; ⁸through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; ⁹known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; ¹⁰sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

¹¹We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. ¹²We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. ¹³As a fair exchange—I speak as to my children—open wide your hearts also.

Do Not Be Yoked With Unbelievers

¹⁴Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? ¹⁵What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? ¹⁶What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."¹⁷

¹⁷"Therefore come out from them and be separate,"¹⁷ says the Lord.

Touch no unclean thing,
and I will receive you."¹⁸

¹⁸"I will be a Father to you,
and you will be my sons and daughters,"
says the Lord Almighty.¹⁹

7 Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

5:1 The Body as a Tent

Paul often refers to his frail and abused body in this letter. But in this passage he looks past life on earth to a future life when, he says, we will have new bodies "not built by human hands." The contrast between tent and house shows the temporary nature of a body in this life compared to what is to come.

¹⁶21 Or be a sin offering

¹⁷22 Isaiah 49:8

¹⁸15 Greek Belial, a variant of Belul

¹⁹16 Lev 26:12, Jer 32:38, Ezek 37:27

²⁰17 Isaiah 52:11, Ezek 20:34-41

²¹18 2 Samuel 7:14, 7:8

Paul's Joy

²Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one. ³I do not say this to condemn you; I have said before that you have such a place in our hearts that we would live or die with you. ⁴I have great confidence in you; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.

⁵For when we came into Macedonia, this body of ours had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn—conflicts on the outside, fears within. ⁶But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, ⁷and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever.

⁸Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. ¹⁰Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. ¹¹See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. ¹²So even though I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did the wrong or of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are. ¹³By all this we are encouraged.

In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you. ¹⁴I had boasted to him about you, and you have not embarrassed me. But just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting about you to Titus has proved to be true as well. ¹⁵And his affection for you is all the greater when he remembers that you were all obedient, receiving him with fear and trembling. ¹⁶I am glad I can have complete confidence in you.

Generosity Encouraged

8 And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the

7:9 What Suffering Produces

When he wrote about suffering, Paul concentrated not merely on the pain itself, but on what qualities it produced in those who had faith. In this case, he cites the emotional suffering the Corinthians had experienced because of his letter. Although the suffering was unpleasant, it produced something of great value: an abrupt change in their attitudes.

Macedonian churches. ²Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. ³For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, ⁴they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. ⁵And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. ⁶So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. ⁷But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

⁸I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. ⁹For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

¹⁰And here is my advice about what is best for you in this matter: Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. ¹¹Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it according to your means. ¹²For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.

¹³Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. ¹⁴At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, ¹⁵as it is written: "He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little."

8:24-27

Titus Sent to Corinth

¹⁶I thank God, who put into the heart of Titus the same concern I have for you. ¹⁷For Titus not only welcomed our appeal, but he is coming to you with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative. ¹⁸And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel. ¹⁹What is more, he was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering, which we administer in order to honor the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help. ²⁰We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. ²¹For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men.

²²In addition, we are sending with them our brother who has often proved to us in many ways that he is zealous, and now even more so because of his great confidence in you. ²³As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives of the churches and an honor to Christ. ²⁴Therefore show these men the proof of your love and the reason for our pride in you, so that the churches can see it.

9 There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the saints. ²For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action. ³But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be. ⁴For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to say anything about you—would be ashamed of having been so confident. ⁵So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.

Sowing Generously

⁶Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. ⁹As it is written:

"He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor;

⁴⁹ Psalm 112:9

his righteousness endures forever."^a

¹⁰Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

¹²This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. ¹³Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. ¹⁴And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given

9:6 Bonuses of Giving

In taking his collection for poor people, Paul mainly appealed to the Christian responsibility to help those in need. But, in this passage, he details generosity's side effects. Giving actually enriches and benefits the giver, he says. Also, a gift can serve as an act of worship to God and can inspire other people's faith and thanksgiving.

INSIGHT

Don't Forget the Poor

A fund-raising letter from Paul himself

Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 9:7

Second Corinthians presents a direct appeal for funds (chapters 8-9). Jewish Christians near Jerusalem were reportedly on the edge of starvation. Paul seized on the crisis as a perfect chance for Gentile Christians to reach out in compassion and demonstrate their spiritual unity with Jewish Christians. Paul used this opportunity to teach the new Christians about the obligation and the privilege of giving.

Practicing What He Preached

In these two chapters, Paul outlines a philosophy of Christian giving, holding up Jesus Christ as a model. He explains the goal of such giving and the proper attitude of the givers. He even applies a little pressure by citing examples of Christians less wealthy than the Corinthians (8:1-6; 9:1-5).

This brief passage on giving shows Paul's holistic concerns. While still recuperating from personal trauma, he had agreed to head up a major fund-raising drive on behalf of the needy in Jerusalem. Later, working on that very project, he paused to write the profoundly theological book of Romans (Romans 15:25-26). His scholarship didn't dampen a zeal for practical Christian love; his concern for souls didn't crowd out concern for their hungry bodies.

Life Questions: Compare Paul's appeal for funds with those you have experienced in the church. Is there a different emphasis?

you! ¹⁰Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

Paul's Defense of His Ministry

10 By the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you. I, Paul, who am "timid" when face to face with you, but "bold" when away! I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. ¹¹For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ¹²The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ¹³We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. ¹⁴And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.

You are looking only on the surface of things. ¹⁵If anyone is confident that he belongs to Christ, he should consider again that we belong to Christ just as much as he. ¹⁶For even if I boast somewhat freely

about the authority the Lord gave us for building you up rather than pulling you down, I will not be ashamed of it. ¹⁷I do not want to seem to be trying to frighten you with my letters. ¹⁸For some say, "His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing." ¹⁹Much people should realize that what we are in our letters when we are absent, we will be in our actions when we are present.

²⁰We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise. ²¹We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the field God has assigned to us, a field that reaches even to you. ²²We are not going too far in our boasting, as would be the case if we had not come to you, for we did get as far as you with the gospel of Christ. ²³Neither do we go beyond our limits by boasting of work done by others.^a Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our area of activity among you will greatly expand,

^a11:15 Or ²¹We, however, will not boast about things that cannot be measured, but we will boast according to that the God of measure has assigned us—a measurement that relates even to you. ²²Neither do we boast about work done in regard to the work done by others.

INSIGHT

Paul Has Had Enough Answering his critics

I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool. 11:16

Verse 1 of chapter 10 introduces a dramatic shift in tone. The first nine chapters mainly show Paul's relief at seeing encouraging signs in Corinth. But these last four chapters make clear that hostility was still raging. In fact, some have guessed this section was taken from the "painful letter" Paul referred to earlier (2:4). Here at the end of 2 Corinthians, Paul boldly confronts his critics.

Who were his antagonists? A picture of them emerges if you compile all the accusations Paul answers throughout the letter. Basically, they were troublemakers. In their eyes, Paul could do nothing right.

Paul's enemies in Corinth had blasted him for not visiting them as promised; yet when he did visit they gossiped, "In person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing" (10:10). They had criticized him for not taking a salary and then hinted he was misusing funds (8:20; 11:7-9). To these "super-apostles" (11:5), Paul somehow appeared simultaneously unimpressive and yet crafty, overly strict and yet worldly. Some even hinted he was out of his mind (5:13).

A Ringing Self-Defense

You can almost sense Paul declaring "I've had it!" then rolling up his sleeves to refute the charges. He insists that the future of the Corinthian church, not just his own reputation, is at stake. What does he feel? Something like the burning jealousy of a father who watches his virgin daughter being seduced away from her true lover (11:2-3).

These four remarkable chapters show Paul's passionate nature. Frustrated by having to defend himself, he almost stammers in print. He is determined to convince the Corinthians that he is motivated by a desire to serve God, not by any schemes of profit or power. Along the way, he lists an amazing catalog of his physical sufferings and reveals intimate details of his spiritual life, including one incident still shrouded in mystery (12:1-6).

Judge for yourself, Paul seems to say, to the Corinthians and to all of us. Look at my life and decide, Whose fool am I?

Life Questions Have you ever been wrongly accused of something? How did you react to your accusers?

16so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you. For we do not want to boast about work already done in another man's territory. 17But, "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord." 18For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

Paul and the False Apostles

11 I hope you will put up with a little of my foolishness; but you are already doing that. 2I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. 3But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. 4For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. 5But I do not think I am in the least inferior to those "super-apostles." 6I may not be a trained speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way.

7Was it a sin for me to lower myself in order to elevate you by preaching the gospel of God to you free of charge? 8I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so as to serve you. 9And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and will continue to do so. 10As surely as the truth of Christ is in me, nobody in the regions of Achaia will stop this boasting of mine. 11Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! 12And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about.

13For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. 14And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. 15It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

Paul Boasts About His Sufferings

6I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool. But if you do, then receive me just as you would a fool, so that I may do a little boasting. 17In this self-confident boasting I am not talking as the Lord would, but as a fool. 18Since many are boasting in the way the world does, I too will boast. 19You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise! 20In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or pushes himself forward or slaps you in the face. 21To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that!

What anyone else dares to boast about—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast about.

22Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. 23Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. 24Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, 26I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles, in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea, and in danger from false brothers. 27I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep, I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. 28Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. 29Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?

30If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. 31The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying. 32In Damascus the governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me. 33But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands.

Paul's Vision and His Thorn

12 I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. 2I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. 3And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows—4was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell. 5I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. 6Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say.

7To keep me from becoming conceited because

11:24 Paul's Many Trials

Acts records many of the apostle Paul's adventures and trials, but this passage shows that other disasters occurred as well. "Forty lashes minus one" was the maximum punishment allowed under Jewish law—five times Paul had been judged and sentenced by the Jews for his activities as a Christian. In addition, he was often imprisoned under Roman law and sometimes beaten with rods (an illegal punishment for a Roman citizen such as Paul).

of these supposedly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ¹⁰Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ¹¹But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. ¹²That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Paul's Concern for the Corinthians

¹³I have made a fool of myself, but you drove me to it. I ought to have been commended by you, for I am not in the least inferior to the super-apostles—even though I am nothing. ¹⁴The things that mark an apostle—signs, wonders and miracles—were done among you with great perseverance. ¹⁵How were you inferior to the other churches, except that I was never a burden to you? Forgive me this wrong!

¹⁶Now I am ready to visit you for the third time, and I will not be a burden to you, because what I want is not your possessions but you. After all, children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. ¹⁷So I will very gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as well. If I love you more, will you love me less? ¹⁸Be that as it may, I have not been a burden to you. Yet crafty fellow that I am, I caught you by trickery. ¹⁹Did I exploit you through any of the men I sent you? ²⁰I urged Titus to go to you and I sent our brother with him. Titus did not exploit you, did he? Did we not act in the same spirit and follow the same course?

²¹Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you? We have been

12:7 The Thorn in Paul's Flesh

Bible scholars don't agree on the precise nature of Paul's "thorn." Some suggest a physical ailment, such as an eye disease, malaria, or epilepsy. Others interpret it as a spiritual temptation, or the constant opposition of his Jewish enemies. The Bible gives no clear evidence on the precise nature of this affliction. Regardless, Paul stresses that God permitted the thorn to continue, despite his prayers for relief, to teach him an important lesson about grace and dependence. This conclusion echoes Paul's thoughts on the Corinthians' need suffering in chapter 7.

speaking in the sight of God as those in Christ and everything we do, dear friends, is for your strengthening. ²²For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, jealousies, rivalries and disorders. ²³I am afraid that when I come again my God will humble me before you and I will be like you and even many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin, and debauchery in which they have indulged.

Final Warnings

13 This will be my third visit to you. "Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." I already gave you a warning when I was with you the second time. I now repeat it while absent. On my return I will not spare those who sinned earlier or any of the others, since you are demanding proof that Christ is speaking through me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you. For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. Likewise we are weak in him, yet by God's power we will live with him to serve you.

²Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith, test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test? And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test. ³Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong. Not that people will see that we have stood the test but that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed. ⁴For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. ⁵We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong, and our prayer is for your perfection. ⁶This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority, the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down.

Final Greetings

⁷Finally, brothers, good-by. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

⁸Greet one another with a holy kiss. ⁹All the saints send their greetings.

¹⁰May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

THE END

NO. 167, THE CORINTHIANS, PART TWO, CHAPTERS 12-13

THE CORINTHIANS, PART TWO, CHAPTERS 12-13
THE CORINTHIANS, PART TWO, CHAPTERS 12-13
THE CORINTHIANS, PART TWO, CHAPTERS 12-13
THE CORINTHIANS, PART TWO, CHAPTERS 12-13
THE CORINTHIANS, PART TWO, CHAPTERS 12-13

GALATIANS

INTRODUCTION

No Second-Class Christians

A protest against treason

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! 1:8

Paul is angry. You can almost see his face: flushed red, with lines of tension working in his jaw. Typically, he greets his readers briefly and then launches into warm praise of them. But in this letter shock and dismay replace the usual warmth. A crisis threatens the Galatians, and Paul opens with a withering blast against the people responsible.

What's the Problem?

Yet, when you read a few chapters, you may wonder why the apostle is so upset. Galatia seems innocent of the sins of Corinth; Paul describes no incest or idolatry here. Instead, he brings up common, everyday Jewish affairs such as the observance of festival days and the practice of ancient traditions, especially circumcision. Where is the big crisis?

Paul could foresee the outcome of the Galatians' thinking: by unduly stressing their Jewish heritage, the Galatians would soon devalue what Christ had done. They would start trusting in their own human effort (their keeping of "the law") to gain acceptance by God (3:1-5).

If the Galatians continued their policies, the bedrock of the gospel would crumble. Faith in Christ would become just one of many steps in salvation, not the only one. The gospel itself would be perverted (1:6-9).

A Dangerous Class Structure

Paul saw other ominous dangers ahead for the fledgling Christian church. As a Jewish Roman citizen who spoke Greek, he knew well the innate human tendency to look down on people. Roman citizens snubbed non-Romans, Greeks looked down their noses at Romans; and Jews, with their exalted history and highly developed religion, felt superior to other cultures.

The Galatians' insistence on strict Jewish rules would bring side effects. Subtle distinctions between Christians would inevitably creep in: *faith in Christ is fine, but a circumcised person who keeps the Jewish law...that's far better*. Already, such thoughts had infected two esteemed apostles, Peter and Barnabas. Circumcised Christians were snubbing uncircumcised ones as second-class citizens.

The letter to the Galatians, then, is protesting against treason. It lashes out against subtle dangers that can ultimately pervert the gospel and divide the church. Paul insists that Jesus Christ came to tear down walls between people, not to build them up. In him there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female (3:28). Faith in him, not anyone's set of laws (2:16), opens the door to acceptance by God.

How to Read Galatians

Galatians reads like a dramatic court trial. On one side of the courtroom stand Paul's accusers. Persuasive and powerful, these "Judaizers" have followed Paul from town to town, spreading rumors and contradicting his version of the Christian faith.

On the other side sit the jury, the Galatian Christians. They have enjoyed warm friendship with Paul in the past, but some of the charges against him are serious. Did he invent parts of the gospel he preached to them? Has God really given him a special insight? Is it true that his message of "freedom" will lead to a weak, immoral church? Should they turn their backs on their Jewish heritage?

Paul, acting in his own self-defense, paces the courtroom. He uses a variety of debating styles: tight logic, historical reviews, and personal outrage. His integrity, and ultimately Jesus Christ's integrity, is at stake.

In topical content, Galatians covers much the same ground as Romans. But in style, it crackles with a fighting spirit. As you read it, try to visualize that courtroom scene, and judge for yourself Paul's effectiveness as a defendant.

PLANS FOR READING GALATIANS

PLAN 1: An Overview of Galatians in 1 Day

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to Galatians, then chapter 3. You'll have to concentrate to follow all the arguments. But this chapter gives an essential interpretation of the Old Testament. Study it as a sample of Paul's defense in Galatians.

PLAN 2: All of Galatians in 5 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5-6

1 Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—²and all the brothers with me,

To the churches in Galatia:

³Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

No Other Gospel

⁶I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—⁷which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! ⁹As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

¹⁰Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Paul Called by God

¹¹I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. ¹²I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

¹³For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and

was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. ¹⁵But when God, who set me apart from birth^a and called me by his grace, was pleased ¹⁶to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, ¹⁷nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.

¹⁸Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter^b and stayed with him fifteen days. ¹⁹I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord's brother. ²⁰I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie. ²¹Later I went to Syria and Cilicia. ²²I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. ²³They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." ²⁴And they praised God because of me.

Paul Accepted by the Apostles

2 Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus^c along also. ²I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain. ³Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. ⁴This matter arose, because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. ⁵We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

⁶As for those who seemed to be important—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance—those men added nothing to my message. ⁷On the

^a15 Or from my mother's womb

^b18 Greek Cephas

contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles,^a just as Peter had been to the Jews.^b For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews.^c All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.^d

Paul Opposes Peter

¹¹When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. ¹²Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. ¹³The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

¹⁴When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"

¹⁵"We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

¹⁷"If, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not! ¹⁸If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a lawbreaker. ¹⁹For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. ²⁰I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"^e

Faith or Observance of the Law

3 You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was

2:11 Forcing a Confrontation

Galatians 2 gives a fascinating behind-the-scenes account of how the Jewish/Gentile question was splitting the early church. Peter and James, so sympathetic to Jewish Christians, acted hypocritically in their treatment of Gentiles until Paul confronted them publicly. Acts 15 gives a more detailed account of the official disagreements and how they were finally resolved.

clearly portrayed as crucified. ²¹I would like to have just one thing from you: Will you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? Have you suffered so much for nothing, if it really was for nothing? Then God gave you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?

²²Consider Abraham. He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness. Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. The Scripture foretold that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

²³All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because "The righteous will live by faith." The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

The Law and the Promise

Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ. What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a prom-

3:17 The 430-Year Gap

In chapter 3, Paul uses clever arguments to put the entire Old Testament law in a new perspective. The law was never intended to make possible a way to God, he says (3:11,21). Rather, the law was given to "lead us to Christ," by convincing us of the impossibility of gaining God's acceptance on our own. To prove his point, Paul mentions a 430-year gap between Abraham and Moses. God gave his promises to Abraham, who lived long before Moses ever received the law; therefore, Abraham couldn't possibly have depended on the law. God's promise reached final fulfillment in Jesus, whom Paul calls "Abraham's seed."

^{a7} Greek uncircumcised. ^{a8} Greek circumcised, also in verses 8 and 9. ^{a9} Greek Cephas, also in verses 11 and 14.

interpreters end the quotation after verse 14.

^{b6} Gen. 15:6

^{c8} Gen. 12:3, 18:18, 22:18

^{d10} Deut. 27:26

^{e21} Some have 24

¹² Lev. 18:5

¹³ Deut. 21:23

¹⁶ Gen. 12:7, 13:15, 24:7

see, but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.

¹⁹What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator. ²⁰A mediator, however, does not represent just one party, but God is one.

²¹Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. ²²But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

²³Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. ²⁴So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ^a that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

Sons of God

²⁶You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

^a24 Or charge until Christ came

^b26 Abba! for Father

²⁹If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

4 What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. ²He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. ³So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. ⁴But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, ⁵to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. ⁶Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba,^b Father." ⁷So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

Paul's Concern for the Galatians

⁸Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. ⁹But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? ¹⁰You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! ¹¹I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.

¹²I plead with you, brothers, become like me, for I became like you. You have done me no wrong. ¹³As you know, it was because of an illness that I

INSIGHT

Legalism

Can we do anything to make God love us more?

But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? 4:9

Before his conversion, Paul was one of the best legalists who ever lived. A loyal Jew, he tortured Christians who stepped outside Jewish tradition to follow Christ. If a person could reach God by obeying the law, then he, the strict Pharisee, would have done it.

But in Galatians, he blasts the idea that God's love is conditioned by how many rules we obey. Legalism is like a cage: it can only condemn people and lock them behind bars. As Paul points out, no one has kept all of God's laws perfectly, and all who try ultimately fail (3:10-11).

No Strings Attached

Chapters 3-4 draw sharp contrasts: a prisoner and a free man, a sheltered child and an adult. Don't act like a slave or a child, Paul says. Act like a privileged son, an heir to a great fortune!

Galatians has been called the "Magna Charta of Christian liberty." "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free," Paul declares (5:1). Galatians teaches that there is nothing we can do to make God love us more—or love us less. We don't have to "earn" God's love by slavishly following rules.

Martin Luther said Galatians was "my own little epistle. I have betrothed myself to it; it is my Katie von Bora [Luther's wife]." This slim book proclaims that God has given his love freely, with no strings attached. We should never get over the awesome implications of that truth, Galatians says. Evidently, Paul didn't.

Life Questions: The early Christians went in two directions. Some, like the people in Galatia, became obsessed with legalism. Others took their Christian freedom too far: they refused to follow anyone's rules. Which is the greater danger in your circle?

first preached the gospel to you. ¹⁴Even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself. ¹⁵What has happened to all your joy? I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. ¹⁶Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?

¹⁷Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may be zealous for them. ¹⁸It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always and not just when I am with you. ¹⁹My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, ²⁰how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!

Hagar and Sarah

²¹Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? ²²For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. ²³His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise.

²⁴These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. ²⁵Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. ²⁶But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. ²⁷For it is written:

"Be glad, O barren woman,
who bears no children;
break forth and cry aloud,
you who have no labor pains,
because more are the children of the desolate
woman
than of her who has a husband."^a

²⁸Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. ²⁹At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. ³⁰But what does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son."^b

4:15 Paul's Anguish

Paul's letter wavers between abstract reasoning and intensely emotional pleading. As this paragraph shows, Paul had once enjoyed intimate closeness with the people of Galatia. He feels anguish and personal rejection because they now seem to be turning their backs on the faith he had carefully taught them. He is in the pains of childbirth, he says, waiting anxiously for them to grow out of their false ideas (verse 19).

³¹Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

Freedom in Christ

5 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

²Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. ³Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. ⁴You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ, you have fallen away from grace. ⁵But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope. ⁶For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

⁷You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth? ⁸That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. ⁹"A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough." ¹⁰I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion will pay the penalty, whoever he may be. ¹¹Brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished. ¹²As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!

¹³You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. ¹⁴The entire law is summed up in a single command. "Love your neighbor as yourself."^c ¹⁵If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

Life by the Spirit

¹⁶So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. ¹⁷For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

¹⁹The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, ²⁰idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. ²⁵Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

^a27 Isaiah 54:1

^b30 Gen. 21:10

^c23 Or *the flesh*, also in verses 16, 17, 19 and 24

^d24 Lev. 19:18

Doing Good to All

6 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. ²Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. ³If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, ⁵for each one should carry his own load.

⁶Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.

⁷Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸The one who sows to

please his sinful nature, from that nature^a will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. ⁹Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ¹⁰Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Not Circumcision but a New Creation

¹¹See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!

¹²Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. ¹³Not even those who are circumcised obey the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your flesh. ¹⁴May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which^b the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation. ¹⁶Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God.

¹⁷Finally, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

¹⁸The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

6:2 Mixing Gentleness with Harshness

Galatians contains some of Paul's harshest language, for he sensed a danger that could destroy the church's faith. But the book also includes some of Paul's most familiar and comforting words. Chapter 6 describes a spirit of tolerance and forgiveness toward those who fail. It also offers encouragement for people who grow tired of doing good when it appears justice is not working out.

^a Or his flesh, from the flesh

^b14 Or whom

INSIGHT

Paul Fights Back

When freedom gets dangerous

The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. 5:6

Over the years Paul caught on to his opponents' crafty ways of undermining him. Galatians provides a textbook case of his response to critics.

First, Paul answered their personal attacks. Some had questioned his right to be called an apostle. In chapters 1 and 2, Paul insists that he received the gospel directly from God. In addition, he has met every criterion of an apostle.

Chapters 3 and 4 deal with Paul's ideas. Had he strayed too far from Old Testament law and customs? Some hinted that Paul was preaching an incomplete gospel. He answered those objections with a carefully reasoned look at the Old Testament, focusing on Abraham, the father of the Jewish race.

What to Do with Freedom

Then Paul turned to more practical matters. Stressing freedom, not rules, left him open to criticism. Did his strong emphasis on freedom lead to loose morals? To answer this question, he ended Galatians, a letter devoted to Christian liberty, with a warning.

"Why did Christ set us free?" Paul asks. To make possible a life of orgies, drunkenness, and witchcraft? Obviously no. Christ freed us from worrying about whether we are "doing enough" to please God and from uselessly following external forms. But we should use that freedom to serve one another in love and to live a Spirit-filled life.

His arguments and emotions exhausted, Paul concludes, "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation" (6:15). A released prisoner, a freed slave, the bountiful fruit of a living tree—all the images in Galatians convey *life*, an abundant life in the Spirit of God, readily available to every Christian.

Life Questions Read over the qualities of life in the Spirit listed in 5:22-23. Do these characterize your life?

EPHESIANS

INTRODUCTION

For the Discouraged

Good news for those who feel abandoned and unloved

You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household. 2:19

Imagine yourself a child, abandoned on the streets of a big city. Your parents died on the way to the city. You have no money and no relatives. You can't speak the language, and you are left to fend for yourself.

Many orphans find themselves in exactly that predicament. They sleep in alleys, huddling for warmth in boxes or metal drums. To survive, they mostly steal, catch rats to eat, or rummage in garbage. Girls sometimes work as prostitutes.

In 1850 immigrants were flooding New York City, one of the largest cities in America, and no one had the time or money to look after the orphans—no one, that is, except Charles Loring Brace, a 26-year-old minister. Horrified by their plight, he organized a unique solution, the Orphan Train. The idea was simple: pack hundreds of orphans on a train heading west and announce to towns along the way that anyone could claim a new son or daughter when the Orphan Train chugged through.

Adopted into a New Life

By the time the last Orphan Train steamed west in 1929, 100,000 children had found new homes and new lives. Two orphans from such trains became governors, one served as a U.S. congressman, and still another was a U.S. Supreme Court justice.

The Orphan Train provides a vivid parable of the message of Ephesians. To capture Paul's enthusiasm in this book, imagine one more stage in your life as a street orphan.

You have learned to survive and fight off starvation. But one day, someone takes you and puts you on a smoke-belching train jammed with hundreds of other foreign-speaking youngsters. Three days later you are selected by a kindly middle-aged couple who introduce themselves to you. You are driven (in an automobile!) to the largest house you have ever seen, and they quietly explain that you are now part of their family. Everything they have is yours to use and enjoy. At long last, by some miracle, you have a family and a home—and what a home!

Welcome to the Family

Paul conveys a feeling something like that in Ephesians, a rich book that expands the message in Jesus' parable of the Lost Son (Luke 15). A big "Welcome Home!" banner is stretched across the garden, balloons lunge skyward, and a band plays. Christians have been adopted directly into the family of God. This is a good news book, to put it mildly.

If you feel discouraged or wonder if God really cares or question whether the Christian life is worth the effort, read Ephesians. You will no longer feel like an orphan. Paul describes the "riches in Christ" available to all and points to us, God's adopted children, as his sparkling "Exhibit A" in all the universe (3:10).

Ephesians contains staggering thoughts. Paul wants his readers to grasp "how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ" (3:18). He cranks up the volume to express that love, and not one low, mournful note sneaks in.

How to Read Ephesians

In many ways, Ephesians is Paul's "summing-up" book. The same subjects appear in greater detail in books like Romans, 1 Corinthians, and 1 Thessalonians. But in Ephesians, Paul gives an overall view of the grand scheme of the gospel. Only now, Paul says, has God's hidden plan for all of history come to light.

Because it compresses such large thoughts into such a short space, Ephesians deserves very careful study. Read the first three chapters slowly, digesting one paragraph at a time. Such study will prove rewarding. Ephesians gives exuberant good news about the nature of the universe and God's plan for believers.

Like other letters from Paul, Ephesians divides fairly neatly between doctrine (chapters 1-3) and practical advice (4-6). The last half details how our lives should change as a result of the great things described in the first half.

PLANS FOR READING EPHESIANS

PLAN 1: An Overview of Ephesians in 2 Days

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to Ephesians, then chapter 2.
- ☐ Day 2. Read chapter 3. You may also want to look at the famous "armor" passage (6:10-18).

PLAN 2: All of Ephesians in 6 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To the saints in Ephesus,^a the faithful^b in Christ Jesus:

²Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵he^c predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. ⁹And he^d made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

¹¹In him we were also chosen,^e having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, ¹²in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. ¹³And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who

is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory

Thanksgiving and Prayer

¹⁵For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit^f of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, ²⁰which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ²²And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Made Alive in Christ

2 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ²in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature^g and following its

*1. Some early manuscripts do not have *in Ephesus*.
wisdom and understanding. ¹⁶he

1. Or: were made heirs

*1. Or: believers who are
1. Or: a spirit

4-5. Or: sight in love. ¹⁸He
23. Or: our flesh

48-9. Or: us. With all

desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. ⁴But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions. It is by grace you have been saved. ⁶And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves. It is the gift of God— ⁹not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

One in Christ

¹¹Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)— ¹²remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷He came and preached peace to you who were far

2:8 Given, Not Earned

As a converted legalist, Paul insisted on one fact of the gospel: eternal life comes not by any ritual of rule-keeping (which he calls "works"), but by the grace of God. Yet in this paragraph he notes that God intends for us to "do good works." Paul makes a clear distinction: Good works do nothing to help us obtain God's favor, but they follow naturally as we experience the love of Christ.

2:14 Destroying the Barriers

A Jewish missionary to the Gentiles, Paul wrote and talked constantly about tearing down the barriers between Jews and Gentiles. Jews kept themselves separate from Gentiles by many cultural and religious barriers. Perhaps the most vivid symbol of separation was an actual wall in the temple. Non-Jews could never enter the temple courts beyond that wall. Here Paul describes how Christ utterly destroyed the "wall of hostility" between the two groups.

away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

¹⁹Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²²And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Paul the Preacher to the Gentiles

3 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

²Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, ³that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. ⁴In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. ⁶This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

⁷I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. ⁸Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. ¹⁰His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹²In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. ¹³I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

A Prayer for the Ephesians

¹⁴For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵from whom his whole family^a in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power

3:16 Reading Between the Lines

Paul's prayers often give some of the best insights into the local situation. This prayer (verses 14–21) and the one in chapter 1 (verses 15–23) indicate the church at Ephesus was well-grounded. In Ephesians Paul does not dwell on any urgent problems; instead, he tries to raise the sights of young Christians who have not fully grasped the extent of God's love and grace.

^a Or whom all fatherhood

through his Spirit in your inner being. ¹²so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ. ¹³and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

¹⁴Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ¹⁵to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Unity in the Body of Christ

4 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love. ²Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ³There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when

you were called—*one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one Lord and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

⁴But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁵This is why it says

*"When he ascended on high,
he led captives in his train
and gave gifts to men."*⁶

⁷(What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions?) ⁸He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens in order to fill the whole universe. ⁹It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹⁰to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. ¹¹Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

¹⁴Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back

¹² Psalm 68:18

¹³ On the depths of the earth

INSIGHT

Letters from Prison

Time at last to tackle the grandest question of all

I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it [the gospel] fearlessly, as I should. 6:20

To stimulate creativity, many authors seek out a scenic setting. Yet some of the world's most famous literature originated in, of all places, a prison cell. John Bunyan wrote his *Pilgrim's Progress* there. Alexander Solzhenitsyn's vast output had its conception behind barbed wire, as did Dostoevsky's.

Parts of the Bible were written in prison as well. Ephesians represents one of Paul's "prison letters" along with Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

Time on His Hands

Prison offers authors one precious commodity: time to think and reflect. When Paul wrote his prison letters, he was no longer journeying from town to town, stamping out fires set by his enemies. Settled into passably comfortable surroundings (probably confined to a house), he could slip off his sandals and devote attention to lofty concepts.

Unlike Paul's other letters, Ephesians does not address any urgent problems. With a sigh of relief, the apostle turned to the grandest question of all: "What is God's overall purpose for this world?" Paul answers the question this way: "To bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ" (1:10).

A Positive Approach

The apostle Paul often borrowed from athletics to press home a crucial point, and Ephesians ends with a well-composed pep talk. In keeping with this letter's uplifting style, Paul does not scold or warn; rather, he begins, "I urge you to live a life worthy of your calling" (4:1).

Already Paul has taught that Christ lives in each Christian—we are his body. Now he exhorts his readers to think through what it means to represent Christ in the world. When people look at Christians, do they see the qualities of Christ on display?

The last half of Ephesians spells out practical steps toward Christian maturity. Paul blends each new thought into his overall theme, urging us to love as *Christ loved*, to forgive as *Christ forgave*, to submit as *you would to Christ* (5:1; 4:32; 5:21).

Ironically, it took time in prison to free Paul up for this endeavor. The book of Ephesians can hardly introduce a new thought without bursting into a song or a prayer. It is no wonder the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge called the book "the divinest composition of man."

Life Questions: Suppose you were put in prison. What kind of letters would you write?

and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Living as Children of Light

¹⁷So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

²⁰You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. ²¹Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²²You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

²⁵Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

²⁹Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

5 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children ²and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. ⁴Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. ⁵For of this you can be sure. No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. ⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are

disobedient. ⁷Therefore do not be partners with them.

⁸For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ⁹and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³But everything exposed by the light becomes visible. ¹⁴For it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said

"Wake up, O sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you."

¹⁵Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. ¹⁸Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. ¹⁹Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

²¹Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Wives and Husbands

²²Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church— ³⁰for we are members of his body. ³¹For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. ³²This is a pro-

5:21 The Key to Submission

Many readers have struggled with the advice Paul gives in the next few paragraphs. This simple sentence sets the tone for all that follows: we are to submit to others because of our reverence for Christ. In other words, in any human relationship—husband and wife, child and parent, slave and master—a third party is involved, Christ himself. Paul urges us to conduct those relationships in light of Christ's own spirit.

*26 Psalm 4:4

*5 Of kingdom of the Christ and God

*26 Of having cleansed

*31 Gen 2:24

and mystery—but on taking of its due lust and the church. ¹⁰However, each one of you must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband

Children and Parents

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²Honor your father and mother—which is the first commandment with a promise—³that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.⁴

⁴Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Slaves and Masters

⁵Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. ⁶Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. ⁷Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, ⁸because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.

⁹And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

The Armor of God

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done

everything, to stand. ¹⁴Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled on and your waist with the breastplate of righteousness in place. ¹⁵And with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

¹⁹Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel. ²⁰For which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Final Greetings

²¹Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. ²²I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.

²³Peace to the brothers, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.

6:11 The Armor of God

Ephesians concludes with a concise analogy, perhaps inspired by a glimpse of a Roman soldier, outfitted in armor, patrolling the grounds of Paul's prison. Paul viewed the Christian life as a kind of warfare, and wanted his readers to prepare for combat with a dangerous opponent. He listed only the "sword of the Spirit" as an offensive weapon; all the rest were used for defense.

PHILIPPIANS

■ INTRODUCTION ■

Cheerful Sounds from a Jail Cell

Joy when it's least expected

Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! 3:1

Joy. The word has a quick, poignant ring to it. Yet it, like other words, has been drained of meaning over the years. Nowadays *joy* is used most commonly for a sensation like *thrill*.

When You Feel Like Despairing

Philippians uses the word *joy* or *rejoice* every few paragraphs, but the joy it describes doesn't vanish after your heart starts beating normally again. Rejoice, says Paul, when someone selfishly tries to steal the limelight from you. And when you meet persecution for your faith. And when you are facing death.

In fact, the most joyous book in the Bible comes from the pen of an author chained to a Roman guard. Many scholars believe Paul wrote Philippians in Rome just about the time Nero began tossing Christians to ravenous lions and burning them as torches to illuminate his banquets. How could a rational man devote a letter to the topic of joy while his survival was in serious jeopardy? In such an environment, how could joy possibly thrive?

Turning Evil into Good

Paul hints at an answer in a burst of eloquence in chapter 2 (verses 5-11). This pithy, metrical paragraph may have been a hymn familiar to the early church. In it, Paul discusses Christ's perspective in coming to earth.

During the Christmas season we celebrate the grand night God visited earth as a baby. But to the rest of the universe the event looked like an astounding humiliation. God, the Creator of all, took on the unimpressive body of a human being to endure a confining life and grisly death on planet Earth.

Paul points to this death to show that God can take even the darkest moment in history and turn it into good. The cross, and Jesus' not staying dead, proves that nothing is powerful enough to stamp out a reason for joy—joy "in the Lord," as Paul says.

Victory in Jail

Thus even the normally depressing state of imprisonment didn't bother Paul. As he wrote Philippians, he must have recalled his first visit to Philippi. Then, a most unusual jailbreak occurred: the jail broke, but the prisoners didn't (Acts 16:22-28).

Even when Paul stayed in jail for long periods, God used the experience to advance the gospel. As he wrote Philippians, conversions were occurring among the Roman palace soldiers, forced by guard duty to overhear Paul's daily ministry.

Paul summarized his life philosophy in a famous "to be or not to be" soliloquy, concluding that "to live is Christ and to die is gain" (1:21). God is even stronger than death, and that makes a Christian's joy indestructible.

How to Read Philippians

Philippians is simple and straightforward. It's not a formal treatise, but a warm letter to friends. Read it like you would read any personal letter. From the clues Paul gives, try to imagine the relationship between him and the Philippians. What did he like about them? Why were they so important to him?

The Introduction refers to the common use of the words *joy* and *rejoice*. Check out each of these, noticing how Paul can find joy in any circumstances. Use Philippians like a devotional book, first reflecting on what it says, then applying it to your own life.

PLANS FOR READING PHILIPPIANS

PLAN 1: An Overview of Philippians in 1 Day

Day 1 Read the Introduction to Philippians, then chapter 2, noticing especially the central passage set off in verse form (verses 5-11).

PLAN 2: All of Philippians in 4 Days

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers¹ and deacons:

²Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

⁷It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. ⁸God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus

⁹And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God

Paul's Chains Advance the Gospel

¹²Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. ¹³As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard² and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. ¹⁴Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly

¹⁵It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. ¹⁶The latter

do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains.³ ¹⁸But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, ¹⁹for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.⁴ ²⁰I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²²If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. ²⁵Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.

²⁷Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel ²⁸without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. ²⁹For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, ³⁰since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

¹Traditionally *principals*
²Or *sentinels*

³13 Or *whole palace*

⁴16,17 Some late manuscripts have verses 16 and 17 in reverse order

Imitating Christ's Humility

2 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.

⁶Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God
something to be grasped.

7but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature* of a servant,
being made in human likeness

*And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself

and became obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every
name.

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should
bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the
earth.

And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is
Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Shining as Stars

¹²Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose

¹⁴Do everything without complaining or arguing, ¹⁵so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe ¹⁶as you hold out the word of life—in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing. ¹⁷But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. ¹⁸So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

2:12-13 Working with God

Philippians, a practical book, presents theology simply and without elaboration. These verses describe both the human and divine element in our faith: we "work out" our salvation, and yet God "works in us" to accomplish it. Philippians 3:16 expresses a similar paradox: Paul urges that we "live up to what we have already attained."

Timothy and Epaphroditus

[illegible]

After I think it is necessary to send back to you expressions of my brother's love, wisdom and help, I want to tell you that he is now your steward, and you want to take care of his needs. After he keeps for an hour and is distressed because you heard no news. Indeed he was ... and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me to spare the sorrow upon sorrow. Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again, you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. Whenever I see in the Lord with great joy and honor men like him. Because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me.

No Confidence in the Flesh

3 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.

Watch out for those dogs—those men who do evil—those mutilators of the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh—though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh I have more circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, in regard to the law, a Pharisee, as for zeal persecuting the church, as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.

But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from

2:25 A Helper for Paul

The paragraph on Epaphroditus reveals the warm feelings between Paul and the church at Philippi. If Paul was imprisoned at Rome, as many scholars believe, then Epaphroditus traveled more than 700 miles to be with him. He fell sick while visiting Paul and was now returning to Philippi, probably carrying this letter to hand-deliver.

*6. Or in the form of *7. Or the form *16. Or held on to

27 On the form

* 16 On hold out the

God and is by faith. I'll want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Pressing on Toward the Goal

12Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead. 14I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

15All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. 16Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

17Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. 18For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.

19Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. 20But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

4 Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!

Exhortations

22I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord. 23Yes, and I

4:2 Women in the Church

Although these two women were stirring up trouble in Philippi, women played a positive role in that church. In fact, Paul's first convert in Europe was Lydia, a businesswoman. Paul met with her and a group of women by a river, and later stayed in her house (see Acts 16).

INSIGHT

Paul's Favorite Church

When others failed, these friends stuck

I thank my God every time I remember you. 1:3

The Christian church hasn't had a perfect record throughout history. If you take a random sample of adjectives people use to describe the church, the list will likely include such labels as **racist, judgmental, narrow, divided, pompous**.

The church of Jesus Christ has fallen far short of the ideals he entrusted to it—so far short that we may sometimes forget what the church is supposed to look like. Problems existed from the beginning. Paul's letters to Galatia, Corinth, and Colosse flame with indignation against defects in the early church.

Occasionally, however, a church came along that worked, against all odds. Philippi was one of those rare congregations.

Loyal Friends

From its birth, the church in Philippi had difficulties to face. Its first recorded converts were an Asiatic Jewish merchant, a Greek slave girl employed as a sideshow fortune-teller, and a gruff Roman jailer (Acts 16). Yet more than a decade later, when Paul wrote the church, he could hardly find words warm enough to express his pride and affection.

Paul turned down money gifts from other churches, out of fear that his enemies might twist the facts and accuse him of being a crook. But he trusted the Philippians. At least four separate times they sacrificed to meet his needs. And they also sent Epaphroditus on an arduous journey to care for Paul in prison.

Paul wrote Philippians, in fact, mainly as a thank-you for all that his friends had done. Its bright, happy tone reflects the fondness he felt for his favorite church.

Nevertheless, Paul couldn't resist an opportunity to give some fatherly advice. In a fireside-chat tone, he warned of encroaching dangers: divisions, a strain of perfectionism, and inroads by those who wished to turn Christians back to the Jewish faith. Always, though, he returned to his underlying theme of joy, an emotion that seemed to come easily when Paul remembered the Philippians.

Life Questions What does Paul single out for praise in the Philippian church? How are those qualities present in your church?

ask you, loyal yokefellow,^a help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Thanks for Their Gifts

¹⁰I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. ¹¹I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹²I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situa-

tion, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

¹⁴Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. ¹⁵Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only. ¹⁶For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. ¹⁷Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account. ¹⁸I have received full payment and even more, I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. ¹⁹And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

²⁰To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

²¹Greet all the saints in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send greetings. ²²All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

²³The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.^b

^a3 Or loyal Syzygus

^b23 Some manuscripts do not have Amen.

COLOSSIANS

INTRODUCTION

Battling the Cults

For everything worthwhile, there exists a counterfeit

see to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy. 2:8

You see them in strange outfits on street corners, chanting phrases with too many vowels and punctuating the chants with a noisy tambourine. Or in airports, thrusting books or flowers into your face. You think of them as crazy cults, populated by misfits. Then one day you hear about a friend of yours

She seemed normal until suddenly, without warning, she snapped. Her parents searched desperately, even hiring private detectives to help get her back. They found her surrounded by allies, with a new name, a new hairstyle, and, so it seemed, a new brain. She stared at them with clear eyes and told them they were missing out on the most wonderful experience of life. She had joined a cult.

A Breeding Ground

Cults come in all varieties, often with exotic names like Urantia or the Church of Scientology. They demand much from their members: a lifetime of discipline and absolute loyalty. And they also promise much in return: the pathway to a secret, hidden knowledge available only to those who follow them.

The first-century town of Colosse was a perfect breeding ground for cults. Situated on a major trade route from the East, Colosse entertained a steady stream of Oriental traders with mysterious religious ideas. Even Jews in that area worshiped angels and river spirits.

Early Christian converts soon confronted new variations of the gospel. Then, as now, many cults didn't reject Jesus Christ outright; they merely worked him into a more elaborate scheme. Christ and simple forms of worship, they taught, were fine for beginners, but for the "deep things of God," well, some further steps would be required.

The Best Defense

Paul doesn't give a complete glossary of the "hollow and deceptive philosophy" the Colossians were sorting through. From his arguments, we can gather that the philosophy must have included strains of Jewish legalism mixed in with angel worship, Greek philosophy, and strict self-denial.

The best defense is a good offense. Rather than attacking each peculiar belief point by point, Paul countered with a positive theology. The principles he outlines in this book can be used today to judge new cults.

"Christ is enough," Paul declares. He is God, the fullness of God, the one who made the world, the reason that everything exists. All the mystery and treasure and wisdom you could ask for are found in the person of Jesus Christ; there is no need to look elsewhere.

Approach God Directly

Because Jesus bridged the chasm between God and us, we don't have to approach God indirectly, through a ladder of angels or other gods. We have no need to prove our worth through superior behavior. We can come to God directly and boldly because of Christ.

As for Jewish practices, they were mere shadows, made obsolete by Christ's coming. Why not concentrate on the actual image that God sent to earth?

Before Christ, Paul grants, a mystery was kept hidden for many centuries (1:26). But with Christ, everything broke out into the open. The fullness of God lived, died, and came back from death in broad daylight. Why settle for counterfeits?

How to Read Colossians

Although this letter was written to counter specific problems in the church at Colosse, it includes some of Paul's most eloquent writing about Jesus Christ. Chapter 1 contains a soaring paragraph (1:15-20) that may have been used as a hymn by the early church. Note in this book how Paul concludes all his arguments by referring to Christ.

Chapters 2 and 3 deal with dangerous tendencies in Colosse. Paul argues against a "mystery" religion by firmly asserting Christ is the complete expression of the mystery of God. As you read these two chapters, try to imagine what kind of behavior at Colosse troubled Paul.

PLANS FOR READING COLOSSIANS

PLAN 1: An Overview of Colossians in 1 Day

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to Colossians, then chapter 1, noting especially Paul's prayer, which precedes the hymnlike paragraph (verses 15-20).

PLAN 2: All of Colossians in 4 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

²To the holy and faithful^a brothers in Christ at Colosse:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father.^b

Thanksgiving and Prayer

³We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints— ⁵the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel ⁶that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. ⁷You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our^c behalf, ⁸and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

⁹For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. ¹⁰And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you^d to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. ¹³For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption,^e the forgiveness of sins.

The Supremacy of Christ

¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born over all creation, ¹⁶For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

²¹Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of^f your evil behavior. ²²But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— ²³if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

Paul's Labor for the Church

²⁴Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. ²⁵I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— ²⁶the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. ²⁷To them God has chosen to make known among the

^a2 Or believing

^b2 Some manuscripts Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

^c7 Some manuscripts your

^d12 Some manuscripts us

^e14 A few late manuscripts redemption through his blood

^f21 Or minds as shown by

contains the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

²⁰We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. ²¹To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

2 I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not met me personally. ³My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding. In order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, ⁴in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁵I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. ⁶For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

Freedom From Human Regulations Through Life With Christ

⁸So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, ⁹rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

¹⁰See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

¹¹For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, ¹²and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. ¹³In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature,^a not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, ¹⁴having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

¹⁵When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature,^b God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁶having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed

to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁷And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.^c

¹⁸Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. ¹⁹These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. ²⁰Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. ²¹He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

²²Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules? ²³"Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? ²⁴These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. ²⁵Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

Rules for Holy Living

3 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁵Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. ¹¹Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

2:16 The Search for Wholeness

Legalism in Paul's day concerned such issues as diet, festival days, and religious ceremony. In these two paragraphs, Paul tells why such rules that appear "spiritual" can actually lead a person away from God. Then, in chapter 3, he details what holy living *should* look like.

In his letter, Paul portrays the Christian life very optimistically. The Christians in Colosse were searching for "fullness" in the same way modern people work to become "holistic" or "self-actualized." After first affirming that Jesus contains all the fullness of God, Paul asserts that true fullness can be found only in Christ (2:10).

3:1 Familiar Words

If Colossians strikes you as vaguely familiar, don't be surprised. Paul's letters tend to follow a pattern: a greeting, a prayer, some doctrine, and a practical application of how we should live. Colossians sounds especially familiar because many of its verses have close parallels in Ephesians. In fact, of Ephesians's 155 verses, 78 appear in some form in Colossians.

^a11 Or the flesh

^b13 Or your flesh

^c13 Some manuscripts us

^d15 Or them in him

^e14 Some manuscripts our

^f16 Some early manuscripts coming on those who are disobedient

¹²Therefore, as God's chosen people—holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ¹³Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Rules for Christian Households

¹⁸Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

¹⁹Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

²⁰Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

²²Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything, and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. ²³Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, ²⁴since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. ²⁵Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.

⁴Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

Further Instructions

²Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. ³And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. ⁵Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶Let your

conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Final Greetings

Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother—a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. ⁸I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. ⁹He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

¹My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) ¹¹Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me. ¹²Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. ¹³I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. ¹⁴Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. ¹⁵Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

¹⁶After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.

¹⁷Tell Archippus, "See to it that you complete the work you have received in the Lord."

¹⁸I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

4:12 Prominent Names in Colosse

Characteristically, Paul ended his letters with personal messages. Epaphras, who is mentioned twice in Colossians (1:7; 4:12), served with Paul and may have founded the church there. The short book of Philemon (verse 23) mentions him as a fellow-prisoner with Paul. The main characters in that book, Philemon and his slave Onesimus, also came from Colosse, and Paul refers to a hoped-for visit to Colosse in his letter to Philemon (verse 22).

⁴⁸ Some manuscripts that he may know about your

1 THESSALONIANS

INTRODUCTION

What Made Paul Successful?

The apostle fusses over the city that once chased him away

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? 3:9

A modern-day evangelist lamented, "Whenever the apostle Paul visited a city, the residents started a riot; when I visit one, they serve tea." The church in Thessalonica, like many of Paul's churches, was born amid violent upheaval. An angry mob took offense at Paul's work and chased him out of town, accusing him of causing "trouble all over the world" (Acts 17:6).

Generally, people do not start riots without a good reason, and in Paul's case they had one. Almost everywhere he visited, an enthusiastic church came to life, provoking the jealousy of the Jewish and Roman establishments.

A Concerned Parent

This letter, 1 Thessalonians, gives important clues into what made Paul so effective at founding churches. Accepted as one of the earliest of Paul's letters, it probably dates from A.D. 50 or 51 and provides a firsthand account of Paul's relationship with a missionary church barely 20 years after Jesus' departure.

Someone once asked John and Charles Wesley's mother which of her ten surviving children she loved the most. She replied, "The one who is sick until he's well, and the one who's away from home until he's back." If someone had asked Paul which church concerned him most, he probably would have answered, "The one with the most problems until it's healthy, the one I've been separated from longest until I return."

When Paul lived with the Thessalonians, he was gentle and loving, "like a mother caring for her little children" (2:7). Later, absent from them, he wrote as if he had only them on his mind all day. In 1 Thessalonians, he praised their strengths, fusses over reports of their weaknesses, and continually thanked God for their spiritual progress.

Questioning Paul's Motives

Some people in the church had questioned Paul's motives, so he opened the letter with a careful review of his work among them. In those days freelance teachers of religion and philosophy sought a profit; Paul reminded the Thessalonians that he had worked night and day to avoid becoming a financial burden. He also painstakingly explained his unavoidable absence from them.

First Thessalonians stands out from the four books that precede it because, unlike them, this letter doesn't major in theology. Rather, it reveals the gratitude, disappointment, and joy of a beloved missionary who can't stop thinking about the church he left behind. Surely one reason for Paul's success centers on his churches' having made as big an impression on Paul as he made on them.

How to Read 1 Thessalonians

This book provides a touching glimpse of Paul as a pastor. Paul visited Thessalonica at a troubled time in his ministry, while enemies were following him from town to town (see Acts 16-17). After he left, the church continued to meet hostility.

First Thessalonians is our earliest record of the life of a Christian community. Paul wrote this letter after receiving a mostly positive report (from Timothy) on the Thessalonians' spiritual health. He rejoiced at the good news, but also showed concern over the church's problems.

As you read 1 Thessalonians, notice the issues that Paul addresses: Christians were raising questions about Jesus' return to earth and were disagreeing on matters of morality. But mainly, look for signs of Paul's relationship to the church at Thessalonica.

PLANS FOR READING 1 THESSALONIANS

PLAN 1: An Overview of 1 Thessalonians in 1 Day

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to 1 Thessalonians, then chapters 3 and 4. The chapters are very short, so you can easily read two together.

PLAN 2: All of 1 Thessalonians in 3 Days

- ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-4 ☐ 5

1 Paul, Silas^a and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace and peace to you.^b

Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians' Faith

²We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. ³We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. ⁶You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. ⁷And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. ⁸The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, ⁹for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

Paul's Ministry in Thessalonica

2 You know, brothers, that our visit to you was not a failure. ²We had previously suffered and been insulted in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in spite of strong opposition. ³For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. ⁴On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts. ⁵You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. ⁶We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else

As apostles of Christ we could have been a bur-

den to you, ⁷but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. ⁸We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. ⁹Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.

¹⁰You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. ¹¹For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, ¹²encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

¹³And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe. ¹⁴For you, brothers, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches suffered from the Jews, ¹⁵who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to all men ¹⁶in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last.^c

Paul's Longing to See the Thessalonians

¹⁷But, brothers, when we were torn away from you for a short time (in person, not in thought),

2:9 Working for a Living

Paul supported his own ministry with a trade (tentmaking) rather than take funds from others. He did this to avoid suspicion that he was profiting financially from his spiritual work. With the Thessalonians, his hard work gave another advantage: it set a good example for those who were quitting their jobs in anticipation of Christ's return to earth.

^a Greek Silvanus, a variant of Silas
^bultu

^c1 Some early manuscripts you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

to On these

all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. ⁷For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. ⁹For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Final Instructions

¹²Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. ¹³Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. ¹⁴And we urge you,

brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. ¹⁵Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.

¹⁶Be joyful always; ¹⁷pray continually; ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

¹⁹Do not put out the Spirit's fire; ²⁰do not treat prophecies with contempt. ²¹Test everything. Hold on to the good. ²²Avoid every kind of evil.

²³May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

²⁵Brothers, pray for us. ²⁶Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss. ²⁷I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers.

²⁸The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

INSIGHT

Preparing for the End

Obsessed with Jesus' second coming

Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you. 5:1

You see them occasionally on the street corners of modern cities: strange, bearded men with hand-lettered wooden signs draped over their bodies. "Jesus is coming again!" they proclaim. "Prepare to meet thy doom!" Similar messages are scrawled on rocks or on street walls.

Archaeologists have yet to unearth Thessalonian graffiti, but this letter makes clear that 19 centuries ago people were already awaiting Jesus' promised return to earth. In fact, they were worried. What about people who died before Jesus returned? they wondered. Would they somehow miss out on life after death? Paul gives a direct and encouraging answer.

A Mixture of Fear and Hope

The Thessalonians had good reason to concern themselves with the future: they lived in constant danger of persecution by the authorities. On any night a knock on the door or the scrape of footsteps outside could mean imprisonment or death. Understandably, the young church looked to Jesus' second coming with longing and hope.

Paul assured them that hope in the future was well-founded, whether or not they lived to see Jesus' return. But he warned against an undue fixation on the future. He urged the Thessalonians to get back to work, indicating that some enthusiasts had quit their jobs to prepare for Jesus' return. Lead a quiet life and mind your own business, Paul advised (4:11).

Waiting for Jesus' Return

The Thessalonians were merely the first in a long line of Christians obsessed with future events. Whole generations since have been caught up in frenzied speculations on the exact time and place of the second coming, only to watch their predictions misfire. Paul shrugs off such speculation (5:1-2). He presents the right way and the wrong way to prepare for Jesus' return.

Paul does not show undue alarm. The mild tone of his rebukes indicates his confidence in the Thessalonians. He asks that they follow God "more and more," as in fact they are already doing (4:1,10; 5:11).

History records that the first readers of this letter responded well. Despite lurking problems (4:3-12), the church in Thessalonica continued to show vigor and health for many years. Christians there stayed so faithful throughout persecutions that their city became known as "The City of Orthodoxy."

Life Questions: How should Jesus' second coming affect us and how can we prepare for it? What extremes does Paul warn against?

2 THESSALONIANS

INTRODUCTION

A Patient Who Didn't Follow Orders

When good advice goes ignored

And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right. 3:13

His light humor and casual manner are gone now. When he was setting the bone, the doctor joked about the benefits of your wearing your arm in a sling every day—instant sympathy from your friends, an opportunity for wild stories on how you got hurt, an easy alibi to avoid heavy work.

But now, three weeks later, lines of concern crease his forehead as he studies the X-rays and notes the slow progress of healing. "I told you to take it easy! Are you giving that arm any rest at all? You can't expect new bone to grow overnight, you know."

When you describe the throbbing pain of the last few days, he grimaces, shakes his head, and scribbles something on a prescription pad. "You shouldn't be feeling pain at this stage," he grumbles. "If you had followed my advice from the beginning you wouldn't need these pills." He then repeats all the instructions he gave you on the first visit, using stronger, less friendly words.

Same Advice, Sterner Words

The book of 2 Thessalonians resembles such a follow-up visit to a family doctor. If you list the topics Paul covers, you will find an uncanny similarity to the subjects of his first letter: Jesus' second coming, spiritual growth, idleness among certain non-workers. However, a sterner, more formal approach replaces the warm tenderness of the first letter.

Obviously, the Thessalonians failed to listen well the first time. Paul wrote this second letter just a few months later, summarizing his message this way: "So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter" (2:15). Instead of coaxing, Paul now commands.

Squelching a Rumor

One topic, Jesus' return, dominates 2 Thessalonians more than any other. Church members were stirred up by a false report, allegedly from Paul, claiming the last days had already arrived (2:2). Paul denies the report and outlines several events that must occur before the day of the Lord arrives.

Here, as elsewhere, the Bible does not focus on the last days in an abstract, theoretical way. Rather, it draws a practical application to how we should live. Paul cautions his readers to be patient and steady. He asks them to trust that Jesus' return will finally bring justice to the earth, urges them to live worthily for that day, and commands them not to tolerate idleness—a prescription for health that has equal potency today.

How to Read 2 Thessalonians

Second Thessalonians has many parallels to its companion letter. The Christians in Thessalonica were still struggling with major problems, and each of the three chapters of this book concerns one of them.

Chapter 1 gives encouragement to Christians who were undergoing persecution for their faith. Chapter 2 attacks head-on the false teaching about the day of the Lord. Rumors about the day of the Lord had caused great excitement and speculation, leading to the practical errors Paul addresses in chapter 3.

Paul's specific words about what must happen before the day of the Lord make this letter a key part of New Testament prophecy. The prophecy passages aren't self-explanatory, and may require a Bible reference book for understanding.

Although 2 Thessalonians is Paul's shortest letter to a church, it contains four of his prayers. Note especially his concern for the Thessalonians as expressed in the prayers.

PLANS FOR READING 2 THESSALONIANS

PLAN 1: An Overview of 2 Thessalonians in 1 Day

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to 2 Thessalonians, then chapter 2, the key chapter predicting what events will precede Jesus' return.

PLAN 2: All of 2 Thessalonians in 2 Days

- ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3

1 Paul, Silas^a and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

²Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

We ought always to thank God for you, brothers—and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing. ⁴Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.

All this is evidence that God's judgment is right and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. ⁶God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you ⁷and give relief to you who are troubled and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. ⁸He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

¹¹With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. ¹²We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.¹

The Man of Lawlessness

2 Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, ²not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter sup-

posed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. ³Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come, until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness² is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

⁵Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? ⁶And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. ⁷For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. ⁸And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. ⁹The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, ¹⁰and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. ¹¹For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie ¹²and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

Stand Firm

¹³But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the be-

2:7 Exactly What Will Happen?

Nearly every age has come up with a different interpretation of this passage. No one is certain about the "secret power of lawlessness" or "the one who now holds it back." This passage is obscure because Paul refers to further information he had taught the Thessalonians in person. (Even another New Testament author admitted that Paul's letters contain "some things that are hard to understand" [2 Peter 3:16].)

¹ Greek: Silvanus, a variant of Silas

² Or God and Lord Jesus Christ

³ Some manuscripts sin

giving God chose you^a to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. ¹⁴He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings^b we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

¹⁶May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, ¹⁷encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

Request for Prayer

3 Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. ²And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith. ³But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. ⁴We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command. ⁵May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.

Warning Against Idleness

⁶In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teachings^c you received from us. ⁷For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, ⁸nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. ⁹We did this, not because we

do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow. ¹⁰For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."

¹¹We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. ¹²Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat. ¹³And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right.

¹⁴If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed. ¹⁵Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

Final Greetings

¹⁶Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.

¹⁷I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in all my letters. This is how I write.

¹⁸The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

3:10 No Work, No Eat

Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians had affirmed that Jesus could return at any time, unexpectedly. Evidently, this doctrine had encouraged those who had quit their jobs; they did nothing but wait for the second coming. To correct the imbalance, in this second letter Paul stresses that certain events must happen before Christ's return. He also strongly warns against idleness.

^a13 Some manuscripts because God chose you as his firstfruits

^b15 Or traditions

^c16 Or tradition

1 TIMOTHY

INTRODUCTION

The Hardest Job

Timothy steps into a hornet's nest

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers.
4:12

Who has the most difficult job? A brain surgeon? A trapeze artist who risks death with every leap? A nuclear engineer? Or perhaps an air traffic controller, who determines the safety of thousands of passengers. A number of professions might be nominated as the most difficult of all.

But if the apostle Paul were alive today, to that question he would very likely reply, "Without doubt—a pastor's job is hardest." In contrast to professionals who specialize, a pastor must call upon wide-ranging skills. In a given week a pastor may act as a psychologist, social worker, hospital chaplain, administrator, personnel supervisor, philosopher, and communicator.

Paul was acutely aware of the vital nature of such a job. Churches sprouted up wherever he visited, but whether they survived or failed depended largely on what kind of local leadership developed.

Final Words to a Young Friend

To assure that his work would continue, Paul turned more and more to a few loyal friends, especially Timothy and Titus. He wrote them explicit instructions in the three letters that follow, known collectively as "The Pastoral Letters."

Paul wrote 1 Timothy near the end of his life. Rugged years of ministry had passed, years marked by stonings, beatings, jailings, and riots. Paul knew that his age, his enemies, or the increasingly brutal Roman Empire would soon catch up with him.

Timothy, a young man, ranked high in Paul's esteem. Converted during Paul's first missionary journey, he had over the years gained the apostle's complete trust. When a volcano of discontent rumbled in some distant church like Corinth or Thessalonica, Paul quickly dispatched Timothy to try and prevent an eruption.

"I have no one else like him," Paul once wrote of Timothy. "As a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel" (Philippians 2:19,22). Through a swarm of controversies, into prison, on the road—wherever Paul went—Timothy loyally followed. Five of Paul's letters begin with the news that Timothy is at his side.

Timothy Becomes a Pastor

Timothy took on, at Paul's request, that difficult job of heading a local church. The congregation at Ephesus, loose and informal, needed order and a more defined structure. To muddle the scene further, certain members of the church had embraced false doctrines. In this letter, Paul advises his understudy on such matters as worship procedures, the control of unruly women, leadership standards, and policies regarding widows, slaves, and rich people.

Although this book addresses a historical situation from the first century, many problems in the early church—underpaid staff members, a generation gap, an integrity shortage, abuse of social aid, love of money—persist today. A pastor's job description hasn't changed much, or grown any easier, over the centuries.

How to Read 1 Timothy

Despite a weak stomach and timid disposition, Timothy had proved his mettle to Paul in many ways, and Paul wrote this letter to challenge him to a difficult task.

Paul doesn't give many details on the false doctrines Timothy had to combat. These letters, however, include vague hints about super-spiritual living, Jewish genealogies, myths, and tables. Look for the problems Paul alludes to and ask yourself whether they have any modern equivalents.

In his instructions, Paul counseled Timothy to combat heresy not by being forceful and argumentative, but by living an exemplary life and by bringing order to the church. Paul's challenge to live a model life applies directly to us; it remains a powerful prescription for the Christian life.

PLANS FOR READING 1 TIMOTHY

PLAN 1: An Overview of 1 Timothy in 1 Day

- Day 1 Read the Introduction to 1 Timothy, then chapter 1, which serves as a good introduction to Paul's "pastoral letters."

PLAN 2: All of 1 Timothy in 4 Days

- 1-2 □ 3-4 □ 5 □ 6

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope

²To Timothy my true son in the faith:

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord

Warning Against False Teachers of the Law

³As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work—which is by faith. ⁵The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. ⁶Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. ⁷They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm

⁸We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. ⁹We also know that law^a is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine ¹¹that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

The Lord's Grace to Paul

¹²I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. ¹³Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. ¹⁴The grace of our Lord was

poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

¹⁵Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. ¹⁶But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life. ¹⁷Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

¹⁸Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, ¹⁹holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith. ²⁰Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.

Instructions on Worship

2 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—²for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. ³This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. ⁵For there is one God and one mediator between God and

2:1 Time to Get Organized

Chapters 2 and 3 give detailed instructions concerning worship and church organization. When Paul wrote this letter, near the end of his life, churches such as Ephesus had been established for many years. The time had come for a more formal organization and for instructions governing appropriate and inappropriate behavior in church.

men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time. ⁷And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles.

⁸I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing.

⁹I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, ¹⁰but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

¹¹A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. ¹²I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. ¹³For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴And Adam was not the one deceived, it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. ¹⁵But women^a will be saved^b through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

Overseers and Deacons

3 Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer,^c he desires a noble task. ²Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. ⁵(If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) ⁶He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. ⁷He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

⁸Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁹They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

¹¹In the same way, their wives^d are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

¹²A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. ¹³Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

¹⁴Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, ¹⁵if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. ¹⁶Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great

He appeared in a body,^f
was vindicated by the Spirit,
was seen by angels,
was preached among the nations,
was believed on in the world,
was taken up in glory

Instructions to Timothy

4 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. ²Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. ³They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. ⁴For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, ⁵because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

⁶If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. ⁷Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales, rather, train yourself to be godly. ⁸For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

⁹This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance ¹⁰(and for this we labor and strive), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe.

¹¹Command and teach these things. ¹²Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. ¹³Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. ¹⁴Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

¹⁵Be diligent in these matters, give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. ¹⁶Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

4:14 Timothy's Calling

In three separate places in his letters to Timothy, Paul refers to his associate's special calling to the ministry. Chapter 1:18 alludes to prophecies made about him. This passage mentions a special ceremony when the church elders "laid their hands" on him. And in 2 Timothy (1:6) Paul specifies that he, too, had been part of such a ceremony. Timothy came from a Christian household; both his grandmother and mother were believers (2 Timothy 1:5).

^a25 Greek shr
manuscripts God

^b25 Or restored

^c16 Or in the flesh

^d1 Traditionally bishop; also in verse 2

^e11 Or say dishonestly

^f16 Some

Advice About Widows, Elders and Slaves

5 Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.

³Give proper recognition to those widows who

are really in need. ⁴But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God. ⁵The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray

INSIGHT

Athlete in Training

Overcoming personal handicaps

Train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. 4:7-8

In order to excel in any sport, athletes must spend hours and hours in training. And what is true of athletes is also true of artists and musicians. No one achieves excellence in any field without tremendous self-discipline, hours of rigorous training, and a willingness to suffer great hardship in order to achieve the goals we have set for ourselves.

Against All Odds

If people who have average abilities must train hard to excel, how much more do those who suffer severe handicaps. There are many athletes who have excelled, even though they have only one leg or one arm! They have disciplined themselves to endure great pain and hardship and have trained themselves to overcome their handicaps.

What Are You Training For?

Paul often uses illustrations from the world of athletics to help his readers understand the point of his message. Writing to Timothy and to other Christians he says that physical training that results in excellence in some sport is good; but he says that if we concentrate on training ourselves in spiritual disciplines or in godliness—that is much better.

In his letter to Timothy, Paul urges Timothy to train himself for godliness the same way disciplined athletes train for competition. Athletes must overcome physical barriers; Timothy faced personality barriers. Several times Paul refers to Timothy's reserved, timid disposition, which probably contributed to his chronic stomach trouble.

Given his shyness and his half-Jewish, half-Gentile ancestry, Timothy did not seem the ideal choice for a heresy fighter in a turbulent church. But Paul was convinced he could do the job. He encouraged Timothy with such motivational phrases as "I charge you" and "I urge you." He also reminded Timothy of his ordination, a commitment he had made long before.

Harassed Christians need a model, an example of how they should live, perhaps even more than they need words of wisdom. In 1 Timothy, Paul urges his loyal friend to become that model by accepting the discipline and hard work required.

How Hard Are You Training?

One of Satan's primary weapons against Christians is the weapon of discouragement. Sometimes we feel that following Jesus is not worth the price. We lose our job; our family does not understand; we suffer persecution. At times like these we need discipline. We need to study God's Word for encouragement.

Life Questions: Do you have any personality traits that make Christian service seem difficult? What specific "training instructions" did Paul give Timothy that might also apply to you?

and to ask God for help. ⁶But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. ⁷Give the people these instructions, too, so that no one may be open to blame. ⁸If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

⁹No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband,^a ¹⁰and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.

¹¹As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. ¹²Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge. ¹³Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to. ¹⁴So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. ¹⁵Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan.

¹⁶If any woman who is a believer has widows in her family, she should help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.

¹⁷The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. ¹⁸For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,"^b and "The worker deserves his wages."^c ¹⁹Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. ²⁰Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning.

²¹I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.

²²Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.

²³Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.

²⁴The sins of some men are obvious, reaching

the place of judgment ahead of them, the sins of others trail behind them. ²⁵In the same way good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not cannot be hidden.

6 All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered. ²Those who have believing masters are not to show less respect for them because they are brothers. Instead, they are to serve them even better, because those who benefit from their service are believers, and dear to them. These are the things you are to teach and urge on them.

Love of Money

³If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, ⁴he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions ⁵and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.

⁶But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. ⁸But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. ⁹People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Paul's Charge to Timothy

¹¹But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. ¹²Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you ¹⁴to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶who alone is immortal and who lives in unap-

5:9 Welfare Mentality

Chapter 5 gives fascinating insight into early church problems that have parallels in today's social programs. Evidently, some members of the Ephesus congregation had been taking advantage of others' charity. Young widows were using the church's resources when they should have been looking for other means of support. Paul outlines a form of "enrollment" to establish who was truly needy.

6:7 Two Familiar Quotes

Paul's parting advice to Timothy includes two sayings that have become familiar quotations. Verse 7 is usually quoted accurately. But verse 10, also familiar, is often misquoted as "money is the root of all evil." An established church had already developed a professional class of Christian workers, and Paul warned against the motive of profit-seeking.

proachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

¹⁷Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. ¹⁹In this way they will lay up

treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

²⁰Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, to which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith.

Grace be with you

2 TIMOTHY

INTRODUCTION

Passing the Torch

The apostle Paul's last known words

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. 2:2

Every four years the world watches an ancient ritual unfold: the passing of the Olympic torch. The spectacular pageantry of the opening ceremonies cannot begin until the final carrier of the torch arrives in the stadium. The torch symbolically links the modern Olympic Games to their 2700-year history.

"Passing the torch" has become a familiar phrase, used when the president of a large company introduces his successor to the public, or when an esteemed orchestra conductor hands over his baton, or a great sports figure tutors her replacement. Often the retiring person delivers an emotional farewell speech. He or she has finished the work; time has come to pass the torch to another.

Choosing Timothy

As the weary apostle Paul neared certain death, with imprisonment preventing him from traveling, he, too, began to think of a successor. It was time to pass the torch, and he decided on the young man Timothy.

At first glance, shy Timothy hardly seemed an adequate replacement, but Paul had few options. "Everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me," he lamented (1:15). This letter, 2 Timothy, reveals his deep reliance on Timothy's loyal friendship. Life was closing in on the apostle, and he felt a somber sense of abandonment.

At times in this letter, Paul lectures Timothy like a master sergeant, calling on him to stand firm, overcome shame, and hold to the faith. Elsewhere, his tone softens into the fond affirmation of a grateful father. Throughout, the bonds of deep friendship are evident: from Paul recalling Timothy's family heritage (1:5) to his urging Timothy to bring him a heavy coat before winter (4:13,21).

An Emotional Moment

Paul's moods alternate between sadness and confidence, nostalgia and grave concern. As he wrote this letter, he contemplated the disquieting months ahead and the prospect of young, divided churches left without his guidance. In these, his last known written words, he sought to prepare Timothy for the inevitable day when the message of God would depend on him and other reliable workers (2:2).

Despite his circumstances, Paul's farewell message from behind bars is gracious, even triumphant. The spreading of the gospel is far too big a task to be limited to any one man. "I am . . . chained like a criminal," Paul declares, "but God's word is not chained" (2:9).

How to Read 2 Timothy

Second Timothy has proved encouraging to Christian workers throughout history. Paul, facing death, did not wallow in self-pity, but instead used this last communication to inspire and challenge his associate Timothy.

This letter reveals much about Paul's emotional state and physical circumstances. As you read it, look for glimpses into Paul's loneliness and suffering. The apostle tells where he turned for strength when he faced personal trials.

In addition, 2 Timothy gives much valuable counsel to those of us who, like Timothy, have inherited the task of representing Christ on earth. Paul stresses the importance of relying on Scripture and of living a life of discipline. As you read this letter, put yourself in Timothy's place; imagine receiving one last personal letter from your great mentor. What final words of advice does he give?

PLANS FOR READING 2 TIMOTHY

PLAN 1: An Overview of 2 Timothy in 1 Day

Day 1 Read the Introduction to 2 Timothy and then chapter 2, which contains a summary of Paul's challenge to Timothy.

PLAN 2: All of 2 Timothy in 4 Days

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,

²To Timothy, my dear son:

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord

Encouragement to Be Faithful

³I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. ⁴Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. ⁵I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. ⁶For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

⁸So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, ⁹who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, ¹⁰but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. ¹¹And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. ¹²That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

¹³What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us

¹⁵You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes

¹⁶May the Lord show mercy to the household of

Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. ¹⁷On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me. ¹⁸May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus.

2 You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ²And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. ³Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs—he wants to please his commanding officer. ⁵Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules. ⁶The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. ⁷Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.

⁸Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, ⁹for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained. ¹⁰Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

¹¹Here is a trustworthy saying:

If we died with him,

we will also live with him;

¹²if we endure,

we will also reign with him.

If we disown him,

2:4 Soldier, Athlete, Farmer

Writing to a friend who knew him well, Paul saw no need to expand on the three analogies in this paragraph; he simply mentions them and tells Timothy to reflect on them. Paul was fully conscious of the threats and dangers facing his own life, and he wanted Timothy to train himself in preparation for any hardships that he might have to face.

he will also disown us;
 13if we are faithless,
 he will remain faithful,
 for he cannot disown himself

A Workman Approved by God

14Keep reminding them of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. 15Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. 16Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. 17Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some. 19Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his,"^a and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness."

20In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. 21If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

22Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 23Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. 24And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. 25Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, 26and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

Godlessness in the Last Days

3 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. 2People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— 5having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them

6They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires— always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth. 7Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the truth— men of depraved minds who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. 8But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone.

Paul's Charge to Timothy

10You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, 11persecutions, sufferings, what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. 12In fact, every one who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

4 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. 3For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. 5But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

6For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. 7I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

3:8 Who Were Jannes and Jambres?

These names, not mentioned in the Old Testament, were handed down in Jewish tradition as the names of the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses during the ten plagues against Egypt (Exodus 7:11; 9:11).

3:16 Scripture Is God-breathed

This important verse gives the origin of the term *inspiration*, which literally means "God-breathed." Although the Bible doesn't spell out the mechanics of how God inspired the writers, it makes clear the ultimate source was God himself.

^a19 Num. 16:5 (see Septuagint)

TITUS

INTRODUCTION

Diverse People, Diverse Problems

An island of liars, brutes, and gluttons

These, then, are the things you should teach. 2:15

Modern people reading about the past can blur people together into a uniform, faceless crowd of strangers. It's hard to visualize individual people you read about.

Actually, the people Paul addressed were as diverse as those you might meet on the streets of any large city. Consider Crete, an island populated by five fiercely independent ethnic groups. Its main knowledge of the outside world came through pirates and coarse sailors. Add to that mix a large community of straight-laced Jews, and you can see why the Cretan church was born amid conflict.

Titus the Troubleshooter

When problems erupted in this stormy congregation, Paul dispatched Titus, his trusted associate of 15 years. The book of Galatians (2:1-5) introduced Titus as proof that a non-Jew could become a fully acceptable Christian.

When Titus's name occurs in the New Testament, he is usually seen serving as Paul's troubleshooter, the one called on to deal with local crises. Twice he was sent on a diplomatic mission to the rowdy church at Corinth. This letter indicates he faced an equally challenging task on Crete. Paul wrote the book of Titus as a set of personal instructions on how to handle a difficult assignment.

Because he was writing to people who knew the local circumstances well, Paul rarely bothered to give background for us years later. But we can gain insights into the conditions by reading between the lines. For example, when Paul tells Titus to search for a leader "not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain" (1:7), that description implies something about the average Cretan. One of the island's own poets described Cretans as "always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons" (1:12), and the Greeks had even coined a special verb for lying: "to Cretize."

Practical Theology

Titus 2 lists some of the diverse groups in the church: older men, older women, younger women, young men, slaves. Each presented a set of problems that needed attention, and Paul gave Titus specific counsel on each group. Although he was mainly emphasizing the need for good living, Paul also dropped in a few concise restatements of the gospel message. His theology was never distantly theoretical; he applied it to real-life human problems.

Taken as a group, the three pastoral letters (1 and 2 Timothy plus Titus) show Paul, an old man now, learning to rely more and more on capable assistants to carry on his work. The Cretans needed a hard-hitting, practical reminder of "sound doctrine" based on a God "who does not lie" (1:2). The instructions in Titus give the man for whom the book was named—and us—the needed jolt.

How to Read Titus

Like 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus was written to an individual, not a church. This letter has similarities to 1 Timothy, but is less personal and more official. The book of Acts doesn't mention Titus, but 13 references to him in Paul's letters indicate that he was one of Paul's most trusted helpers.

In some letters, such as Galatians, Paul fought valiantly against legalism. But the church on Crete, full of immature Christians, needed basic lessons in morality, and Paul spelled them out for Titus. Using a very straightforward style, he told his associate what he would prescribe in such circumstances.

Because it is written in such a direct style—almost like a training manual—Titus needs little explanation. Paul's meaning comes through clearly. Note particularly how Paul adapts his overall principles to specific groups in chapter 2. And give careful study to the "nuggets" of theology in these passages: 1:1-4, 2:11-14, and 3:4-7.

PLANS FOR READING TITUS

PLAN 1: An Overview of Titus in 1 Day

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to Titus, then chapter 2, which contains Paul's practical advice for the diverse groups in the Cretan church.

PLAN 2: All of Titus in 2 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2-3

1 Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness—^{2a} faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, ³and at his appointed season he brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior

⁴To Titus, my true son in our common faith:

Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior

Titus' Task on Crete

⁵The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint^a elders in every town, as I directed you. ^{6a}An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, ^{7a}a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. ^{7b}Since an overseer^b is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁸Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. ⁹He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

¹⁰For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. ¹¹They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain. ¹²Even one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons." ¹³This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith ¹⁴and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth. ¹⁵To the pure, all things are pure,

but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. ¹⁶They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.

What Must Be Taught to Various Groups

2 You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. ²Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

³Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. ⁴Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

⁶Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. ⁷In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness ⁸and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

⁹Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, ¹⁰and not to steal from them, but to show

1:14 Foolish Questions

In addition to the problems hinted at in chapter 2, the Cretan church struggled with issues its Jewish members introduced. These trends toward myths and "foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law" (3:9) resemble the heresies Paul had warned against in the book of Colossians. Titus had to be prepared to deal with problems both of doctrine and of righteous living.

^a For ordain

^b Traditionally bishop

that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.

¹¹For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. ¹²It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

¹⁵These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

Doing What Is Good

3 Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, ²to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.

¹At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. ⁴But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. ⁸This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these

things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

⁹But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. ¹⁰Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. ¹¹You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

Final Remarks

¹²As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there. ¹³Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need. ¹⁴Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives.

¹⁵Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith.

Grace be with you all.

3:5 Nuggets of Theology

Despite its practical, instructive tone, Titus contains three outstanding passages of Paul's theology. They appear in 1:1-4, 2:11-14, and 3:4-7. This last passage balances off Paul's stress on clean living in Titus. Verse 5 makes clear that "righteous things" do not earn us acceptance by God. Rather, they are a natural response from people who have experienced God's forgiveness and love.

PHILEMON

INTRODUCTION

Letter to a Slave Owner

A slave's life hangs in the balance

Although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, yet I appeal to you on the basis of love. 8,9

Onesimus was a runaway slave, a hunted fugitive whose life was in constant danger. He had two options. He could spend his days hiding in the dark, grimy alleys of a Roman city, dodging sold ers and bounty-hunters. Or, he could do the unthinkable and return to his master.

The laws of the empire were harsh. If Onesimus did return, his master Philemon had the legal power to sentence him to immediate execution. If Philemon mercifully decided to let him live, Onesimus would have the letter *F* (for *Fugitivus*) seared on his forehead with a branding iron, marking him for life.

Paul Defends a Runaway

His conversion to Christ through Paul's ministry greatly complicated the decision of the runaway slave. Onesimus knew he couldn't keep running all his life. He had wronged his legal owner and, painful as it seemed, he needed to make amends.

The apostle Paul, sympathetic to the slave's cause, agreed to use his full influence on Philemon. Onesimus's life hung in the balance. This 468-word letter to the slave owner masterfully brings together Paul's skills of persuasion and diplomacy.

Every phrase in Philemon is crafted to produce the best possible effect. Paul appeals to Philemon's friendship, his status as a Christian leader, his sense of love and compassion. He doesn't outright order Philemon to consent, yet he applies blatant pressure, reminding Philemon that "you owe me your very self" (verse 19). Addressing the letter to Philemon's church (verse 2) increases the pressure, as does Paul's promise of a personal visit (verse 22).

Christianity and Slavery

Slavery existed for 1,800 years after this letter was written, and it took the full moral force of Christianity to ban it from the globe. But the tiny book of Philemon shows that the faith had a profound impact on slavery long before abolition.

Christ can revolutionize any social relationship. Onesimus, a runaway, decided to turn himself in. In Philemon, Paul asks for a second miracle. He pleads with the owner to "welcome him as you would welcome me" (verse 17). Such an attitude, in that culture, was social dynamite.

How to Read Philemon

Obviously, Paul had a close relationship with both the slave Onesimus and his owner Philemon. Some scholars believe that Onesimus first heard about Christ when he shared a jail cell with the apostle (see verses 9-10). As you read Philemon, look for clues into Paul's relationship with each person.

Philemon gives us a model of Christian diplomacy. As you read it, think of awkward social situations you know about: two estranged friends or a parent-child conflict, for example. Notice the kind of persuasion used by Paul, and try to apply it to your own circumstances.

A PLAN FOR READING PHILEMON

PLAN 1: Philemon in 1 Day

☐ Day 1. Just one chapter long, Philemon will take only a few minutes to read

¹Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker,
²to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church that meets in your home:

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

⁴I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, ⁵because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. ⁶I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. ⁷Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints.

Paul's Plea for Onesimus

⁸Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, ⁹yet I appeal to you on the basis of love. I then, as Paul—an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus—¹⁰I appeal to you for my son Onesimus,^a who became my son while I was in chains. ¹¹Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me.

¹²I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you. ¹³I would have liked to keep him with

me so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. ¹⁴But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced. ¹⁵Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for good—¹⁶no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord.

¹⁷So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. ¹⁸If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. ¹⁹I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self. ²⁰I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord, refresh my heart in Christ. ²¹Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask.

²²And one thing more. Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers.

²³Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. ²⁴And so do Mark, Anstarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.

²⁵The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

^a10 *Onesimus means useful*

HEBREWS

INTRODUCTION

Time to Decide

Does it matter what you believe as long as you're sincere?

How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? 2:3

You can go through much of life deliberately avoiding hard decisions. But sometimes you have no choice: the situation forces you to make a decision. Consider an example from the sport of mountain climbing.

Sooner or later every mountain climber faces a dreaded section of slick granite that offers no ledges or cracks to grasp. When you come to such a wall, you can abandon the climb. Or, you can risk a move like "the pendulum."

The Pendulum

The pendulum works the way it sounds: as high above you as you can reach, you fasten a loop with a metal nut and slide the rope through the loop. Then you climb down a few feet, dangle on the end of the rope, and try to swing across the sheer section. It takes nerve. You must lean out against the rope into empty space and, with a well-timed push, vault across the face of the cliff. If your lunge toward a safer spot fails, you swing helplessly back and try again.

After your entire party has swung the pendulum, you pull the rope all the way through the loop. From then on, there's no turning back. You have crossed a section of cliff that requires a rope to swing on and a loop to attach it to. The loop is now out of your reach, and the rope coiled at your feet. There is only one way to go: up.

Worth the Risk?

The author of Hebrews wrote to people who faced just such a climactic, can't-turn-back decision. It involved not a mountain climb, but their entire future. Should they stick with the familiar routine of the Jewish religion? After all, it enjoyed Rome's official protection and had traditions going back thousands of years. Or should they take a risk and join the growing body of people who called themselves Christians? Those readers needed some compelling reasons to choose Christianity. At that time new converts were being thrown out of Jewish temples, tossed into jail, and even tortured. Was faith in Christ worth the risk?

The tug of the old and the fear of the new kept many interested people, especially Jews, teetering on the edge of Christianity. And the book of Hebrews seems designed to push such people toward a decisive commitment, in one direction or the other. Point by point, the author shows how Christ improved on the Jewish way. Hebrews is a no-holds-barred argument on why Christianity is *better* (a key word in Hebrews) than Judaism. The new faith is worth any risk.

Drawing on the Old Testament

For the sake of Jewish readers, the author painstakingly cites Old Testament passages, more than 80 times in all. He develops the case for Christ like a lawyer, but with the charged emotions befitting the life-and-death issues involved.

Although Hebrews mainly focuses on the Jewish religion, comparing it to Christianity, the book also speaks to our time. Today people ask, "Are religions all that different? Isn't the most important thing to be sincere?" Hebrews insists there are decisive reasons to choose Christ. The author urges his readers to leap forward to a new experience with God through Jesus.

How to Read Hebrews

Who wrote Hebrews? Did the author have a particular group of readers in mind? Scholars have debated these questions for centuries without reaching agreement. The truth is, no one knows for certain either the author or the intended audience of Hebrews.

Nevertheless, the book does give some information about its first readers. They had heard the gospel through contemporaries of Jesus (2:1) and their conversions had brought on physical persecution (10:33-34). One fact leaps out: their spiritual state greatly distressed the unidentified author. Five times in the book of Hebrews he interrupts a careful line of reasoning to fire off a warning (2:1; 3:7; 5:11; 10:26; 12:25).

Hebrews is actually a commentary on the Old Testament. It examines many Jewish customs and shows how Jesus brought about a "better covenant" to replace many of those laws. (Covenant means the same thing as Testament, a firm agreement between God and humanity.) Therefore, to fully appreciate Hebrews, you should have some familiarity with such books as Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers.

As you read, look at the bottom of each page for footnotes referring to the Old Testament. If you can't figure out what a text in Hebrews means, try looking back to the original passage.

To follow the logic in Hebrews, note each use of the word *better*. The author compares Jesus Christ to the angels, to Moses, to the priests Aaron and Melchizedek, and to Abraham.

PLANS FOR READING HEBREWS

PLAN 1: An Overview of Hebrews in 3 Days

Day 1. Read the Introduction to Hebrews, then chapter 2. There you will learn about God's decision to send his Son to earth and why it was so important that Jesus come as a fully *human* being, not as some kind of alien.

Day 2. Hebrews 11 lists many Old Testament heroes, with a capsule description of how each one demonstrated faith. Read this famous chapter.

Day 3. Read Hebrews 12, which combines a pep talk with a brief summary of the entire book.

PLAN 2: All of Hebrews in 11 Days

1. 2. 3-4. 5-6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13

The Son Superior to Angels

1 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. ³The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. ⁴So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

⁵For to which of the angels did God ever say,

"You are my Son;
today I have become your Father?"^b

Or again,

"I will be his Father,
and he will be my Son?"^c

⁶And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says,

"Let all God's angels worship him."^d

⁷In speaking of the angels he says,

"He makes his angels winds,

his servants flames of fire."^e

⁸But about the Son he says,

"Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever,
and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom.

⁹You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions
by anointing you with the oil of joy."^f

¹⁰He also says,

"In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth,
and the heavens are the work of your hands.

¹¹They will perish, but you remain;
they will all wear out like a garment.

¹²You will roll them up like a robe;
like a garment they will be changed.
But you remain the same,
and your years will never end."^g

¹³To which of the angels did God ever say,

"Sit at my right hand
until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet?"^h

^a5 Or have begotten you
Septuagint)

^b5 Psalm 27

^c5 2 Samuel 7:14, 1 Chron. 17:13

^d7 Psalm 104:4

^e9 Psalm 45:6,7

^f12 Psalm 102:25-27

^g6 Deut. 32:43 (see Dead Sea Scrolls and
^h13 Psalm 110:1

¹⁴Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

Warning to Pay Attention

2 We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. ²For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, ³how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. ⁴God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

Jesus Made Like His Brothers

⁵It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. ⁶But there is a place where someone has testified:

"What is man that you are mindful of him,
the son of man that you care for him?

⁷You made him a little^a lower than the angels;
you crowned him with glory and honor

⁸ and put everything under his feet."^b

In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. ⁹But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

¹⁰In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. ¹¹Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. ¹²He says,

"I will declare your name to my brothers;
in the presence of the congregation I will
sing your praises."^c

¹³And again,

"I will put my trust in him."^d

And again he says,

"Here am I, and the children God has given
me."^e

¹⁴Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—¹⁵and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. ¹⁶For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. ¹⁷For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Jesus Greater Than Moses

3 Therefore, ¹holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. ²He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. ³Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. ⁴For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. ⁵Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future. ⁶But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.

Warning Against Unbelief

⁷So, as the Holy Spirit says:

"Today, if you hear his voice,

⁸ do not harden your hearts
as you did in the rebellion,

during the time of testing in the desert,

⁹where your fathers tested and tried me
and for forty years saw what I did.

¹⁰That is why I was angry with that generation,
and I said, 'Their hearts are always going
astray,

and they have not known my ways.'

¹¹So I declared on oath in my anger,
'They shall never enter my rest.'"²

¹²See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. ¹⁴We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. ¹⁵As has just been said:

"Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts
as you did in the rebellion."³

¹⁶Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? ¹⁷And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? ¹⁸And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who

2:17 Like Us in Every Way

Hebrews goes further than any other New Testament book in explaining Jesus' human nature. Why was it so important that Jesus share our humanity? Hebrews stresses three reasons: (1) so that, in dying, he could free us from the power of death (verses 14-15); (2) so that, by becoming the final sacrifice for sin, he could reconcile us to God (5:8,9); and (3) so that, in experiencing temptation, he can better help us with our own temptations (verse 18).

^a Or him to a little less than

^b Psalm 8:4-6

¹² Psalm 22:22

¹³ Isaiah 8:17

¹⁴ Isaiah 8:18

^c Or and that he might turn aside God's wrath, taking away

¹¹ Psalm 95:7-11

¹⁵ Psalm 95:7-8

disobeyed?¹⁸ So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.

A Sabbath-Rest for the People of God

4 Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it.¹⁹ For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.²⁰ Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said,

"So I declared on oath in my anger,
'They shall never enter my rest.'"²¹

And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world.²² For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: "And on the seventh day God rested from all his work."²³ And again in the passage above he says, "They shall never enter my rest."

²⁴ It still remains that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached

to them did not go in, because of their disobedience.²⁵ Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it Today, when a long time later he speaks through David, as was said before:

"Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts."²⁶

²⁷ For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day.²⁸ There remains, then, a Sabbath rest for the people of God,

4:9 A Future Rest

Although Chapter 4 does not define it, "Sabbath-rest" seems to represent a time of great peace and happiness. The Israelites may have dreamed of a promised land of peace when they left Egypt, but their disobedience ruined those dreams. A final "rest" does remain available to all who do not waver in faith. To underscore his point, the author quotes from the very same passage (Psalm 95:7-11) in three different places (3:7-11, 15; 4:3-7).

¹⁸ Or disbelieved
²⁴ Gen. 2:2

²² Many manuscripts because they did not share in the faith of those who obeyed
²⁷ Psalm 95:7,8

²³ Psalm 95:11, also in verse 9

INSIGHT

Is Christ Better?

The uniqueness of Jesus

Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. 3:3

In time, a work of art by a great artist gains enormous value because of its creator's reputation. Even a musty notebook full of scratchings, if found to be by a great artist, would suddenly be worth a lot of money.

To dramatize his argument that Christ is superior to any religious system, the author of Hebrews uses an analogy: Which has greater honor, the builder of a house or the house itself? Obviously, the builder has more honor; the house is just one expression of his genius.

In a Category by Himself

Likewise, Hebrews says, Christ has more honor than anyone else on earth. As creator of the universe, he actually designed and made all people (1:2). That puts him in a different category of greatness, far above Moses, Aaron, and other Jewish heroes.

"Therefore," Hebrews urges, "fix your thoughts on Jesus" (3:1). He deserves all respect and allegiance. By becoming human, Jesus learned firsthand the temptations and sufferings that people undergo, so that he can now represent us sympathetically to God (4:14-15). The author goes on to prove that Jesus fulfilled all the Old Testament requirements. He was the one priest who could permanently bring together God and the human race (7:23-27). And, as God, he had the power through his death to remove the final barrier of sin between God and humankind (9:11-15).

Free Access to God

Over time, the author argues, God chose various ways to reveal himself: creation, the prophets, and the Old Testament Scriptures. But the final, complete self-expression culminated in his Son. Jesus is the one worthy of honor.

Because of Jesus, we no longer have to approach God through a priest, as the Israelites did. Christ's work makes God available to all who have faith in him. And God no longer dwells in an elaborately designed temple; we have become his house (3:6), his work of art.

Life Questions: People sometimes say about Jesus, "I don't believe he was God, but he was a very fine man—like Gandhi or Buddha." What arguments does the author of Hebrews use to contradict this?

¹⁰For anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. ¹¹Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.

¹²For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow, it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. ¹³Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Jesus the Great High Priest

¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens,^a Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. ¹⁶Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

5 Every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. ²He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. ³This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people.

⁴No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was. ⁵So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him,

You are my Son,
today I have become your Father^b.

⁶And he says in another place,

You are a priest forever,
in the order of Melchizedek.^c

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered ⁹and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him ¹⁰and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

Warning Against Falling Away

¹¹We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. ¹²In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food. ¹³Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. ¹⁴But solid food is for the

mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

6 Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death,^d and of faith in God, ²instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. ³And God permitting, we will do so.

⁴It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, ⁵if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.

⁷Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. ⁸But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.

⁹Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things in your case—things that accompany salvation. ¹⁰And it is not unjust, he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. ¹¹We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. ¹²We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

The Certainty of God's Promise

¹³When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, ¹⁴saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants."^e ¹⁵And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.

¹⁶Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. ¹⁷Because God wanted to

6:4 Can a Believer Fall Away?

This passage has caused interpreters great difficulty. People who don't believe in "eternal security" think the passage refers to Christians who fall away from the faith. Others, such as John Calvin, insist that the author of Hebrews must be referring to people who never fully became Christians, because other verses seem to teach the eternal security of those in Christ (see John 5:24; 6:37; Romans 8:1; Hebrews 8:12). Regardless, the author is writing about a hypothetical situation. He is not describing what happened, but only what could happen: if such a falling away ever did occur, it would be impossible to rescue such people again. A somewhat similar argument appears at the end of chapter 10.

^a14 Or gone into heaven. ^b11 Or have begotten you. ^c14 Gen 22:17.

^d5 Psalm 2:7.

^e15 Psalm 110:4.

^f11 Or more useless rituals.

^g16 Or

make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. ¹⁸God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. ¹⁹We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, ²⁰where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

Melchizedek the Priest

7 This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, ²and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name means "king of righteousness"; then also, "king of Salem" means "king of peace." ³Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God he remains a priest forever.

⁴Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder! ⁵Now the law requires the descendants of Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the people—that is, their brothers—even though their brothers are descended from Abraham. ⁶This man, however, did not trace his descent from Levi, yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. ⁷And without doubt the lesser person is blessed by the greater. ⁸In the one case, the tenth is collected by men who die; but in the other case, by him who is declared to be living. ⁹One might even say that Levi, who collects the tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham, ¹⁰because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor.

Jesus Like Melchizedek

¹¹If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come—one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? ¹²For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law. ¹³He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the

altar. ¹⁴For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. ¹⁵And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, ¹⁶one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. ¹⁷For it is declared:

"You are a priest forever,
in the order of Melchizedek."^a

¹⁸The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless ¹⁹(for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.

²⁰And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath, ²¹but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him:

"The Lord has sworn
and will not change his mind;
'You are a priest forever.'"^a

²²Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

²³Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; ²⁴but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. ²⁵Therefore he is able to save completely^b those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

²⁶Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. ²⁷Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. ²⁸For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

The High Priest of a New Covenant

8 The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, ²and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.

³Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. ⁴If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already men who offer the gifts prescribed by the law. ⁵They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."^c ⁶But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.

⁷For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought

7:1 Who Is Melchizedek?

This mysterious person appears in only two places in the Old Testament: Genesis 14 and Psalm 110. Although a Gentile, Melchizedek worshiped the true God. In addition to being a priest, he was also a king. (The Jews would never have permitted such dual office-holding.) Hebrews demonstrates that the priesthood of Melchizedek was superior to that of Aaron; but both of them were exceeded by the great high priest, Jesus himself. Because he is both priest and king, Jesus is "in the order of" Melchizedek (See the note at Psalm 110 for more details.)

for another. ⁸But God found fault with the people and said:

"The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. ⁹It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant,

and I turned away from them,

declares the Lord.

¹⁰This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel

after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.

I will be their God, and they will be my people

¹¹No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," because they will all know me,

⁸ Some manuscripts may be translated *fault and said to the people*

INSIGHT

New Light on the Old Testament

The advantages of living now

For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. 8:7

To understand the difference between an original and a copy, consider trying to photograph the largest animal, a whale. Roy Chapman Andrews describes it:

Once in Alaska we raised a humpback's spout and ran up close before the animal submerged. Ten minutes later, without warning, the floor of the ocean seemed to rise and a mountainous black body, dripping with foam, heaved upward, almost over our heads. It paused an instant, then fell sideways to be swallowed up by a vortex of green water. With the camera ready in my hands I stared at the thing. The whale had dropped back scarcely twenty feet away, if it had fallen the other way, the vessel would have been crushed beneath its forty tons."

How can you adequately communicate the impact of something that immense? Photographers have recorded humpback whales bursting from the water, or "lobtailing" (standing on their heads and waving their mighty flukes high in the air). But no photograph can capture the sheer bigness of such an animal. A baby blue whale gains a ton of weight a month. An adult blue whale's heart weighs 1,000 pounds. How can any two-dimensional photograph convey such enormous size?

Comparing the Copy to the Original

Even the best photograph is just a copy, a representation of its subject's reality. No 8x10 rectangle can contain a whale. The photograph preserves a mere two-dimensional copy of reality.

Hebrews uses that word *copy* to describe the images and rituals of the Old Testament—Passover feasts, sacrifices, and other priestly duties. They were mere shadows, expressing the reality to come in Jesus Christ. No ceremony alone, however elaborate, can adequately express the experience of God himself, any more than a photograph of a whale or a mountain can adequately represent a whale or a mountain.

According to Hebrews, the Old Testament rituals were a copy, but Christ is the original. The author pulls up time-hallowed images from the Jewish tradition—sacrifices, laws, blood, the tabernacle, the priest, the Day of Atonement—and explains how Christ revealed once and for all the meaning these images only hinted at. The incomplete, shadowy copy contrasts with the perfect, genuine reality.

Which Is Better?

As always, Hebrews stresses the advantages of living now, rather than in the Old Testament ("the first covenant"). Because of Christ, sacrifices are no longer necessary (10:11-12), and God's laws are now written in our minds and on our hearts, not in a formal code (8:10). "It is finished," Christ cried out from the cross; the author of Hebrews describes how

Copies have some value. A photograph of a whale, for example, conveys much to those who will never encounter one. But, as the author of Hebrews asks, who would prefer a copy to the real thing?

Life Questions What practical help does Hebrews give on how to read the Old Testament? Of what value are the Old Testament laws and religious rituals?

from the least of them to the greatest.
 12For I will forgive their wickedness
 and will remember their sins no more.”^a

13By calling this covenant “new,” he has made the first one obsolete, and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.

Worship in the Earthly Tabernacle

9 Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary. ²A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand, the table and the consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place. ³Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, ⁴which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron’s staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant. ⁵Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover.^b But we cannot discuss these things in detail now.

⁶When everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry. ⁷But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. ⁸The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing. ⁹This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. ¹⁰They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order.

The Blood of Christ

¹¹When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here,^c he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. ¹²He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. ¹³The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. ¹⁴How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death,^d so that we may serve the living God!

For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

¹⁵In the case of a will,^e it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it. ¹⁶Because a will is in force only when somebody has died, it never takes effect while the one who made it is living.

¹⁷This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. ¹⁸When Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. ¹⁹He said, “This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep.” ²⁰In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. ²¹In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

²²It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²³For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one, he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God’s presence. ²⁴Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again; the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. ²⁵Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁶Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, ²⁷so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people, and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Christ’s Sacrifice Once for All

10 The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. ²If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. ³But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, ⁴because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

⁵Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said:

9:26 A Once-for-all Sacrifice

Jewish readers of Hebrews were very familiar with the religious rituals described in this chapter (see Leviticus 9 and 16 for the original instructions). Step by step, the author shows how Christ’s new covenant improves upon the old one. Instead of many sacrifices, he made only one, himself, thus gaining free and complete forgiveness for us. The chapter uses an analogy to explain why Christ’s death was necessary (verse 17). It compares God’s grace to a will. Wealth is only passed down when a death occurs; Christ’s death freed the inheritance for us.

^a Some Greek word as covenant also in verse 17

^b Some early manuscripts are to come

^c 14. Cf. from Hebrews 9:14

^d 20. Exodus 24:8

Sacrifice and offering you did not desire,
but a body you prepared for me,
with burnt offerings and sin offerings
you were not pleased.
Then I said, "Here I am—it is written about me
in the scroll—
I have come to do your will, O God." ^a

⁸First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them" (although the law required them to be made). ⁹Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second. ¹⁰And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

¹¹Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹²But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. ¹³Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, ¹⁴because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

¹⁵The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says

¹⁶"This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord.
I will put my laws in their hearts,
and I will write them on their minds."^b

¹⁷Then he adds:

"Their sins and lawless acts
I will remember no more."^c

¹⁸And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.

A Call to Persevere

¹⁹Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. ²⁵Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the

habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

²⁶If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, ²⁷but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. ²⁸Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. ²⁹How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? ³⁰For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay,"^d and again, "The Lord will judge his people."^e ³¹It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

³²Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. ³³Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. ³⁴You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.

³⁵So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. ³⁶You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. ³⁷For in just a very little while,

"He who is coming will come and will not delay.

³⁸ But my righteous one/ will live by faith.
And if he shrinks back,
I will not be pleased with him."^f

³⁹But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.

By Faith

11 Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. ²This is what the ancients were commended for.

³By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

⁴By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.

⁵By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. ⁶And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

⁷By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family.

10:12 Why Christ Sat Down

Hebrews makes special mention that Christ "sat down" after finishing his priestly duties. Jewish priests never sat down; the tabernacle and the temple did not have seats. They did their work standing up as a symbol that it was never finished. Having finished the work of a priest once for all, Christ "sat down."

^{a7} Psalm 40:6-8 (see Septuagint)

^{b16} Jer. 31:33

^{c17} Jer. 31:34

^{d30} Deut. 32:35

^{e30} Deut. 32:36; Psalm 135:14

^{f8} One early manuscript *But the righteous*

^{g38} Hab. 2:3,4

By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

⁹By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. ¹⁰By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹¹For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

¹²By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful, who had made the promise. ¹³And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

¹⁴All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. ¹⁵People who say

such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. ¹⁶If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁷Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

¹⁸By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son. ¹⁹Even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring^a will be reckoned," ²⁰Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.

²¹By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.

²²By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

²³By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions about his bones.

^a11. Or by "testimony" (Hebrew text); some Greek texts read "faith"; Vulgate, Syriac, Arabic, Latin

¹⁸18 Greek text

¹⁸18 Gen. 21:12

INSIGHT

What Is True Faith?

Not even giants of faith get exactly what they want

These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. 11:39

What is faith? And how can you be sure you've got it? Some Christians think of faith as an almost magical force: if you muster up enough of it, you'll get rich, stay healthy, and live a contented life, they say. Yet how does one "muster up" faith? What are signs of true faith?

The author of Hebrews launches into a detailed description of faith, complete with references to several dozen biographical models. (Some have dubbed Hebrews 11 the "Faith Hall of Fame.") "Without faith," Hebrews says bluntly, "it is impossible to please God" (11:6).

Not What You'd Expect

But the picture of faith emerging from these chapters contains some surprises. The author uses words and phrases like "persevere," "endure," "don't lose heart." In many instances, the heroes cited did not receive the promise they hoped for, some ended up flogged and destitute, hiding out in goat skins (11:36-38). Many died—horrible deaths.

Faith, concludes the author, most resembles a difficult race. The runner has his eyes on the winner's prize, and despite nagging temptations to slacken the pace, he refuses to let up until he crosses the finish line. "Throw off everything that hinders," Hebrews coaches (12:1). "Strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees" (12:12).

Is It Worth the Struggle?

Why do people punish their bodies to run a grueling marathon race? Most runners name two reasons: the sense of personal reward they get and the physical benefits of the exercise. The same two rewards apply in the spiritual realm: great prizes await those who persevere, and the very process of living by faith builds strong character. In this race, no one loses. If you finish, you get the reward.

Here, as elsewhere, Hebrews holds up Jesus, who endured great suffering for our sakes (12:2-3), as the ultimate example. The faith described in Hebrews is not sugar-coated. God does not guarantee a life of luxury and ease. It is tough faith: a constant commitment to hang on and believe (and again) all odds, no matter what.

Life Questions Hebrews 11 mentions some people who prospered and some who suffered, yet all had faith. Taking into account what this passage says, try to come up with your own definition of faith.

²³By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

²⁴By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. ²⁵He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. ²⁶He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. ²⁷By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. ²⁸By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

²⁹By faith the people passed through the Red Sea^a as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

³⁰By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the people had marched around them for seven days.

³¹By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.^b

²And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, ³³who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. ³⁵Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. ³⁶Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. ³⁷They were stoned;^c they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— ³⁸the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

¹⁹These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised.

⁴⁰God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

God Disciplines His Sons

12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. ²Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorned its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart!

⁴In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. ⁵And

you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons:

"My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline,
and do not lose heart when he rebukes you,
⁶because the Lord disciplines those he loves,
and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."^d

⁷Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? ⁸If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. ⁹Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! ¹⁰Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. ¹¹No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

¹²Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. ¹³"Make level paths for your feet,"^e so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.

Warning Against Refusing God

¹⁴Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. ¹⁶See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. ¹⁷Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears.

¹⁸You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; ¹⁹to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them. ²⁰because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned."^f ²¹The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear."^g

²²But you have come to Mount Zion, to the

12:18 A Vivid Contrast

The author of Hebrews has been arguing that Christ's new covenant is far better than the old one between God and the Jews. This one section (12:18-28) uses powerful images to summarize the great difference between encountering God in the way Moses did in the Old Testament and encountering him through Jesus. It also predicts that even greater things are in store: a new kingdom and new creation.

^a29 That is, Sea of Reeds. ^b31 Or unbelieving. ^c37 Some early manuscripts stoned; they were put to the test. ^d40 Prov. 3:11-12. ^e13 Prov. 4:26. ^f20 Exodus 19:12-13. ^g21 Deut. 9:19.

heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, ²³to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, ²⁴to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

²⁵See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? ²⁶At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens."^a
²⁷The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

²⁸Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, ²⁹for our "God is a consuming fire."^b

Concluding Exhortations

13 Keep on loving each other as brothers. ²Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. ³Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

⁴Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. ⁵Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said,

Never will I leave you;
never will I forsake you."^c

⁶So we say with confidence,

The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?"^d

⁷Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. ⁸Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

⁹Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by ceremonial foods, which are of no value to those who eat them. ¹⁰We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat

¹¹The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. ¹²And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. ¹³Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. ¹⁴For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.

¹⁵Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name. ¹⁶And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

¹⁷Obeys your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

¹⁸Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way. ¹⁹I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon.

²⁰May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, ²¹equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

²²Brothers, I urge you to bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written you only a short letter.

²³I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he arrives soon, I will come with him to see you.

²⁴Greet all your leaders and all God's people. Those from Italy send you their greetings.

²⁵Grace be with you all.

13:15 Sacrifice of Praise

In form, Hebrews is more theological than practical. But in the last chapter the author adds a list of specific commands and suggestions. Even here, however, he makes one last reference to sacrifice. Now, we have only a "sacrifice of praise" to offer, because Christ accomplished all that was needed.

JAMES

INTRODUCTION

Words Are Not Enough

You can believe all the right things, yet still be dead wrong

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. 1:22

Where there is life, there is motion. Some antelopes, as well as the cheetah, can sprint faster than speeding cars. Bighorn sheep, charging one another head-first, collide with such force that the sound echoes like a gunshot through mountain ranges. Migrating birds battle winds for 1,000 miles, nonstop, before dropping back to earth.

Sometimes we keep relics of life: a fragile, perfect seashell, an exotic butterfly mounted on a pin. But these are mere mementos. Life has gone from them, and with it motion.

A Sure Sign of Life

Authors of the Bible often look to nature for analogies to express spiritual truth. And the book of James, controversial because of its emphasis on "good works," is perhaps best understood through the analogy of motion. In the spiritual realm also, where there's life, there will be motion.

When a person becomes a Christian, new life begins, and inevitably that life must express itself through spiritual motion—or good deeds. In James's words, "What good is it if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds?" (2:14)

Movement does not cause life, but it does invariably follow life. It's a sure sign that life is present. Similarly, genuine faith in Christ should always result in actions that demonstrate the faith.

Does James Contradict Paul?

James is not writing about how to become a Christian, but rather how to act like one. Having all the correct beliefs about God will hardly suffice: even demons believe in God. Real, life-giving faith should produce motion, and James minces no words in describing the specific spiritual actions expected of Christians.

Christian thinkers, notably Martin Luther, have struggled to reconcile the message of James with that of Paul, who so firmly warned against slavish legalism. But Paul never belittled holy living. When he wrote to those living in sin, such as in his letters to the Corinthians, he railed against immorality as strongly as James.

Evidently, James's readers were not even flirting with legalism. They lived at the other extreme, ignoring those laws God had clearly revealed. James had a simple remedy: "Do not merely listen to the word, . . . Do what it says" (1:22).

Straight to the Point

Unlike the apostle Paul, James was no urbane man of letters. He was a simple, homespun preacher, perturbed at people who were not living right. His letter covers a wide range of topics, applying the Christian faith to specific problems and commanding readers to live out their beliefs.

Be humble, James orders. Submit to God. Stop sinning. James is as forthright as an Old Testament prophet; it's hard to miss his point.

Modern readers of James face the same dilemma as the first recipients of this unsettling letter. His words are easy enough to understand, but are we doing what he says? What kind of motion characterizes our spiritual lives? As Luther himself said, "You are saved by faith alone, but if faith is alone, it is not faith."

How to Read James

Few New Testament writers achieve the clarity or the "punch" of James. He doesn't spend time expanding subpoints or worrying about literary structure. As a result, the book of James reads like a collection of pithy proverbs. (It's sometimes called the "Proverbs of the New Testament.") In *your study*, it may help to group the material by subject; James tends to return to themes repeatedly.

As *elder* of the headquarters church in Jerusalem, James knew how to speak with authority. You don't have to look for hidden meanings in this book. James tells you clearly how you should act in 24 direct commands. Note that many of these have parallels to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. As you read, keep in mind the diverse audience he was addressing, which included the rich and the poor. Note his "asides" to specific groups.

PLANS FOR READING JAMES

PLAN 1: An Overview of James in 1 Day

- Day 1 Read the Introduction to James, then chapter 1, on how the Christian should respond to tough times, or "trials."

PLAN 2: All of James in 4 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3-4 ☐ 5

1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ

To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations

Greetings

Trials and Temptations

4Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 5because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 6Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. 7If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. 8But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 9That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; 10he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

11The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position. 12But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wild flower. 13For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business.

14Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14but each one is tempt-

ed when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. 15Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

16Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. 17Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. 18He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

Listening and Doing

19My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. 21Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

22Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. 23Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror 24and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 25But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.

26If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. 27Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Favoritism Forbidden

2 My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. ²Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. ³If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," ⁴have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

⁵Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? ⁶But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? ⁷Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong?

⁸If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself,"^a you are doing right. ⁹But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. ¹⁰For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. ¹¹For he who said, "Do not commit adultery,"^b also said, "Do not murder."^c If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

¹²Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, ¹³because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

Faith and Deeds

¹⁴What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? ¹⁵Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

¹⁸But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. ¹⁹You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

²⁰You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?^d ²¹Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?

2:1 Play No Favorites

James 1 tells Christians to act out their faith. James 2 gives a very pointed example of church members deterring to the wealthy and powerful. This direct application, hitting close to home, characterizes James. He leaves no room for ambiguity.

²²You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. ²³And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,"^e and he was called God's friend. ²⁴You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

²⁵In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? ²⁶As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

Taming the Tongue

3 Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. ²We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.

³When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ⁴Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. ⁵Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. ⁶The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

⁷All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, ⁸but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

⁹With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. ¹¹Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? ¹²My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

Two Kinds of Wisdom

¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your

3:3 Colorful Language

Vivid, homey pictures from nature give a visual character to James's words, almost as if each thought were a photograph. He refers to sea froth, wilted flowers, a forest fire, a horse's bit, the morning mist, a hungry moth, the farmer's spring rains, a giant ship, and a saltwater spring. Paul, a more educated writer, alluded to culture and athletics and human relationships. But James felt most comfortable borrowing simple images from nature.

^a Lev 19:18
(Gen 15:1)

^b Exodus 20:14, Deut 5:18
(Greek bitter (see also verse 14))

^c Exodus 20:13, Deut 5:17

^d20 Some early manuscripts *dead*

hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. ¹⁵Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. ¹⁶For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

¹⁷But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness

Submit Yourselves to God

4 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? ²You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. ³When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

⁴You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. ⁵Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? ⁶But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

*"God opposes the proud
but gives grace to the humble."*^a

⁷Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up

¹¹Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. ¹²There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?

Boasting About Tomorrow

¹³Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." ¹⁴Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow.

4:1 The Need for Self-Control

If you had to distill the message of James into one word, it might be *self-control*. Chapters 4 and 5, which contain some of James's most striking imagery, show how simple greed and desire can corrode the church and destroy unity. And, indeed, many of the Jewish Christians he was writing to soon experienced an abrupt turn of fortune. They lost their wealth and suffered severe persecution.

What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. ¹⁴Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.

Warning to Rich Oppressors

5 Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. ²Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. ³Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. ⁴Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. ⁵You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. ⁶You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you.

Patience in Suffering

⁷Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. ⁸You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. ⁹Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

¹⁰Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

¹²Above all, my brothers, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," no, or you will be condemned.

The Prayer of Faith

¹³Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. ¹⁴Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be

5:10 To Those Who Suffer . . .

James echoes the thoughts of Paul and Peter when he speaks to suffering people. Here (and in chapter 1:2-8) he explains how God can actually use suffering for our benefit, although not in the way we might wish. In addition, James describes the church's ministry of healing as an added hope for the sufferer.

^a "that" and jealously longs for the spirit that he made to live in us; or that the Spirit he caused to live in us longs jealously for yourselves as in a day of feasting

forgiven. ¹⁶Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

¹⁷Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. ¹⁸Again he

prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

¹⁹My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, ²⁰remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

INSIGHT

Conflicts of Rich and Poor

A different kind of class struggle

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. 4:6

Our society tends to divide the rich and the poor. The two groups have little daily contact, and you would have a very hard time communicating a single message to both the very rich and the very poor.

Yet it seems James's original readers included both those groups. In one paragraph James addresses the haughty, privileged people of wealth, and in the next paragraph he turns to poor, people undergoing severe trials. (Note the shift between 5:1 and 5:7.)

The two groups had different problems. The wealthy were selfish. They showed insensitivity and snobishness to the poor. For their part, the poor responded with envy and grumbling. They blamed God for their poverty.

Who Is Double-minded?

James gave advice on the specific problems of each group, but he also implied they have much in common. For both rich and poor the most important struggle is not outside—the conditions we live in—but rather inside. All of us experience the inner conflict of being pulled by powerful, contrary forces. Will we move toward Christ and the life he taught, or in the opposite direction? Will we trust God or reject him?

James coined a new word to describe this inner conflict: he called it being "double-minded" (4:8). For rich and poor, this conflict may express itself in different ways, as James went on to explain. But double-mindedness is a tug-of-war between divided loyalties. The essential struggle to obey God is no different for either group.

As he discussed the rich and the poor, James relied on many of the actual phrases Jesus had used, especially in the Sermon on the Mount. (This is quite understandable if the author was James the brother of Jesus, as many scholars believe.) He applied what Jesus taught in a fresh, new way, calling on all of us—rich and poor—to be single-minded in our commitment to follow that way.

Life Questions: James 2 warns against favoritism based on social class. Does such favoritism happen among Christians today? Is there any difference between the way rich and poor people think about following Jesus?

1 PETER

INTRODUCTION

A Word to the Suffering

What to do when trouble comes

Dear friends: do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. 4:12

More people have died for their religious faith in this century than in all the rest of history combined. Thousands of Christians died in East Africa, first in the Mau Mau uprising and then during Idi Amin's reign of terror. Millions more suffered under Soviet and Chinese governments. And the oppression goes on: even today some countries imprison and torture converts to Christianity. This fact alone makes the book of 1 Peter starkly relevant for modern readers.

How to Respond to Persecution

What advice would you give Christians about to undergo persecution? The apostle Peter took up that challenge just as ominous rumblings from Rome were striking fear in every Christian community. Heli-crazed Nero had seized on believers as scapegoats for the ills of his empire.

Should the persecuted Christians flee or resist? Should they tone down their outward signs of faith? Give up? Peter's readers, their lives in danger, needed clear advice on suffering.

They also wanted explanations of the meaning of suffering. Why does God allow it? Can good result? Does God care? In short, they were asking the questions that occur to any Christian who goes through great trial.

According to Peter, suffering should not catch a Christian off guard. We are "strangers" (1:17) in a hostile world, and where Christians thrive, storm clouds may gather. Suffering is an expected part of a life of sincere faith.

Peter's Own Experience

On the subject of suffering, Peter makes an ideal counselor, for readers then and now. He had been flogged and imprisoned for his own faith, once even expecting execution (Acts 12). Also, Peter had personally watched Jesus endure suffering, and in this letter he points to him as an example of how to respond.

Peter encourages his readers to "live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God" (2:12). Suffering can refine believers and give us an opportunity to prove our faith, the result thus working out for our benefit.

This book emphasizes a further point also: suffering is temporary, to be endured only for "a little while" (1:6, 5:10). Those who suffer with Christ will also glory with him in a life forever free of pain. Skeptics have criticized the church for stressing a future life rather than working to improve this one. "You promise pie in the sky by and by," they taunt. But to Peter's readers—wary of enemies on the prowl, unsure of surviving another day—that message was as tangible and nourishing as food.

According to 1 Peter, our hope that suffering will one day cease is not a mirage but a "living hope" (1:3) in the One who has conquered death.

How to Read 1 Peter

At first Christianity enjoyed official toleration by the Roman empire, but gradually the government turned against it. Rome resented the Christians' talk about another kingdom and their objections to idolatry and decadence.

Although 1 Peter was originally written to people in severe danger, its lessons apply to all of us, for we all experience pain of some kind. Why don't things work out the way we want? Is God

trying to tell us something? Peter gives authoritative answers. As you read, try to apply what he says to your own situation.

Peter's writing style reveals his simple fisherman background: he uses pithy peasant expressions and awkwardly shifts back and forth between doctrine and advice. Chapter 2 (verses 18-25) shows an excellent example. Peter gives a deep insight into what it meant for Christ to suffer on our behalf, but he includes it in a practical section on slaves and governments. Thus, he blends doctrine (what to believe) with practice (how to behave).

More a preacher than a writer, Peter structured his book like a rambling sermon. Look for the 14 direct commands included. Peter's reliance on common figures of speech—a cornerstone, a lamb, a shepherd—makes the book very quotable.

But Peter was not simply giving homespun advice; he was well-grounded in the teachings of Jesus and the prophets. Proportionately, he quotes from the Old Testament more than any other New Testament author.

PLANS FOR READING 1 PETER

PLAN 1: An Overview of 1 Peter in 1 Day

Day 1: Read the Introduction to 1 Peter, then chapter 1 for a capsule summary of the letter's style and message.

PLAN 2: All of 1 Peter in 4 Days

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4-5

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, ²who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood

Grace and peace be yours in abundance

Praise to God for a Living Hope

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, ⁵who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith

of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁷Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do

not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁸for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

¹⁰Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. ¹²It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

Be Holy

¹³Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled, set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. ¹⁴As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. ¹⁵But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do, ¹⁶for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

¹⁷Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers

here in reverent fear. ¹⁸For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers. ¹⁹But with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. ²⁰He was chosen before the creation of the world but was revealed in these last times for your sake. ²¹Through him you believe in God who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

²²Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. ²³For you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴For,

All men are like grass,
and all their glory is like the flowers of the field.

the grass withers and the flowers fall,

²⁵ but the word of the Lord stands forever."²⁵

And this is the word that was preached to you.

2 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all ~~deceit~~ hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk so that by it you may grow up in your salvation—now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

The Living Stone and a Chosen People

⁴As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁵For in Scripture it says

See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him
will never be put to shame."⁶

Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,

The stone the builders rejected
has become the capstone,⁷

and

2:4 A Play on Words

In verses 4-9, Peter constructs a detailed metaphor out of a very common object: a stone. He refers to Christ as a stone rejected by builders, the kind of useless rock someone trips over. Yet this stone, Jesus, becomes the cornerstone of a new building composed of Christians ("living stones"). This metaphor has much in common with Paul's references to the "body of Christ," but Peter (nicknamed the "rock") uses architectural rather than biological terms.

"A stone that causes men to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall."⁷

They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

⁹But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God, once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

¹¹Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. ¹²Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Submission to Rulers and Masters

¹³Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men, whether to the king, as the supreme authority, ¹⁴or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. ¹⁵For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. ¹⁶Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. ¹⁷Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.

¹⁸Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. ¹⁹For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. ²⁰But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. ²¹To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

²²"He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth."²³

²³When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Wives and Husbands

3 Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, ²when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. ³Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such

²² Some early manuscripts from a pure heart
8 Isaiah 8:14

²³ Isaiah 53:9

²⁵ Isaiah 40:6-8

⁶ Isaiah 28:16

⁷ Or cornerstone

⁸ Psalm 118:22

as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. ⁸Instead, it should be that of your inner self: the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. ⁹For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, ¹⁰like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

Suffering for Doing Good

⁸Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another, be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. ⁹Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. ¹⁰For,

"Whoever would love life

and see good days

must keep his tongue from evil

and his lips from deceitful speech

¹¹He must turn from evil and do good,

he must seek peace and pursue it

¹²For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous

and his ears are attentive to their prayer,

INSIGHT

A Man Named "The Rock"

Peter slowly learned how to live up to his nickname

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 5:6

You can't miss Peter in the four Gospels. He stands out like a bumpkin, pushing to the head of the line and coming out with loud, outrageous assertions. Every list of the disciples names him first, and Peter is often seen elbowing his way to center stage.

He was likable enough, with a big heart and unlimited enthusiasm. He just had too many rough edges. He swung like a pendulum, bold and courageous at one moment, yet cowardly when it really counted.

Signs of Mellowing

But by the time Peter sat down to write this letter, late in his life, a lot had changed. You can sense the change in the very words he chooses: words like *humble* and *submit*. This book contains nothing of the brash, aggressive style evident in the Gospels. He is heeding Jesus' last command to him: "Feed my sheep" (John 21:17). Gruff Peter has become a tender shepherd.

To get the full impact of Peter's transformation, you must read about him in the Gospels (especially in Mark), and then turn directly to this letter. Blustery, loudmouthed Peter now counsels wives to have "the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit" (3:4) and husbands to treat their wives with consideration and respect (3:7). The man who sliced off an ear in Jesus' defense (John 18:10) now advises submission to every government authority (2:13). Peter once vigorously protested Jesus' prediction of death (Mark 8:32); now he solemnly commends Christ's suffering as an ideal (2:21-24).

It's easy to believe Peter is describing himself when he writes such statements as "Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God" (2:10) and "You were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls" (2:25). Over time the shifting sand of Peter's personality solidified into granite.

Never Too Late

Peter finally earned the nickname that Jesus gave him long before: the "rock" (Matthew 16:18). And when he instructs his readers to stand fast in the true grace of God (5:12), you get the feeling Peter has learned through hard experience the lessons he is now passing on to others.

If Paul is the apostle of faith, Peter is the apostle of hope. God does not give up on people, as Peter's life amply demonstrates. We have reason to hope, whatever our circumstances—even when facing suffering or death.

Tradition reports that Peter was crucified head downward on a Roman cross; he thought himself unworthy to die right side up like Jesus. Peter died still believing his promise of a happy ending: "And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast" (5:10). He wrote like a man who knew.

Life Questions If Jesus were to give you a nickname, what would it be? Has your personality undergone major changes? What still needs work?

but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.

¹³Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? ¹⁴But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened." ¹⁵But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. ¹⁷It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

¹⁸For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit. ¹⁹Through whom¹⁴ also he went and preached to the spirits in prison ²⁰who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people—eight in all, were saved through water, ²¹and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge¹⁵ of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

Living for God

4 Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. ²As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. ³For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. ⁴They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you. ⁵But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. ⁶For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.

The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.

3:19 The Spirits in Prison

At least 18 major theories have been proposed to explain Peter's meaning in verses 18-22. Primarily, scholars differ over what the phrase "spirits in prison" refers to. Were "the spirits" people in some intermediate state of death, or the fallen angels alluded to in Genesis 6:1-4? No one knows for sure. Peter uses the obscure reference to make a point about the ultimate good that came from the suffering Jesus endured.

⁸Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. ⁹Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Suffering for Being a Christian

¹²Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. ¹⁶However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. ¹⁷For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God, and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸And,

"If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"

¹⁹So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

To Elders and Young Men

5 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: ²Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; ³not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ⁴And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

⁵Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,

"God opposes the proud

4:13 Participating in Christ's Sufferings

This one verse, above all others, shows how much Peter had changed. He received Jesus' strongest rebuke (Mark 8:33) for objecting to the suggestion that Jesus would suffer. But now he presents suffering for Christ as a privilege, a way to participate in Christ's glory.

¹² Psalm 34:12-16. ¹⁴ Or not fear their threats.
response. 15 Prov. 11:31

¹⁴ Isaiah 6:12

^{18,19} Or alive in the spirit, ¹⁹through which

²¹ Or

but gives grace to the humble."⁸

⁶Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.
⁷Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

⁸Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

¹⁰And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a

little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. ¹¹To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

¹²With the help of Silas,^b whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.

¹³She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark. ¹⁴Greet one another with a kiss of love.

Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

2 PETER

INTRODUCTION

A Threat from Within

The worst dangers aren't always well marked

Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. 3:1

First-century apostles must have felt like explorers in a mosquito-infested swamp. A pest attacked them. Slap! They'd killed it, and instantly another would land. Wherever they went new dangers swarmed up.

One group denied Jesus was God; then another declared him God but not fully man. The apostles denounced legalism, only to encounter anti-legalists who assumed "anything goes." Members of one church quit work and huddled together to await Jesus' return; those of another gave up on his returning at all.

Second Peter was written in response to a young church's jumpy tendencies. Whereas 1 Peter centered on fearsome dangers from outside, this letter speaks to dangers from within. False teachers were stirring up dissent, questioning basic doctrines, and leading Christians into moral error.

Warning Signs

In its advice to the various squabbling groups, 2 Peter calls for a return to the true gospel. It always reminds you of these things—the author says (1:12) and proceeds to go over some basic facts on how Christians should believe and behave. The book doesn't introduce many new insights; rather, it erects a giant warning sign against common pitfalls that endanger the church.

A key word, knowledge, echoes throughout this letter. 2 Peter refreshes readers' memories regarding the proper knowledge that makes possible "everything we need for life and godliness" (1:3). The author carefully grounds his knowledge in Old Testament prophets and eyewitness accounts of Jesus' life, not in "cleverly invented stories" (1:16). And he urges his readers to resist dangers of living blamelessly.

The answer to false knowledge, the author bluntly insists, is true knowledge; the answer to immoral living is moral living. As he prepares to die (1:14), the author of 2 Peter gets in one last appeal for truth.

How to Read 2 Peter

Although 1 and 2 Peter claim the same author, they have large differences in style and approach. Second Peter is unrefined in writing style, more shrill, and less gentle than the first letter.

Perhaps the difference in audiences explains the two approaches. The Bible views suffering—persecution from outside—as a purifying influence that often results in an even stronger church. Thus 1 Peter has an encouraging and devotional tone. But the real danger to a church comes from the inside, from immoral behavior and false teaching. Second Peter, in strong words, addresses those "inside" dangers.

As you read, try to put yourself in the place of the original audience. What dangers does the author warn against? Are there parallels today? Chapters 1 and 3 can be universally applied. Chapter 2 concerns itself more directly with the particular false teachers plaguing the first-century church.

In tone and actual content, 2 Peter resembles the tiny book of Jude. Both deal with the same problems and propose the same solutions.

When reading 2 Peter, look for the key words *knowledge*, *thinking*, and *reminders*. The author appeals to true knowledge that can correct many of the young church's errors.

PLANS FOR READING 2 PETER

PLAN 1: An Overview of 2 Peter in 1 Day

Day 1 Read the Introduction to 2 Peter, then chapter 1

PLAN 2: A Study of 2 Peter in 3 Days

Day 1 Day 2 Day 3

1 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours:

Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Making One's Calling and Election Sure

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control, and to self-control, perseverance, and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.

Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall. And you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Prophecy of Scripture

So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside and be with our Lord Jesus Christ. I will make every effort to see that after my death you will always be able to remember these things.

We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of

our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

False Teachers and Their Destruction

But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them, bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man,

1:14 Approaching Death

The person writing these words was nearing death, a fact that may partially explain the book's forceful tone. An eyewitness (1:16) of Jesus on earth was watching a young church stray from Christ's clear teaching. This letter may offer the last chance to oppose the deterioration.

who was entrusted to the other men at various times that the righteous men, being among them in their day, were entrusted to his spirit as well as to the laws given to you and me. — In this way then the Lord shows how to receive good men from their sins and to limit the punishments for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. — This is especially true of those who follow the carnal desire of the sinful nature and despise authority.

Some are arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander, revile, abuse — or even abuse — although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring themselves accusations against such beings in the presence of the Lord. — But these men punishment as matters they do not understand. They are like tame beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish.

They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to criticize, to quarrel, to get. They are cruel and bloodthirsty, hating all their neighbors while they feast with wine. When ever full of adultery, they never stop sinning, they slander the righteous, they are experts in every — an accused crime. They have not the wisdom and understanding which the world of knowledge has in fact, and using the wisdom of wickedness, they are as reckless as the roaring of a lion — a beast without reason — who comes with a roar, kills and destroys the innocent — victims.

These men are springs without water and clouds of smoke. Blackest darkness is reserved for them. When they dream of evil, they speak of it as appearing in the light, boasting of what they know. They think people will be as foolish as they are and will live in error. They think that though while they themselves are slaves of desire, they are a slave to what they have believed in. — They have excluded the possibility of the word of knowledge, of love and peace, which love and are again excluded from the world. They are wandering at the end of the world, in the beginning. — It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, but it has happened and they are turned away from the saving judgment that was theirs. — In fact, with them the heavens are like a fire and the earth like a furnace. — A new heaven and a new earth is now awaiting in the future.

2:5 Three Worlds

So 2 Peter refers to three great ages of the earth. The first, the ancient world, was destroyed by the flood in Noah's day. The present time, in which we are now living, will be destroyed by fire (2:6). But the author points with hope to an age that has not yet come: a new heaven and a new earth (3:13).

The Day of the Lord

3 Dear friends, this is now the second letter to you. I have written before, there is no wonder if stimulate you in whatever thinking. I want you to read the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

First of all, we must understand that in the last days sinners will come, working and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this coming we promised?" Ever since our sinners did everything good or as it has been the beginning of creation. — But they do not forget that they are in God's word, the heavens passed and the earth was covered out of water and by water. — In these waters and the world of that time was changed and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends. With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand foolishness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar, the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything that will be laid bare.

Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives. — As you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. — That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. — But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

3:10 The Fate of the Earth

The time of global destruction described here was a common theme in letters to the early churches. Talk of a coming judgment and the overthrow of the existing world threatened and alarmed Rome, the chief power in the existing world then. Such doomsday prophecies aroused Roman hostility against Christians.

3:15 A Fellow Author

This comment is one of the rare instances in which a New Testament author refers directly to another New Testament book. Evidently 2 Peter was written late enough that a group of Paul's letters already existed. Scholars use clues like this one to date books of the Bible.

¹⁴So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. ¹⁵Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. ¹⁶He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unsta-

ble people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

¹⁷Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. ¹⁸But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

1 JOHN

■ INTRODUCTION ■

Words That Get Polluted

A problem with the new generation

Let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. 3:18

Over time, common phrases can be stripped of meaning and applied to something else entirely. Christianity has been around so long that people borrow its words for quite different meanings.

Same Words, Different Meanings

This tendency to pollute language is not new. Even at the close of the first century, words were being twisted and drained of their original meanings. When the apostle John wrote his letters, the Christian faith was perhaps 50 or 60 years old. A generation had grown up in Christian homes, and a distinct subculture was already developing.

Some people were using familiar phrases such as “knowing God,” “walk in the light,” and “born of God,” but with new, distorted meanings. The apostle responded with fire. He knew that a confused, subtle distortion of truth is harder to resist than an outright denial.

In this book, John chooses key words (*light, sin, Christ, love, faith*, etc.), “disinfects” them, and then restores their original meanings. He points back to the truths behind the words. Repeatedly, he begins with the phrase, “If we claim . . .” and proceeds to show what actions must result if we claim to live in the true light and know God.

A Step Further

John wrote his Gospel account of Jesus’ life in order to bring readers to a belief in Christ (John 20:31). He directed this letter to people who were already Christians, outlining how that faith should affect a person’s life. God is light, he says; so walk in the light. He is spirit; so worship him in the proper spirit. He is love; so demonstrate that love to others.

At times John shows the tender concern of a pastor, calling his readers “my dear children” (2:1) and urging them to “love one another” (3:11). But in other places his stern language hints at why he once wore the nickname “son of thunder.”

John was probably the last surviving apostle when he wrote this book. He lived almost to the end of the first century. But he was not too old to fight vigorously against whatever might corrupt the faith that had inspired him for so many years.

How to Read 1 John

First John is constructed like a piece of music. Its author states a few simple themes—light, truth, life, love—then builds variations on them. Relying on simple words and a rhythmic style, John writes in universal terms that apply to any time period.

Yet the book is understood far better if you know something about the environment in which John was writing. Therefore, begin your reading with “Who Were the Gnostics?” on page 1077.

As you read John, note the pattern. He defines a word, such as *light*, discusses its opposite, *darkness*, and then describes what a life in the light should look like. In every case, he shows God as the source of power in the Christian life.

PLANS FOR READING 1 JOHN

PLAN 1: An Overview of 1 John in 1 Day

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to 1 John, then chapter 3, a great summary of the love of God and how it should affect our lives.

PLAN 2: All of 1 John in 4 Days

- ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

The Word of Life

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. ²The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. ³We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴We write this to make our joy complete.

Walking in the Light

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. ⁷But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all^a sin.

⁸If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

2 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ²He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

³We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. ⁴The man who says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵But if anyone obeys his word, God’s love^d is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

⁷Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. ⁸Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.

⁹Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates

his brother is still in the darkness. ¹⁰Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him^e to make him stumble. ¹¹But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.

¹²I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.

¹³I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning.

I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.

I write to you, dear children, because you have known the Father.

¹⁴I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning.

I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

Do Not Love the World

¹⁵Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. ¹⁷The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

Warning Against Antichrists

¹⁸Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. ¹⁹They went out from us, but

2:12 A Friendly Interruption

John begins his book with a stern warning against false ideas. But this lyrical paragraph interrupts the flow with a warm greeting to true believers in the church. Many commentators believe that John intended the three categories (dear children, young men, fathers) to represent three different stages in his readers’ spiritual lives.

^aSome manuscripts your also

^dOr every

^eOr He is the one who turns aside God’s wrath, taking away our sins, and not only ours but

^bOr word, love for God

^cOr it

they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

²⁰But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.^a ²¹I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. ²²Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist—he denies the Father and the Son. ²³No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

²⁴See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵And this is what he promised us—even eternal life.

²⁶I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. ²⁷As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him.

Children of God

²⁸And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

²⁹If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

3 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ²Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears,^b we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

⁴Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. ⁵But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. ⁶No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

⁷Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. ⁸He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. ⁹No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. ¹⁰This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.

Love One Another

¹¹This is the message you heard from the begin-

ning: We should love one another. ¹²Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. ¹³Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you. ¹⁴We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. ¹⁵Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.

¹⁶This is how we know what love is. Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. ¹⁷If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? ¹⁸Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. ¹⁹This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence ²⁰whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

²¹Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²²and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. ²³And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. ²⁴Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

Test the Spirits

4 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ²This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

⁴You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. ⁵They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

3:11 Love vs. Hate

Very often John defines words in relation to their opposites: light vs. darkness, truth vs. falsehood, life vs. death. In this paragraph, he begins with a command to "love one another," then goes on to illustrate the life of hate before coming back to define love. Many of 1 John's themes are developed in this "circular" method.

^a20 Some manuscripts and you know all things

^b2 Or when it is made known

^c6 Or spirit

God's Love and Ours

"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁹Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ¹⁰This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son^a into the world that we might live through him. ¹¹This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for^b our sins. ¹²Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹³No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

¹⁴We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁵And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his

Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁶If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. ¹⁷And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. ¹⁸In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. ¹⁹There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

²⁰We love because he first loved us. ²¹If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. ²²And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother

^a9 Or his only begotten Son

^b10 Or as the one who would turn aside his wrath, taking away

INSIGHT

Who Were the Gnostics?

A dangerous cult that proved fatally attractive

This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. 4:2

As Christianity spread across the Mediterranean, it came into contact with other religions. Greeks and Romans tried to absorb the faith into their own philosophies, just as some Jews had initially.

Intellectual centers of the Mediterranean raised questions about Jesus: Who was he? If he was God, how could he die? And a popular new cult called Gnosticism (from the Greek word for knowledge, *gnosis*) gained ground in an attempt to explain these things. The cult thrived especially among the intellectual elite.

Could God Have a Body?

Gnostics balked at the Christian concept of God's becoming a man. Because they believed a physical body was intrinsically evil, they denied that a pure God could take on a body. Some dealt with the problem by claiming that Jesus was never a real human being, but a phantom, a temporary appearance of God who only looked human. Others proposed that God had "descended" on Jesus at his baptism, but left him before his death.

The apostle John debated in person with Gnostics of his day, and he had Gnostic thinking in mind when he wrote this letter. The very first sentence expressly states that the author has seen, heard, and touched Jesus—implying he could not have been a phantom, or pure spirit. Throughout the letter, and especially in 4:2-3, the author criticizes those who deny that Jesus came in the flesh.

Live As You Please

To Gnostics, all matter was evil. Only the spirit was pure, and Gnostics sought to rise to a higher, more spiritual plane. This teaching often produced a side effect: people who strove to rise above matter didn't care about personal ethics. Their pure spirits could not be tainted by "earthly" sin. Thus, they could act any way they wanted.

Angry, John roared out against the twin dangers of Gnosticism: immoral living and doubts that Christ became a man. Rebels must be judged by the actions they produce, and John stresses the theme of brotherly love. He primarily refutes errors by presenting a wholesome picture of the Christian life as it is supposed to be lived.

True fellowship is not a mystical, super-intellectual flight into the great Alone, but a relationship with the Father through Christ. And that also entails responsibilities to others in God's family.

Life Questions Gnosticism showed itself in several ways: the belief that matter was evil; a desire for "super-spirituality"; a tendency toward loose morals. How can we counter those same trends among Christians today?

Faith in the Son of God

5 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. ²This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. ³This is love for God—to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, ⁴for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. ⁵Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

⁶This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. ⁷For there are three that testify: ⁸the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. ⁹We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. ¹⁰Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be

5:7 Water, Blood, and Spirit

The apostle John relied heavily on symbolic language in his Gospel account of Jesus' life. Here, too, he uses symbols in giving proofs of Jesus. Water may refer to Jesus' baptism, blood to his death on the cross, and the Spirit to the Holy Spirit who descended on Jesus. John refers to these three as a "testimony" from God about his Son.

a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. ¹¹And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹²He who has the Son has life, he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Concluding Remarks

¹³I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. ¹⁴This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him

¹⁶If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that. ¹⁷All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.

¹⁸We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him. ¹⁹We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. ²⁰We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true—even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

²¹Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.

² & Late manuscripts of the Vulgate testify in heaven: the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. ⁶And there are three that testify on earth: the (not found in any Greek manuscript before the sixteenth century)

2 JOHN

INTRODUCTION

Undesirable Guests

When a "Welcome" sign is inappropriate

Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for. 8

Roman roads made first-century travel safer and easier than ever before, but good hotels were still centuries away. Therefore, when teachers of the Christian faith traveled the empire, they relied on local Christians for food and lodging.

Before long, false teachers (such as Gnostics) also hit the circuit, joined by religious racketeers attracted primarily to the free food and lodging. The two letters, 2 John and 3 John, the shortest books in the entire Bible, concern themselves with the mounting problems of hospitality for the "circuit-riding" teachers.

Show Discretion, But Also Love

Heresies had already sprung up in many local churches, and 2 John urges true Christians to use discretion in testing a visitor's message and motive. The author cautions against entertaining visitors who do not teach the truth about Christ.

True to his nickname, the apostle of love repeats his motto, "Love one another," even in this letter of warning. The ancient writer Jerome tells of the frail apostle John, in extreme old age, being carried into his congregation mumbling only, "Love one another." When asked why he talked of nothing else, John replied, "Because it is the Lord's command, and if this only is done, it is enough."

How to Read 2 and 3 John

These two books are best read together, since each gives one side of a problem facing a young church. Try to imagine the setting back then, when Christianity was still new and many teachers came along claiming special insights. Do you see any parallels among Christians today? Look for the specific advice John gave in those circumstances.

A PLAN FOR READING 2 AND 3 JOHN

PLAN 1: Read 2 and 3 John together in 1 Day

- ☐ Day 1. These books are only one short chapter each, so you can easily read two together.

¹The elder,

To the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in the truth—and not I only, but also all who know the truth—²because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever

³Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love.

⁴It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us. ⁵And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. ⁶And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.

⁷Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge

Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. ⁸Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. ⁹Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God, whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. ¹¹Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.

¹²I have much to write to you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

¹³The children of your chosen sister send their greetings

3 JOHN

INTRODUCTION

Guidelines for Hospitality

The same questions crop up in every age, in every place

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. ⁴

Taken together, this letter and its companion give a balanced view of proper Christian hospitality. Second John warned against entertaining false teachers. But 3 John praises a man named Gaius for warmly welcoming genuine Christian teachers. His actions had been opposed by Diotrephes, a cantankerous church dictator, who was also gossiping against John.

In a very condensed form, John's two letters deal with heresy and church splits, two problems that have plagued the church in every age, in every place. To defend against those dangers, John urges love and discernment. Believers must know whom to accept and support, and whom to resist.

How to Read 3 John

See How to Read 2 and 3 John, page 1079.

¹The elder,

To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth

²Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. ³It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth. ⁴I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

⁵Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers, even though they are strangers to you. ⁶They have told the church about your love. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. ⁷It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. ⁸We ought therefore to show hospitality to such men so that we may work together for the truth.

⁹I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will have nothing to do with us. ¹⁰So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us. Not satisfied with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.

¹¹Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God. ¹²Demetrius is well spoken of by everyone—and even by the truth itself. We also speak well of him, and you know that our testimony is true.

¹³I have much to write you, but I do not want to do so with pen and ink. ¹⁴I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.

Peace to you. The friends here send their greetings. Greet the friends there by name.

JUDE

INTRODUCTION

Watch Out!

Sounding an alarm

I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith. 3

If you sign up for a driver's training course, you'll begin with several hours of classroom lectures on Rules of the Road. The instructor will drill you on the shapes and colors of warning signs—signs that announce danger on the highways.

Driving seems all very academic, until you slide behind the wheel. There, a missed stop sign won't just lower a test score; it could cost you your life. Your instructor, rather than calmly correcting you, will shout, "Look out!"

Jude writes in the style of a teacher who is watching a freight train bear down on his student driver. Bells ring out, crossing gates go down, red lights flash. He admits this kind of letter isn't his preference—he intended a more high-minded treatise on salvation (verse 3). But the church was facing mortal dangers, and so Jude dashed off a vehement warning.

Who Were the Troublemakers?

Jude doesn't elaborate on what the troublemakers (verse 4) were teaching—perhaps he didn't want to honor their ideas by discussing them. Their behavior, however, is fair game: he fires away at their hypocrisy, divisiveness, and loose morals. He calls them spies and urges believers to fight for the true faith. At his poetic best, he borrows vivid images from nature to describe these people (12-13).

Short and vigorous, the book of Jude brings to mind a message from a fiery Old Testament prophet. Yet Jude holds out hope for his readers. Sincere believers can keep themselves in God's love, and some wavering souls can still be "snatched from the fire" (21-23). (Even when battling heretics, Jude does not hint at persecuting the offenders—no burnings at the stake here.)

Jude closes with a familiar and joy-filled doxology, the one part of his letter still quoted widely in modern churches.

How to Read Jude

In tone, Jude reads a lot like James and 2 Peter: it is simple, hard-hitting, and stern. In fact, it seems to copy entire sections of 2 Peter.

You can read through Jude in a few minutes, to get the force of his argument. But to truly appreciate his letter, you should reflect on (and look up) his various Old Testament references. Jude supports his arguments with extensive illustrations from history, and he even quotes from two Jewish books not accepted as part of the Bible, *The Assumption of Moses* (verse 9) and *Enoch* (verse 14).

All these citations support Jude's main thrust, which he summarizes eloquently in the last few paragraphs.

A PLAN FOR READING JUDE

PLAN 1: Read Jude in 1 Day

Day 1. Just one chapter long, Jude will take only a few minutes to read.

Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James

To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by^a Jesus Christ.

Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

The Sin and Doom of Godless Men

Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.⁴ For certain men whose condemnation was written about^b long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe.⁶ And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own abode—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.⁷ In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings.⁹ But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"¹⁰ Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals—these are the very things that destroy them.

Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.

¹²These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead.¹³ They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.

¹⁴Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones¹⁵ to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him." ¹⁶These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.

A Call to Persevere

¹⁷But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. ¹⁸They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." ¹⁹These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.

²⁰But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. ²¹Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

²²Be merciful to those who doubt; ²³snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

Doxology

²⁴To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—²⁵to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

^{a1} Or for, or in

^{b4} Or men who were marked out for condemnation

^{c5} Some early manuscripts Jesus

REVELATION

■ INTRODUCTION ■

A Book Full of Mysteries

Why Revelation is hard to understand

Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near. 1:3

The Roman Empire had a special prison for enemies of the empire: a rocky island called Patmos. Prisoners banished to that hard-labor colony usually wasted away and died. In that desolate setting a man named John had a series of visions he wrote down as Revelation, the strangest book in the New Testament.

John probably wrote this book about 60 years after Jesus left the earth. Questions were troubling the church. Was Jesus coming back as he had promised? Where did he go? To do what? Why didn't he return immediately? Revelation addresses those issues.

Writing in Code

No other New Testament book resembles Revelation in style. Yet during its time similar Jewish "apocalyptic" books (books that symbolically picture the ultimate destruction of evil and the triumph of good) flourished. Authors, writing to persecuted Christians anxious about their future, predicted what would take place. Often, they used coded language to protect themselves; for example, they substituted a word like *Babylon* when criticizing Rome, just in case their writings fell into the wrong hands.

The codes in Revelation are effective—so effective that few people today agree on exactly what they mean. Some people think many of the predictions in Revelation have not yet been fulfilled, perhaps John was writing about events that will come to pass in our own generation, they say. A best-selling book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, interprets Revelation that way.

Others explain Revelation in terms of the first century, concluding that many of the events prophesied in code took place during the Roman Empire. Still others find clues to John's meaning spread out over 2,000 years of church history, or surmise that he employed symbols merely to describe an idealized battle of good and evil.

Two Dangers

Because of all the conflicting theories about Revelation, readers are tempted to respond in one of two ways. Some judge the book so perplexingly weird that they can find no reason to read it at all. How can anyone be sure of its meaning?

Others fall prey to the opposite danger. They pore over Revelation and conclude they have discovered the secret explanation of each obscure detail. To the latter group, it may be humbling to learn that every generation since the first century has come up with different interpretations of the prophecies.

Why Read Revelation?

Why read this strange book? John gives a good clue in the first phrase, which introduces this book as "the revelation of Jesus Christ." Revelation gives a unique picture of Jesus Christ, and the New Testament would be incomplete without it. The Gospels describe Jesus' life on earth from four different viewpoints. The letters discuss the deep significance of the resurrected Christ and what he accomplished. But Revelation shows Jesus Christ from a new perspective: as the mighty ruler of the cosmic forces of good. When John saw him in this exalted state, he fell at Jesus' feet as though dead (1:17).

Although Revelation does not remove the mystery surrounding Jesus' return and the end of the world, it does throw light on those events. It cannot be reduced to a mere timetable of events; it speaks lasting truths to every generation of readers. Revelation tells of Christ's future triumph over all the evil in the universe. This crucial message of final hope was needed by its original readers in the first century and is still needed by us today.

Although Revelation does not remove the mystery surrounding Jesus' return and the end of the world, it does throw light on those events. It cannot be reduced to a mere timetable of events. It speaks lasting truths to every generation of readers. Revelation tells of Christ's future triumph over all the evil in the universe. This crucial message of final hope was needed by its original readers in the first century and is still needed by us today.

How to Read Revelation

Revelation is probably the most intimidating book in the Bible. It packs in so many symbols and obscure details that most readers find themselves plagued by the sensation that they are missing something.

All new forms of writing seem intimidating at first. For example, consider your very first science fiction book, filled with weird names and unearthly creatures, and governed by its own rules of writing. Science fiction seems very strange until you learn the techniques used by virtually all science fiction writers. Once you understand the form, it makes more sense. The same applies to Revelation. It will likely seem strange at first, because it uses techniques of symbolism and visions not commonly used elsewhere in the New Testament.

It is best to read Revelation one vision at a time, rather than all at once. The seven main visions give a view of similar events from different angles.

1. The church on earth (1-3)
2. The Lamb and the seven seals (4-7)
3. Seven angels with trumpets (8-11)
4. The church persecuted by Satan and the beast (12-14)
5. The seven bowls of God's wrath (15-16)
6. Judgment of Babylon (17-19:10).
7. Final judgment and final victory (19:11 to end).

Try to read completely through a vision, following the subtitles marked in the Bible text.

As you read, look behind the visual symbols for the meaning they point to. Ask yourself, What does this tell me about Christ, about God, about the real meaning of history? Don't try to analyze details at first; just follow the main flow of thought.

Keep in mind also the condition of the persecuted Christians who first received this book. They needed not a precise calendar of future events, but rather a word of encouragement and hope. They needed faith that, no matter how things looked, God was in charge of history and good would ultimately triumph. Revelation provides this hope, for them and for us.

Finally, a good Bible dictionary or commentary will clear up much of the confusion about Revelation.

PLANS FOR READING REVELATION

PLAN 1: An Overview of Revelation in 3 Days

- ☐ Day 1. Read the Introduction to Revelation, then chapter 1 to see how John introduces this book.
- ☐ Day 2. Read chapter 12 as a sample of the writing contained in this book of visions.
- ☐ Day 3. Read chapter 21 for a glimpse of the final end of the universe.

PLAN 2: All of Revelation in 19 Days

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4-5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10-11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15-16 ☐ 17 ☐ 18
☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22

Prologue

1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, ²who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. ³Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

Greetings and Doxology

⁴John,

To the seven churches in the province of Asia:

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits^a before his throne, ⁵and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, ⁶and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

⁷Look, he is coming with the clouds,
and every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him;
and all the peoples of the earth will mourn
because of him.

So shall it be! Amen.

⁸"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

One Like a Son of Man

⁹I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, ¹¹which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."

¹²I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man,"^b dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. ¹⁵His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. ¹⁶In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

¹⁷When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am

alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

¹⁹"Write, therefore, what you have seen—what is now and what will take place later. ²⁰The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels^c of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

To the Church in Ephesus

2 "To the angel^d of the church in Ephesus write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. ²I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. ³You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

⁴Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. ⁵Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. ⁶But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

⁷He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

To the Church in Smyrna

⁸"To the angel^d of the church in Smyrna write:

These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. ⁹I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. ¹⁰Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.

¹¹He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.

To the Church in Pergamum

¹²"To the angel^d of the church in Pergamum write:

These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. ¹³I know where you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives.

¹⁴Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the

^a4 Or the sevenfold Spirit

^b13 Daniel 7:13

^c20 Or messengers

^d1 Or messenger; also in verses 8, 12 and 18

teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality. ¹⁵Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. ¹⁶Repent (therefore)! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

¹⁷He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.

To the Church in Thyatira

¹"To the angel of the church in Thyatira write:

These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze. ¹⁰I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.

Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. ²¹I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. ²²So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. ²³I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds. ²⁴Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira—to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets (I will not impose any other burden on you): ²⁵Only hold on to what you have until I come.

²⁶To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations

²⁷He will rule them with an iron scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery"—

just as I have received authority from my Father. ²⁸I will also give him the morning star. ²⁹He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

To the Church in Sardis

3 ¹"To the angel¹ of the church in Sardis write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits² of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. ²Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. ³Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it,

and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

⁴Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. ⁵He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels. ⁶He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

To the Church in Philadelphia

⁷"To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. ⁸I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. ⁹I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. ¹⁰Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.

¹¹I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. ¹²He who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name. ¹³He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

To the Church in Laodicea

¹⁴"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. ¹⁵I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! ¹⁶So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you

3:1 Churches in Strategic Areas

The cities mentioned in chapters 2 and 3 were actual cities in the ancient world where a church existed. John listed them in the order in which a messenger on the road would have found them, starting with the chief city of Ephesus and then circling back clockwise. The cities lie in what is now part of modern Turkey. Religious wars took their toll: none of the churches in these cities survived.

²⁷ Psalm 2:9

¹ Or messenger, also in verses 7 and 14

² Or the sevenfold Spirit

out of my mouth. ¹⁷You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. ¹⁸I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

¹⁹Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. ²⁰Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

²¹To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. ²²He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

The Throne in Heaven

4 After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." ²At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. ³And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne. ⁴Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. ⁵From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits^a of God. ⁶Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal

In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. ⁷The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. ⁸Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying:

"Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord God Almighty,
who was, and is, and is to come."

⁹Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, ¹⁰the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

¹¹"You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they were created
and have their being."

The Scroll and the Lamb

5 Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. ²And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" ³But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. ⁴I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. ⁵Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."

⁶Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits^a of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. ⁸And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹And they sang a new song:

"You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and with your blood you purchased men for
God
from every tribe and language and people
and nation.

¹⁰You have made them to be a kingdom and
priests to serve our God,
and they will reign on the earth."

¹¹Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. ¹²In a loud voice they sang:

"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and
strength
and honor and glory and praise!"

¹³Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:

5:1 Seals and Scrolls

Certain words and phrases used in Revelation had a clearer meaning to ancient readers familiar with the objects. For example, important documents were sent written on a papyrus scroll sealed with several wax seals. Only the proper person, in the presence of witnesses, could open the document. Thus in this vision, only the "worthy" creature is able to break the seal.

To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power,
for ever and ever!"

¹⁴The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped

The Seals

6 I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Come!" ²I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.

³When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!"

⁴Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large sword.

⁵When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard

^areek a *chointa* (probably about a liter)

^b6 Greek a *denarius*

the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. ⁸Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "A quart^a of wheat for a day's wages,^b and three quarts of barley for a day's wages,^b and do not damage the oil and the wine!"

⁷When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" ⁸I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

⁹When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. ¹⁰They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge

INSIGHT

A Startling Image of Jesus

A helpless lamb—the mightiest of all creatures

I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. 5:4

Images of Jesus abound in Revelation, and one way to study the book is to follow a single image through the entire book. After his luminous appearance in the first chapter, Jesus is presented as a king, a child, a warrior on a horse, the Lord of the whole earth, the husband of a bride. Of all the images, however, none is so startling and unlikely as the one in John's second vision. Yet it takes hold and appears repeatedly throughout the book.

To set the stage for this vision, the book of Revelation uses more visual drama than a novel. Lightning flashes, the sky growls, and awesome creatures encircle a lofty throne. Four of the creatures seem to symbolize the most impressive examples of all creation, for a common saying in those days went,

The mightiest among the birds is the eagle.
The mightiest among the domestic animals is the bull.
The mightiest among the wild beasts is the lion.
And the mightiest of all is man.

Only One Worthy

A question resounds in the heavens, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" (5:2). In other words, who is worthy to unloose the next phase of history? No one can answer, much to John's dismay. Not one of the four impressive creatures qualifies.

But suddenly John sees another creature, a "Lamb, looking as if it had been slain" (5:6). The image contains a great paradox. None of the majestic angels or elders or living creatures has the right to break the seals. Only a Lamb does—a helpless, slaughtered Lamb.

John records a song of celebration ("You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God" [5:9]), a song later set to earthly music in Handel's *Messiah*. And elsewhere in Revelation true believers are identified as being recorded in the "Lamb's book of life."

This powerful image resurfaces often in Revelation, a book of warfare between good and evil. Christ the king is also the Lamb, the one who died for us. His death on the cross, seemingly a great defeat, actually ushered in a decisive victory, for him and for us. Good was not destroyed; it triumphed.

Life Questions: What meaning does the image of Jesus as a slain Lamb have for you? What are your favorite "pictures" or images of Jesus?

our blood?" ¹¹Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.

¹²I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, ¹³and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. ¹⁴The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

¹⁵Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. ¹⁶They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!" ¹⁷For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

144,000 Sealed

⁷ After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. ²Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: ³"Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God." ⁴Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.

⁵From the tribe of Judah 12,000 were sealed,
from the tribe of Reuben 12,000,
from the tribe of Gad 12,000,
⁶from the tribe of Asher 12,000,
from the tribe of Naphtali 12,000,
from the tribe of Manasseh 12,000,

7:1 Significant Numbers

Numbers had a great symbolic significance in the Bible, and especially to the writer of Revelation. The most obviously symbolic numbers in Revelation are 4, 7, 12, and their multiples.

The number 4 seems to stand for the created universe (four points of the compass, four winds of the earth), and thus the four living creatures represent all creation. In the Bible, the number 7 denotes perfection or completion, probably because the Genesis creation account covers seven days. The 12 tribes of Israel in the Old Testament and 12 apostles in the New indicate that the number 12 stands for the church, or God's redeemed people from both Covenants.

A number multiplied by 10's, such as 144,000 (12x12x10x10x10), suggests an indefinite but very large figure. Therefore, 144,000 may stand for the entire church throughout history.

⁷from the tribe of Simeon 12,000,
from the tribe of Levi 12,000,
from the tribe of Issachar 12,000,
⁸from the tribe of Zebulun 12,000,
from the tribe of Joseph 12,000,
from the tribe of Benjamin 12,000

The Great Multitude in White Robes

⁹After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰And they cried out in a loud voice:

"Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb."

¹¹All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹²saying:

"Amen!
Praise and glory
and wisdom and thanks and honor
and power and strength
be to our God for ever and ever.
Amen!"

¹³Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?"

¹⁴I answered, "Sir, you know."

And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵Therefore,

"they are before the throne of God
and serve him day and night in his temple;
and he who sits on the throne will spread his
tent over them.

¹⁶Never again will they hunger;
never again will they thirst.
The sun will not beat upon them,
nor any scorching heat.

¹⁷For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be
their shepherd;
he will lead them to springs of living water.
And God will wipe away every tear from their
eyes."

The Seventh Seal and the Golden Censer

⁸ When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

²And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.

³Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. ⁴The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand. ⁵Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the

down and hurled it on the earth, and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

The Trumpets

Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them.

The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth. A third of the earth

was burned up; a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood. A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water.

INSIGHT

Revelation's Use of Symbols

Why are there so many theories explaining Revelation?

The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. 9:7

In reading Revelation confusion comes because readers tend to fixate wildly on details, mainly because John relied so heavily on symbols to express his meaning in this book.

Creatures covered with eyes and sprouting horns, eagles wheeling in the sky, molten mountains hurtling into the ocean—such rich imagery excites frenzied attempts to explain every word. John interprets some symbols for us—"The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches" (1:20)—and hints broadly at the meaning of others, such as the four horsemen in chapter 6. But

many questions remain unanswered. For example, do the major visions describe consecutive periods of history, or do they foretell the same events from different angles?

Look at the Broad Picture

Artists find that symbols communicate with special power. When Picasso painted his massive *Guernica*, he attempted to express what had happened in war-ravaged Spain on April 28, 1937. He created a work of art, not a photographic record. The painting does communicate the tragedy at Guernica, but artfully, symbolically.

In a similar way, John poetically renders human events so strange and climactic as to be otherwise inexpressible. If he had wanted to, God could have revealed a precise timetable of future events, but instead Jesus warned specifically against such speculation about the future. In keeping with that approach, Revelation does not so much outline future events as hint at the cosmic significance that goes on *behind* history.

Readers new to Revelation should start by viewing scenes as a whole, looking for an overall meaning. The visions are like Jesus' parables: each has a main thrust, and some of the details may serve merely to dramatize or add literary fullness to the scene. No one can find the precise meaning behind every detail in John's visions. Those who seek to explain each symbol too quickly may easily miss the meaning of the symbol as well as the grand emotional sweep of the book.

Searching for a System

Revelation will always attract scholars who search for the meaning behind each symbol. It is no easy undertaking: over 300 allusions to the Old Testament and an elaborate system of symbolic numbers must be factored into any explanation. History has proved thousands of explainers wrong. People from every generation—especially in the hectic days around A.D. 1000 and in the 14th and 19th centuries—have insisted the end of the world was just around the corner.

Today, some believe that Revelation's symbols—statues that talk, fire coming from heaven, totalitarian economic control, massive changes in the earth and sea—come hauntingly close to 20th-century phenomena. The wholesale devastation of earth prophesied in the middle chapters seems eerily up-to-date.

Yet, calamities merely provide a backdrop to John's main thrust: followers of Christ will be made safe at last. "God will wipe every tear from their eyes," he says (7:17). Much of Revelation remains shrouded in mystery, but the final results shine out clearly.

Life Questions: Two potential dangers in reading Revelation (see Introduction) are avoiding it entirely or getting obsessed with its details. Which danger are you most familiar with? Why do we need message of Revelation today?

¹¹the name of the star is *Wormwood*.^a A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.

¹²The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night.

¹³As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: "Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!"

9 The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. ²When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. ³And out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. ⁴They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. ⁵They were not given power to kill them, but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes a man. ⁶During those days men will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.

⁷The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. ⁸Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. ⁹They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle. ¹⁰They had tails and stings like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months. ¹¹They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon.^b

¹²The first woe is past; two other woes are yet to come.

¹³The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the horns of the golden altar that is before God. ¹⁴It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates."

¹⁵And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. ¹⁶The number of the mounted troops was two hundred million. I heard their number.

¹⁷The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur. ¹⁸A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. ¹⁹The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like

snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury.

²⁰The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk. ²¹Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.

The Angel and the Little Scroll

10 Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars. ²He was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand. He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, ³and he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke. ⁴And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven say, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down."

⁵Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven. ⁶And he swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, "There will be no more delay! ⁷But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets."

⁸Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me once more: "Go, take the scroll that lies open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land."

⁹So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, "Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey." ¹⁰I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour. ¹¹Then I was told, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings."

The Two Witnesses

11 I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of

9:20 Judgments for a Purpose

Revelation records a number of severe judgments, in chapters 6, 9, and 16. It carefully mentions the purpose of these judgments: to convince humankind that its rebellion is futile and encourage it to repent. In this way, the judgments are similar to the 10 plagues against Egypt. Like the 10 plagues, these judgments do not ultimately work. The failure of people to repent makes necessary the final judgment against the source of all evil.

^a11 That is, Bitterness.

^b11 Abaddon and Apollyon mean Destroyer.

^c13 That is, projections.

God and the altar, and count the worshipers there. ²But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months. ³And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." ⁴These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. ⁵If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. ⁶These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.

⁷Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. ⁸Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. ⁹For three and a half days men from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. ¹⁰The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth.

¹¹But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. ¹²Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on.

¹³At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

¹⁴The second woe has passed; the third woe is coming soon.

The Seventh Trumpet

¹⁵The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said:

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."

¹⁶And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷saying:

11:1 Echoes from the Old Testament

A full understanding of Revelation requires detailed study of such Old Testament prophets as Ezekiel and Daniel. John frequently borrows images from those books. For example, the passage here on the temple of God parallels Ezekiel 40. Similarly, many passages referring to kings and political empires are reminiscent of Daniel's visions.

"We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign.

¹⁸The nations were angry;

and your wrath has come.

The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets

and your saints and those who reverence your name,

both small and great—

and for destroying those who destroy the earth."

¹⁹Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

The Woman and the Dragon

12 A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. ²She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. ³Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. ⁴His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born. ⁵She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. ⁶The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.

⁷And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. ⁹The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

¹⁰Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:

"Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ.

For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night,

has been hurled down.

¹¹They overcame him

by the blood of the Lamb

and by the word of their testimony;

they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

¹²Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them!

But woe to the earth and the sea,

because the devil has gone down

He is filled with fury,

because he knows that his time is short.”

¹³When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. ¹⁴The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. ¹⁵Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. ¹⁶But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. ¹⁷Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—

those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁸And the dragon stood on the shore of the sea.

The Beast out of the Sea

And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. ²The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. ³One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. ⁴Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority

^{a1} Some late manuscripts And I

INSIGHT

A Look Behind the Scenes

Christmas from heaven's perspective

The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born. 12:4

As many interpret it, chapter 12 describes Christmas day, but its point of view differs radically from that of the Gospels. Revelation does not tell of shepherds, a crazed king bent on infanticide, and a stable; rather, it pictures a murderous dragon leading a ferocious struggle in heaven. His attack when Christ was born launches a series of bloody rebellions against the forces of good.

Two Histories at Once

The view of Christ's birth in Revelation 12 gives a glimpse into the pattern of the entire book. John is fusing things seen with things normally not seen. In daily life, two parallel histories occur simultaneously: one on earth and one in heaven. Revelation, however, views them together. It parts the curtain, allowing a quick look behind the scenes at the cosmic impact of what happens on earth.

Every inch of this planet is claimed by God and counterclaimed by Satan. We normally experience only the visible, everyday effects of this struggle. We feel it, for example, when we make a choice between what we know is wrong and what is right. But, as we are living out our lives on earth, the supernatural universe is simultaneously at war. Revelation draws the contrasts sharply: good vs. evil, the Lamb vs. the dragon, Jerusalem vs. Babylon, the bride vs. the prostitute.

Is God in Control of History?

Sometimes the "battle in the heavens" can break out into actual violence on earth, as it did when Jesus came. Revelation was originally written to people who were facing extreme persecution from the Roman Empire. Revelation establishes that a war is being waged on this planet between good and evil, a war that reflects a larger struggle in the whole universe. But, no matter how it looks, God is in firm control of history. To first-century Christians, Rome was the arch-villain, and allusions to that empire crop up in these chapters. John asserts that Jesus Christ, not an emperor, determines the flow of history.

Events are marching onward to a definite climax; history has meaning. Ultimately, even the despots of history will end up fulfilling the plan mapped out for them by God. Pontius Pilate and his Roman soldiers demonstrated that starkly. They thought they were getting rid of Jesus by crucifying him. Instead, they made possible the salvation of the world.

Life Questions: As Revelation tells it, events that appear tragic can work great good. Have you ever experienced that in your life?

to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?"

⁵The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. ⁶He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. ⁷He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. ⁸All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.^a

⁹He who has an ear, let him hear.

¹⁰If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go.

If anyone is to be killed^b with the sword, with the sword he will be killed.

This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints.

The Beast out of the Earth

¹¹Then I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. ¹²He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. ¹³And he performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men. ¹⁴Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. He ordered them to set up

an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. ¹⁵He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. ¹⁶He also forced every one, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, ¹⁷so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name.

¹⁸This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666.

The Lamb and the 144,000

14 Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. ²And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. ⁴These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they kept themselves pure. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb. ⁵No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.

The Three Angels

⁶Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. ⁷He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water."

⁸A second angel followed and said, "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries."

⁹A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, ¹⁰he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. ¹¹And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name." ¹²This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.

¹³Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on."

"Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."

13:5 Forty-Two Months of Trials

This mysterious number has prompted much speculation. Literally it means "a time and times and half a time" (see 12:4), that is, one year plus two years plus half a year, or three and a half years. It occurs several places in Revelation. Could it simply be half the perfect number 7, thus representing the age of the New Covenant (the time between the first and second coming of Christ)? Or does it refer to literal months: a brief but intense three-and-one-half year period of great persecution against the church? If so, did these 42 months already take place during the Roman persecutions of Christians? Or are they still in the future?

^a8 Or written from the creation of the world in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain

^b10 Some manuscripts anyone kills

The Harvest of the Earth

¹⁴I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one "like a son of man"^a with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. ¹⁵Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." ¹⁶So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.

¹⁷Another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. ¹⁸Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe." ¹⁹The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath. ²⁰They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses' bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia.^b

Seven Angels With Seven Plagues

15 I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues—last, because with them God's wrath is completed. ²And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They held harps given them by God ³and sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb.

"Great and marvelous are your deeds,
Lord God Almighty.

Just and true are your ways,
King of the ages.

⁴Who will not fear you, O Lord,
and bring glory to your name?

For you alone are holy.

All nations will come

and worship before you,

for your righteous acts have been revealed."

⁵After this I looked and in heaven the temple, that is, the tabernacle of the Testimony, was opened. ⁶Out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues. They were dressed in clean, shining linen and wore golden sashes around their chests. ⁷Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of God, who lives for ever and ever. ⁸And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

The Seven Bowls of God's Wrath

16 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go, pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth."

²The first angel went and poured out his bowl on the land, and ugly and painful sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped his image.

³The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it turned into blood like that of a dead man, and every living thing in the sea died.

⁴The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. ⁵Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say:

"You are just in these judgments,
you who are and who were, the Holy One,
because you have so judged.

⁶for they have shed the blood of your saints and prophets,

and you have given them blood to drink as
they deserve."

⁷And I heard the altar respond:

"Yes, Lord God Almighty,
true and just are your judgments."

⁸The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and the sun was given power to scorch people with fire. ⁹They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him.

¹⁰The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was plunged into darkness. Men gnawed their tongues in agony ¹¹and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.

¹²The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East. ¹³Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.

¹⁵"Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed."

¹⁶Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

¹⁷The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, "It is done!" ¹⁸Then there

16:16 The Battle of Armageddon

Armageddon has been the site of many military struggles in Israel's history. Some historians estimate more wars have been fought here than any other location in the world. It is an appropriate setting (or symbol) for the final struggle between good and evil.

^a14 Daniel 7:13

^b20 That is, about 180 miles (about 300 kilometers)

^c13 Greek unclear

came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake. ¹⁶The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath. ²⁰Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found. ²¹From the sky huge hailstones of about a hundred pounds each fell upon men. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.

The Woman on the Beast

17 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters. ²With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries."

³Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. ⁴The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. ⁵This title was written on her forehead:

MYSTERY

BABYLON THE GREAT

THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES

AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

⁶I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus.

When I saw her, I was greatly astonished. ⁷Then the angel said to me: "Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides, which has the seven heads and ten horns. ⁸The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and will come up out of the Abyss and go to his destruction. The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because he once was, now is not, and yet will come.

⁹"This calls for a mind with wisdom. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. ¹⁰They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for a little while. ¹¹The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction.

¹²"The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. ¹³They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome

them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers."

¹⁵Then the angel said to me, "The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages. ¹⁶The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire. ¹⁷For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to give the beast their power to rule, until God's words are fulfilled. ¹⁸The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth."

The Fall of Babylon

18 After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. ²With a mighty voice he shouted:

"Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!

She has become a home for demons

and a haunt for every evil spirit,

a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird

³For all the nations have drunk
the maddening wine of her adulteries.

The kings of the earth committed adultery with her,

and the merchants of the earth grew rich
from her excessive luxuries."

⁴Then I heard another voice from heaven say

"Come out of her, my people,
so that you will not share in her sins,
so that you will not receive any of her
plagues;

⁵for her sins are piled up to heaven,
and God has remembered her crimes.

⁶Give back to her as she has given;
pay her back double for what she has done.
Mix her a double portion from her own cup

⁷Give her as much torture and grief
as the glory and luxury she gave herself.
In her heart she boasts,

18:2 What Is Babylon?

Many people believe Babylon was a coded substitute for Rome, the city set on seven hills (17:9). Revelation was almost surely written to Christians undergoing great persecution from harsh Roman emperors. Scholars who see Babylon as Rome sometimes try to identify the kings mentioned here as specific Roman rulers.

However, not all interpreters agree. Some suggest that Babylon stands for Jerusalem, and others believe we cannot clearly identify Babylon. Rather, they say, it can represent all powerful world systems that kill faithful Christians and seduce people away from God. Regardless, chapter 18 reveals that the great enemy, Babylon, will disappear forever (18:21).

I sit as queen. I am not a widow,
and I will never mourn.

¹⁷Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake
her,

death, mourning and famine.
She will be consumed by fire,
for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.

¹⁸When the kings of the earth who committed
adultery with her and shared her luxury see the
smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn
over her. ¹⁹Torn at her torment, they will stand
afar off and cry:

"Woe! Woe, O great city,
O Babylon, city of power!
In one hour your doom has come!"

The merchants of the earth will weep and
mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes
any more—²cargoes of gold, silver, precious
stones and pearls, fine linen, purple, silk and scar-
let cloth, every sort of citron wood, and articles of
every kind made of ivory, costly wood, bronze,
iron and marble; ³cargoes of cinnamon and spice,
of incense, myrrh and frankincense, of wine and
olive oil, of fine flour and wheat; cattle and sheep;
horses and carriages; and bodies and souls of men.

⁴"They will say, 'The fruit you longed for is
gone from you. All your riches and splendor have
vanished, never to be recovered.' ⁵The merchants
who sold these things and gained their wealth
from her will stand far off, torn at her torment.
They will weep and mourn ⁶and cry out:

"Woe! Woe, O great city,
dressed in fine linen, purple and scarlet,
and glittering with gold, precious stones and
pearls!

⁷In one hour such great wealth has been
brought to ruin!"

⁸Every sea captain, and all who travel by ship,
the sailors and all who earn their living from the
sea will stand far off. ⁹When they see the smoke
of her burning, they will exclaim, 'Was there ever a
city like this great city?' ¹⁰They will throw dust on
their heads, and with weeping and mourning cry
out:

"Woe! Woe, O great city,
where all who had ships on the sea
became rich through her wealth!
In one hour she has been brought to ruin!
¹¹Rejoice over her, O heaven!
Rejoice, saints and apostles and prophets!
God has judged her for the way she treated
you."

¹²Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the
size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea,
and said:

"With such violence
the great city of Babylon will be thrown
down,
never to be found again.

¹³The music of harpists and musicians, flute
players and trumpeters,
will never be heard in you again.

No workman of any trade
will ever be found in you again.
The sound of a millstone
will never be heard in you again.

¹⁴The light of a lamp
will never shine in you again.
The voice of bridegroom and bride
will never be heard in you again.
Your merchants were the world's great men.
By your magic spell all the nations were led
astray.

¹⁵In her was found the blood of prophets and of
the saints,
and of all who have been killed on the
earth."

Hallelujah!

19 After this I heard what sounded like the roar
of a great multitude in heaven shouting,

"Hallelujah!
Salvation and glory and power belong to our
God,

² for true and just are his judgments.
He has condemned the great prostitute
who corrupted the earth by her adulteries.
He has avenged on her the blood of his
servants."

³And again they shouted:

"Hallelujah!
The smoke from her goes up for ever and
ever."

⁴The twenty-four elders and the four living crea-
tures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated
on the throne. And they cried:

"Amen, Hallelujah!"

⁵Then a voice came from the throne, saying:

"Praise our God,
all you his servants,
you who fear him,
both small and great!"

⁶Then I heard what sounded like a great multi-
tude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud
peals of thunder, shouting.

"Hallelujah!
For our Lord God Almighty reigns

⁷Let us rejoice and be glad
and give him glory!
For the wedding of the Lamb has come,
and his bride has made herself ready.

⁸Fine linen, bright and clean,
was given her to wear."
(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the
saints.)

⁹Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are
those who are invited to the wedding supper of the
Lamb.'" And he added, "These are the true words
of God."

¹⁰At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he
said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with
you and with your brothers who hold to the testi-

many of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

The Rider on the White Horse

11I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. 12His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. 13He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. 14The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. 15Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." 16He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. 17On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written.

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS

17And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, 18so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great."

19Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war

against the rider on the horse and his army. 20But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. 21The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

The Thousand Years

20 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. 21He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. 22He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.

4I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand

115 Psalm 2:9

INSIGHT

A Happy Ending after All

The last word is the best news of all

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. 21:1

We sense it at rare moments. We see the good, the beauty in new crops, in flowers, in sunshine, and even in rain.

This world may be full of pollution, war, crime, and hate. But inside us, all of us, linger remnants that remind us of what the world could be like—of what we could be like. The Old Testament prophets dreamed of "that day," when creation would be made new. And those sensations, following a dismal monotone of predicted catastrophes, burst out of the last few chapters of Revelation. That perfect world is not merely a dream; it will come true.

A New World at Last

There will be no more tears then, nor pain. Wild animals will frolic, not kill. Once again creation will work the way God intended. Peace will reign not only between God and individuals, but between him and all creation. The kingdom comes out into the open. The City of God flings wide its gates.

Revelation ends on a note of great triumph. Somehow, out of all the bad news augured here, good news emerges—spectacular Good News. To those who believe, Revelation becomes a book not of fear, but of hope. God will prevail. All will be made new.

The Bible began, back in Genesis, with a tragic defeat, when humanity, made in the image of God, rebelled. It ends with a reunion—a marriage, Revelation calls it. There is a happy ending after all.

Life Questions. If you could design a perfect world, what would it look like?

years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

Satan's Doom

When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth.

Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

The Dead Are Judged

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire.

20:3 The Millenium

Christians interpret the thousand-year reign referred to here in a variety of ways:

1. Postmillennialism believes that the church itself will, through its expanding influence, bring about a time of peace and prosperity in preparation for the return of Christ. This view was far more popular in the 19th century, when people were optimistic about progress and the future.

2. Premillennialism believes that Christ will return to earth and reign here in person, ushering in a period of great peace. During this period, Satan will be bound up, but will lead a final revolt at the end of the thousand years.

3. Amillennialism interprets this passage much less literally. Some amillennialists hold that the millenium has already been going on, but the reign of Christ is taking place in heaven, not on earth. Others believe the church is establishing the kingdom of Christ now, between Jesus' first and second coming.

Because so little information is given on the millenium, no one can be completely sure. The "thousand year" period itself may be symbolic, standing for a very long period of time. Regardless, all positions agree that ultimately this world will end with Jesus' establishment of an eternal kingdom.

The lake of fire is the second death. Those who come over the second death will never be able to come back to this life.

The New Jerusalem

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new." Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

He said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. He who is thirsty, let him come and drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. He measured its wall and it was 144 cubits thick, by man's measurement, which the angel was using. The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysoberyl, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the

¹⁶ That is, about 3,400 miles (about 2,200 kilometers).

¹⁷ That is, about 24 feet (about 7.3 meters).

¹⁸ That is, 12 miles.

the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.^a ²¹The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass.

²²I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. ²⁴The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. ²⁵On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. ²⁶The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. ²⁷Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

The River of Life

22 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

⁶The angel said to me, "These words are trust-

worthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place."

Jesus Is Coming

⁷"Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book."

⁸I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. ⁹But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book. Worship God!"

¹⁰Then he told me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near. ¹¹Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy."

¹²"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. ¹³I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

¹⁴"Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. ¹⁵Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

¹⁶"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you^b this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."

¹⁷The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

¹⁸I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. ¹⁹And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

²⁰He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

²¹The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.

22:1 Eden Regained

The last two chapters of Revelation contain numerous parallels to the description of the Garden of Eden in the first three chapters of Genesis. Revelation describes a new creation that excludes all the things that spoiled Eden. There will be no night and no death. Satan will disappear forever, and nothing impure will enter the new city. People will walk with God again, just as they did in Eden. There will be no crying or pain. Once again humankind will rule over creation, this time with open access to the tree of life. Everything put wrong by human rebellion in Eden will be set right. In Eden, Adam and Eve were driven from the garden; in the new earth, they will see God's face.

^a20 The precise identification of some of these precious stones is uncertain

^b16 The Greek is plural

Table of Weights and Measures

| BIBLICAL UNIT | | APPROXIMATE AMERICAN EQUIVALENT | APPROXIMATE METRIC EQUIVALENT |
|----------------|--------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| WEIGHTS | | | |
| talent | (60 minas) | 75 pounds | 34 kilograms |
| mina | (50 shekels) | 1 1/4 pounds | 0.6 kilogram |
| shekel | (2 bekas) | 2/5 ounce | 11.5 grams |
| pim | (2/3 shekel) | 1/3 ounce | 7.6 grams |
| beka | (10 gerahs) | 1/5 ounce | 5.5 grams |
| gerah | | 1/50 ounce | 0.6 gram |
| LENGTH | | | |
| cubit | | 18 inches | 0.5 meter |
| span | | 9 inches | 23 centimeters |
| handbreadth | | 3 inches | 8 centimeters |
| CAPACITY | | | |
| Dry Measure | | | |
| cor [homer] | (10 ephahs) | 6 bushels | 220 liters |
| letheh | (5 ephahs) | 3 bushels | 110 liters |
| ephah* | (10 omers) | 3/5 bushel | 22 liters |
| seah | (1/3 ephah) | 7 quarts | 7.3 liters |
| omer | (1/10 ephah) | 2 quarts | 2 liters |
| cab | (1/18 ephah) | 1 quart | 1 liter |
| Liquid Measure | | | |
| bath | (1 ephah) | 6 gallons | 22 liters |
| hin | (1/6 bath) | 4 quarts | 4 liters |
| log | (1/72 bath) | 1/3 quart | 0.3 liter |

The figures of the table are calculated on the basis of a shekel equaling 11.5 grams, a cubit equaling 18 inches and an ephah equaling 22 liters. The quart referred to is either a dry quart (slightly larger than a liter) or a liquid quart (slightly smaller than a liter), whichever is applicable. The ton referred to in the footnotes is the American ton of 2,000 pounds.

This table is based upon the best available information, but it is not intended to be mathematically precise; like the measurement equivalents in the footnotes, it merely gives approximate amounts and distances. Weights and measures differed somewhat at various times and places in the ancient world. There is uncertainty particularly about the ephah and the bath; further discoveries may give more light on these units of capacity.

Where to Find It

WELL-KNOWN EVENTS

(in approximate order of occurrence)

Creation, Genesis 1-2
 The first sin, or fall, Genesis 3
 Cain kills Abel, Genesis 4
 Noah and the ark, Genesis 6-9
 Sodom and Gomorrah, Genesis 18-19
 Abraham sacrifices Isaac, Genesis 22
 Jacob's ladder, Genesis 28:10-22
 Joseph and the coat, Genesis 37
 Moses' birth, Exodus 2
 Moses and the burning bush, Exodus 3
 Plagues on Egypt, Exodus 7-11
 The exodus, Exodus 12-13
 The Ten Commandments, Exodus 20
 The battle of Jericho, Joshua 6
 Gideon and the fleece, Judges 6-7
 Samson and Delilah, Judges 13-16
 God calls the boy Samuel, 1 Samuel 1-3
 David and Goliath, 1 Samuel 17
 David and Bathsheba, 2 Samuel 11
 Elijah versus the priests of Baal, 1 Kings 18
 The miracles of Elisha, 2 Kings 4-5
 Jonah and the fish, Jonah 1
 Hosea and his adulterous wife, Hosea 1-3
 Ezekiel and the dry bones, Ezekiel 37
 Daniel in the lions' den, Daniel 6
 Birth of Jesus, Luke 1:1-2
 Baptism of Jesus, Mark 1:9-11
 Temptation of Jesus, Luke 4:1-13
 Jesus clears the temple, John 2:12-25
 The transfiguration of Jesus, Matthew 17:1-13
 Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, John 11:1-46
 Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Mark 11:1-11
 Jesus and the widow's offering, Mark 12:41-44
 The Last Supper, Luke 22:7-38
 Jesus washes his disciples' feet, John 13:1-17
 Jesus at Gethsemane, Matthew 26:36-56
 Judas betrays Jesus, Luke 22:1-53
 Peter denies Christ, Luke 22:54-62
 The crucifixion, Matthew 26:57-27:66
 Resurrection and ascension, Luke 24
 Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Acts 2
 Stephen stoned, Acts 6-7
 Paul's conversion, Acts 9:1-31
 Peter's escape from prison, Acts 12:1-19
 Paul and Silas in prison, Acts 16:16-40

MIRACLES OF JESUS

(in biblical order)

Healing of individuals

Man with leprosy, Matthew 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-44; Luke 5:12-14
 Roman centurion's servant, Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10
 Peter's mother-in-law, Matthew 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-39
 Two demon-possessed men from Gadara, Matthew 8:28-34
 Paralyzed man, Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26

Two blind men, Matthew 9:27-31
 Man mute and possessed, Matthew 9:32-33
 Man blind, mute, and possessed, Matthew 12:22
 Canaanite woman's daughter, Matthew 15:21-28
 Boy with epilepsy, Matthew 17:14-18
 Two blind men, Matthew 20:29-34
 Man with a shriveled hand, Matthew 12:9-13; Mark 3:1-5; Luke 6:6-11
 Man with an evil spirit, Mark 1:23-26; Luke 4:33-36
 Deaf mute, Mark 7:31-37
 Blind man, Mark 8:22-26
 Bartimaeus, or one blind man, Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43
 Woman with bleeding, Luke 8:43-48
 Crippled woman, Luke 13:11-13
 Man with dropsy, Luke 14:1-4
 Ten men with leprosy, Luke 17:11-19
 The high priest's servant, Luke 22:50-51
 Royal official's son, John 4:46-54
 Man at the pool of Bethesda, John 5:1-9

Control of nature

Calming of storm, Matthew 8:22-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25
 Feeding of 5,000, Matthew 14:1-21; Mark 6:35-44; Luke 9:12-17; John 6:5-15
 Walking on water, Matthew 14:22-23; Mark 6:45-52; John 6:16-21
 Feeding of 4,000, Matthew 15:29-39; Mark 8:1-9
 Fish with coin, Matthew 17:24-27
 Fig tree withers, Matthew 21:18-22; Mark 11:12-14, 20-25
 Huge catch of fish, Luke 5:1-11; John 21:1-11
 Water into wine, John 2:1-11

Raising the dead

Jairus's daughter, Mark 5:22-42
 Widow at Nain's son, Luke 7:11-15
 Lazarus, John 11:1-44

PARABLES OF JESUS

(in alphabetical order)

Cancelled debts, Luke 7:41-43
 Cost of discipleship, Luke 14:28-33
 Faithful servant, Luke 12:42-48
 Fig tree, Matthew 24:32-35; Mark 13:28-29; Luke 21:29-31
 Good Samaritan, Luke 10:30-37
 The great banquet, Luke 14:16-24
 Growing seed, Mark 4:26-29
 Hidden treasure and pearl, Matthew 13:44-46
 Honor at a banquet, Luke 14:7-14
 Light of the world, Matthew 5:14-15
 Lost coin, Luke 15:8-10
 Lost sheep, Matthew 18:12-14; Luke 15:3-7
 Mustard seed, Matthew 13:31-32
 New wine in old wineskins, Matthew 9:16-17; Mark 2:21-22; Luke 5:36-39
 Net, Matthew 13:47-50
 Obedient servants, Luke 17:7-10
 Persistent friend, Luke 11:5-8
 Persistent widow (unjust judge), Luke 18:2-8
 Pharisee and the tax collector (publican), Luke 18:10-14
 Prodigal (or lost) son, Luke 15:11-32
 Rich fool, Luke 12:16-21
 Rich man and Lazarus, Luke 16:19-31
 Sheep and the goats, Matthew 25:31-46
 Shrewd manager (unjust steward), Luke 16:1-8
 Sower, Matthew 13:1-8, 18-23; Mark 4:3-8, 14-20; Luke 8:5-8, 11-15
 Talents, Matthew 25:14-30
 Tenants, Matthew 21:33-44; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-18
 Ten minas (pounds), Luke 19:11-27
 Ten virgins, Matthew 25:1-13
 Two sons, Matthew 21:28-31

Unfruitful fig tree, Luke 13:6-9
 Unmerciful servant, Matthew 18:23-34
 Watchful servants, Luke 12:35-40
 Wedding banquet, Matthew 22:2-14
 Weeds, Matthew 13:24-30,36-43
 Wise and foolish builders, Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 6:47-49
 Workers in the vineyard, Matthew 20:1-16
 Yeast (leaven), Matthew 13:33; Luke 13:20-21

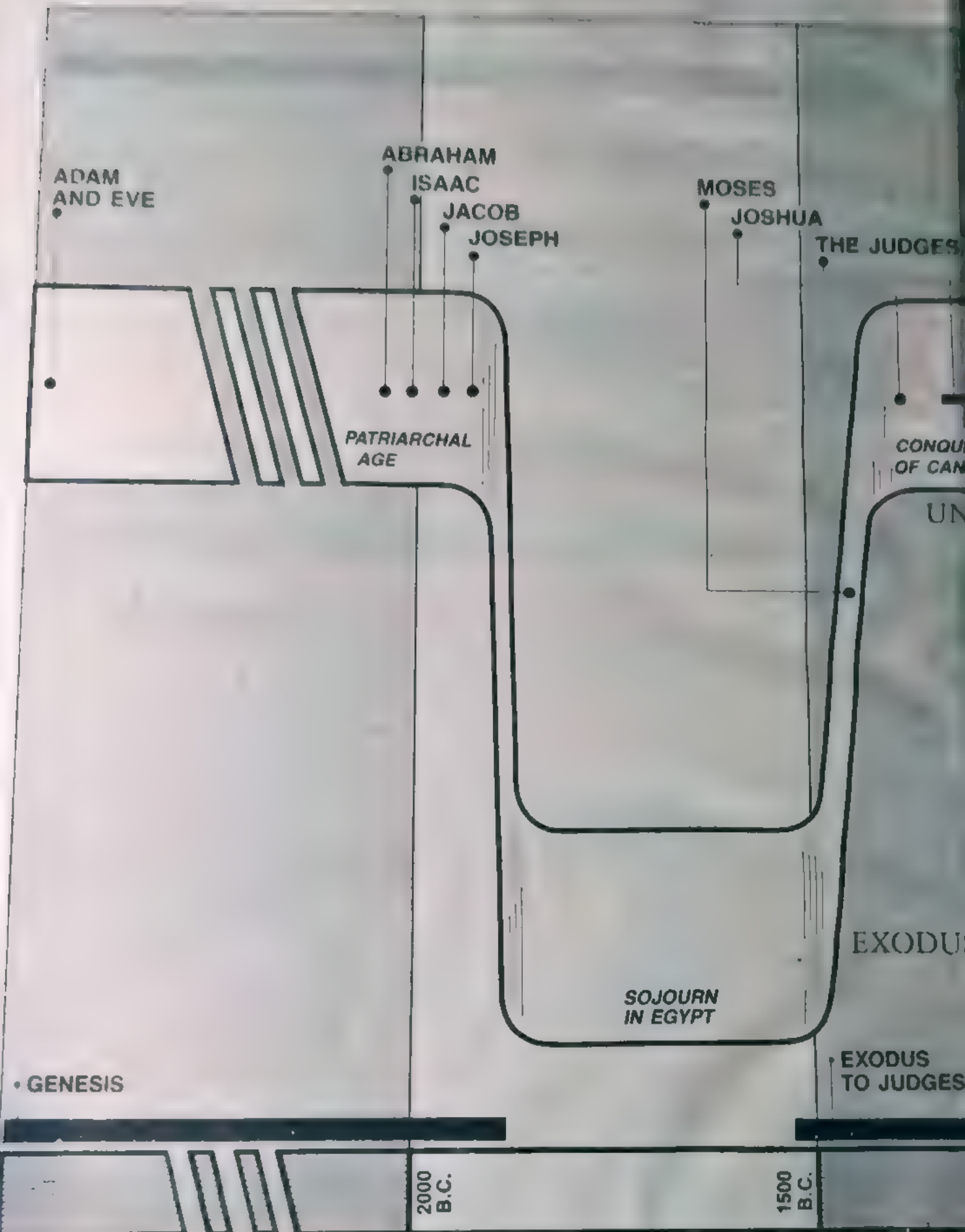
TEACHINGS OF JESUS

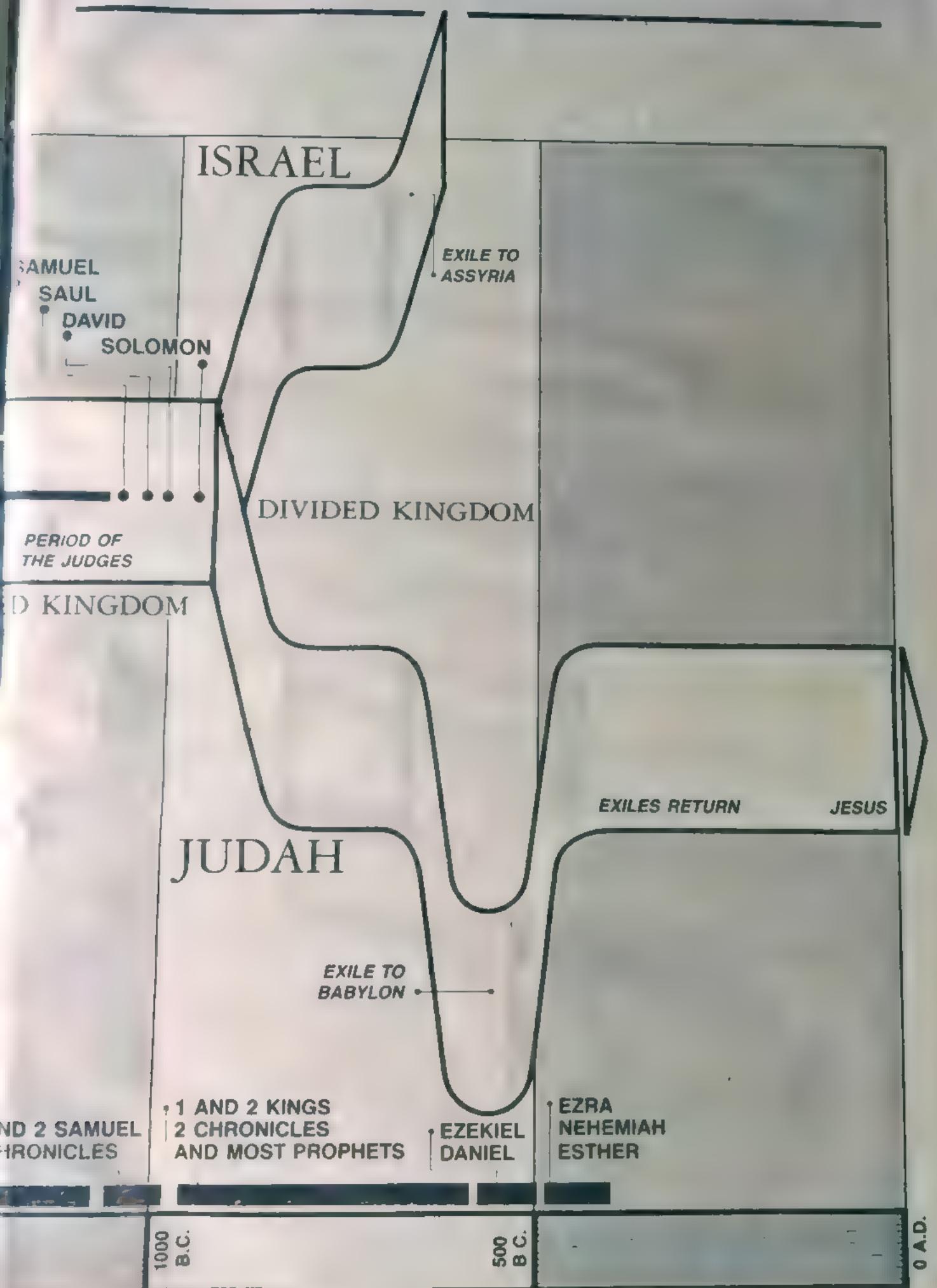
(in alphabetical order)

Beatitudes, Matthew 5:1-12
 Bread of life, John 6:25-59
 Born again, John 3:1-21
 Discipleship, Luke 14:25-35
 Give to Caesar, Mark 12:13-17
 Good shepherd, John 10:1-21
 Golden rule, Luke 6:31
 Greatest commandment, Matthew 22:34-40
 Living water, John 4:1-26
 Lord's prayer, Matthew 6:5-15
 Sending out the Twelve, Matthew 10
 Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7
 Vine and branches, John 15:1-17
 The way, the truth, and the life, John 14:5-14
 Wealth, Matthew 19:16-30
 Worry, Luke 12:22-34

Outline of Old Testament History

This outline emphasizes broad historical periods rather than specific events. Dates, which are often dependent on scholarly interpretation, are approximate.





Subject Guide

The Subject Guide is not a "concordance" that shows where the Bible uses a certain word. Rather, it lists major subjects that may be of interest, along with the Bible passages (not single verses, usually) that speak to these subjects. Topics of pressing interest or major significance have been highlighted within the list. Although we have tried to be comprehensive, any list of subjects must necessarily be restrictive. Subjects like "Jesus" were not included simply because of their size. The titles in quotes refer to Insights or Introductions on the subject.



AARON — brother and spokesman for Moses; became the first high priest with Moses, Exodus 4:10-12:50
made priest, Exodus 28-29
his role with golden calf, Exodus 32

ABEL — Adam's second son; murdered by his brother Cain
life of, Genesis 4:1-9
example of faith, Hebrews 11:1-4

ABORTION — death of a fetus through a medical procedure
penalty for harming fetus, Exodus 21:22-25
unborn life important to God, Psalm 139

ABRAHAM — founder of the Jewish nation
call of, Genesis 11:26-12:20
life of, Genesis 11:26-25:11
and Melchizedek, Genesis 14:18-24
covenant with, Genesis 15:17
and Hagar, Genesis 16
sacrifice of his only son, Genesis 22
"Abraham," p. 13

ABSALOM — third son of David, by Maacah
kills Amnon, 2 Samuel 13-14
rebellion against David, 2 Samuel 15:1-19:8

"Sin As a Cancer," p. 272

ADAM — the first man
life of, Genesis 1:26-5:5
fall of, Genesis 3
Jesus as "second Adam," Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 42-57

ADULTERY — sexual unfaithfulness of a married person
Jesus' views on, Matthew 5:27-32
avoid, Galatians 5:13-26

AFTERLIFE — see RESURRECTION
HEAVEN, HELL

AMBITION — strong desire for success, honor, or power (see also PRIDE, SERVANTHOOD)
results of, Matthew 16:21-27
of disciples, Mark 9:33-37; 10:35-45

ANGELS — heavenly beings created by God
assist people, Genesis 24
execute judgment, Matthew 13:24-50
deliver messages, Luke 1:26-38; 2:8-15
serve in heaven, Revelation 8-9

ANGER

of God:

toward sin, Numbers 11:1-35; Romans 1:18-32

tempered with mercy, Psalm 103
averted through Christ, Romans 5

of human beings:

Jesus' teaching on, Matthew 5:21-26
can lead to sin, Ephesians 4:17-5:2
be slow to, James 1:19-27

as experienced by:

Moses, Exodus 32:15-35

Jonah, Jonah 3-4

Jesus, Mark 2:23-3:6

"Five Dangerous Responses," p. 556

ANTICHRIST — an evil person or power; a false Christ, expected in the end times

prophesied by Daniel, Daniel 11:36-45
Jesus' teaching on, Mark 13:1-37
will be destroyed, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12
qualities of, 1 John 2:18-23; 4:1-6
visions of, Revelation 11-13

ANXIETY

overcome by trust in God, Luke 12:22-34
subdued through prayer, Philippians 4:4-9

APOLLOS — an Alexandrian Jew who preached in Corinth
with Priscilla and Aquilla, Acts 18:24-28
followers of, 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

APOSTLES — title given to the followers of Christ who founded the early church, especially the 12 disciples and Paul

commissioned, Matthew 28:16-20
disciples called, Luke 5:1-11; 6:12-16
replacement for Judas, Acts 1:12-26
received Holy Spirit, Acts 2

ARK OF THE COVENANT — the Israelites' sacred chest containing the tablets of the law
description of, Exodus 25:10-22
represented God's power, 1 Samuel 4-5
David returns it to Jerusalem, 2 Samuel 6:1-15; 1 Chronicles 13:15; 16:1-6

ART — creative expression such as music, dance, painting, sculpture, writing, architecture
ordained by God, Exodus 31:1-11; 35:30-36:2

excellence needed, Psalm 33:1-3
ASCENSION — Christ's rising into heaven after the resurrection
Luke 24:36-53; Acts 1:1-11

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

certainty of God's forgiveness and love
built on trust, Psalm 37
through Christ, Romans 8
produced by faith, 2 Timothy 1:8-12
achieved by obeying God, 1 John 2:28-3:24

ASTROLOGY — seeking information about human events from the stars
(see also **WITCHCRAFT**)
powerless, Isaiah 47:12-15
Daniel discredits, Daniel 2

ATONEMENT — payment for sin;
associated with the Israelites' Day of Atonement, when a blood sacrifice was made for the sins of the nation (see also **SALVATION**, **JUSTIFICATION**)
Hebrew ritual of, Leviticus 16
Christ as our, Romans 3:21-26;
2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Hebrews 9;
1 Peter 2:22-25

BAAL — god of the Phoenicians and Canaanites

worshiped in Israel, 1 Kings 16:29-34;
2 Kings 17:7-23; 21:1-9

defeat by Elijah, 1 Kings 18

"Why All the Fuss about Idols?" p. 328

BACKSLIDING — departure from a life of faith in, and obedience to, God
displeases God, Psalm 78
forgiveness for, Revelation 2:4-5;
3:2-3, 15-21

examples of:

Solomon, 1 Kings 11

Peter, Matthew 26:29-74

BALAAM — man employed by the Moabites to curse the Israelites
stopped by God, Numbers 22-24
death of, Numbers 31:1-24

"Whose Side Is Balaam On?" p. 136

BAPTISM — a water ritual, used as a spiritual symbol (see also **HOLY SPIRIT**, **JOHN THE BAPTIST**)

as sign of repentance, Matthew 3:1-12

as sign of conversion, Matthew 28:16-20

in the early church, Acts 8:26-39

BARABBAS — criminal released by Pilate instead of Jesus
set free, Matthew 27:11-26

BATHSHEBA — committed adultery with David and later married him (see also **DAVID**, **SOLOMON**)

life of, 2 Samuel 11:1-12:25

"Adultery and Murder," p. 267

BEAUTY

inner, 1 Samuel 16:1-13; 1 Peter 3:1-7

of Bathsheba, 2 Samuel 11

of Esther, Esther 2:1-18

BEGGARS — see **POOR**

BIBLE

in praise of, Psalm 19:7-11; Psalm 119

instructs, 2 Timothy 3:14-17

act on, James 1:19-27

BITTERNESS

lingering resentment or anger

avoid, Ephesians 4:29-32

as sin, James 3:13-18

BLOOD — used to represent the life of a creature, often in sacrifices or rituals of cleansing

instructions to Noah about shedding,
Genesis 9:1-6

for purification of priests, Exodus 29
in offerings to God, especially for sin,
Leviticus 1, 3, 4

BLOOD OF CHRIST — shed on the cross as Jesus died

wine as sign of, in the Lord's Supper,
Matthew 26:27-29

as payment for sin, Hebrews 9:11-28

BODY OF CHRIST

signified by bread in the Lord's Supper,
Mark 14:22-24

as metaphor for church, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; "Lessons from the Human Body," p. 989

completely human, Hebrews 2:14-18

BORN AGAIN — spiritual rebirth or conversion (see also **CONVERSION**, **SALVATION**)

necessity of, John 3:1-21

marked by holiness, 1 Peter 1:13-23

CAIN — first son of Adam and Eve;
murdered his brother Abel
life of, Genesis 4:1-26

CALEB — one of 12 spies sent by Moses into promised land

report of, Numbers 13:1-14:38

receives Hebron, Joshua 14:1-15

CALVARY — a place outside Jerusalem where executions occurred

Jesus crucified at, Luke 23:26-43

CANAAN — land God promised to the Israelites; later called Palestine

promised to Abraham, Genesis 15:12-21

Moses can't go in, Deuteronomy 34:1-12
Joshua conquers, Joshua 1-12

CELIBACY — abstaining from marriage
calling to, Matthew 19:4-12
advantages of, 1 Corinthians 7:32-40
not required, 1 Timothy 4:1-5

CHILDREN

should honor parents, Exodus 20:12,
Ephesians 6:1-4

blessed, Mark 10:13-16

CHRIST — see MESSIAH

CHRISTIAN — name given to followers
of Christ

first called Christians, Acts 11:26
how to become, Romans 10:9-13
marks of, Galatians 5:22-26

CHURCH

both the local assemblies of Christians and
the worldwide community of
believers

early, Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37

as body of Christ, 1 Corinthians
12:12-28

Christ's relationship to, Ephesians
4:7-16

"When Everything Goes Wrong,"
p. 986; "Paul's Favorite Church,"
p. 1019

CIRCUMCISION — removal of the
foreskin in males; established by God
to signify his relationship with the
Israelites

sign of covenant, Genesis 17:9-14
no longer necessary, Galatians 5:1-12

COMFORT

in grief, Psalm 23

in trouble, Psalm 46; Romans 8:18-39

when we sin, Psalm 103

when afraid, Isaiah 41:8-20

from Holy Spirit, John 14:1-4, 15-27

share with others, 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

COMMUNION — see LORD'S SUPPER

COMPASSION — to have pity and show
kindness to another

of God, Jonah 3

of Jesus, John 11:17-44

sign of faith, 1 John 3:11-24

CONFESSION — an acknowledgment of
the truth

of Christ

Peter's, Matthew 16:13-20

Thomas's, John 20:24-31

as Lord, Romans 10:9-13

as Son of God, 1 John 4:2-3, 13-16

of sin:

David's, Psalm 51

lost son's, Luke 15:11-32

to one another, James 5:16

to God, 1 John 1:5-2:2

CONFORMITY — to adopt the values
and practices of a group

to wrongdoers, Proverbs 4:10-19

to the world, James 4:1-10, 17

CONSCIENCE — awareness of one's
actions as either right or wrong (see
also CONFESSION, FORGIVENESS)

guilty, Psalm 38

be sensitive to others', Romans 14;

1 Corinthians 8; 10:23-11:1

CONVERSION

to turn away from sin and to God through
repentance and faith (see also

PAUL, BORN AGAIN, SALVATION)

result of God's love, Jeremiah 31:3-14

of Samaritan woman, John 4:1-30, 39-42

of Paul, Acts 9:1-25; "Recruiting from
the Opposition," p. 947

of a jailer, Acts 16:22-34

become new through, 2 Corinthians
5:17-19

by grace, Ephesians 2:1-10

COURAGE

Esther's, "A Profile of Courage," p. 429

Daniel's, "Kidnapped," p. 742

COVENANT — an agreement between
two parties; a solemn promise or vow,
especially between God and people
with Noah, Genesis 9:1-17

with Abraham, Genesis 15; 17:1-14;

"Abraham," p. 13; "Promises,

Promises," p. 21

with Israelites, Exodus 19:3-8, 24;

Deuteronomy 29; "The Covenant,"

p. 68

with David, 2 Samuel 7:1-17

new, 2 Corinthians 2:12-3:18; Hebrews
8:7-13; 10:1-18

COVETING — envious desire for
something that belongs to another (see
also ENVY, GREED)

commandment on, Exodus 20:17

result of, James 4:1-10

CREATION

account of, Genesis 1-2

God revealed through, Psalm 19:1-6; -

Romans 1:18-23

God's delight in, Psalm 104

God's wisdom in, Proverbs 8:12-36

Christ's work in, John 1:1-14; Colossians
1:15-17

"The Beginning," p. 3

CROSS — means by which Jesus died;
also used as a metaphor for
self-sacrifice

take up your, Mark 8:31-9:1

Jesus' crucifixion on, Luke 23:26-49
 "The Killing of a King," p. 849; "The Day
 of Execution," p. 871; "Final Glimpse
 of Jesus," p. 899

CLUTS — see FALSE TEACHERS

D

DANCING

David before the ark, 2 Samuel 6:12-23
 in worship, Psalm 150
 in celebration, Luke 15:22-27
 to manipulate, Matthew 14:1-12

DAVID — Israel's greatest king;
 associated with many of the Psalms
 (see also JONATHAN, SAUL)

life of, 1 Samuel 16-1 Kings 2
 chosen king, 1 Samuel 16
 and Goliath, 1 Samuel 17
 conflict with Saul, "A Sense of God's
 Timing," p. 250
 as king, "The Life of King David," p. 258;
 "A Family Record," p. 347

God's promise to, 2 Samuel 7

and Bathsheba, 2 Samuel 11-12;

"Adultery and Murder," p. 267; "Sin As
 a Cancer," p. 272

confession of, Psalm 51; "David Caught
 in the Act," p. 492

DAY OF THE LORD — a common Old
 Testament phrase for God's final
 victory over evil

"Beyond Darkness," p. 800

DEATH

physical:

unprepared for, Luke 12:13-21

victory over, 1 Corinthians 15

spiritual:

to self, John 12:23-26

to sin, Romans 6:1-23

of Jesus (see CROSS, BLOOD OF
 CHRIST)

"A Matter of Life and Death," p. 566

DEBORAH — one of Israel's greatest
 judges and a prophetess
 delivers Israel, Judges 4
 song of, Judges 5

DEBTS (see also FORGIVENESS, LORD'S
 PRAYER)

compassion to debtors, Exodus 22:25-27

pay promptly, Romans 13:8-10

DELILAH — see SAMSON

DEMONS — powerful evil spirits that can
 possess a person (see also EVIL)

cast out, Matthew 8:28-34

ignore teaching of, 1 Timothy 4:1-10

DEVIL — see SATAN

DISCIPLESHIP — the act of following
 and learning from a teacher, especially
 Jesus

cost of, Luke 14:25-34

evidence of, John 15:1-17

result of love, John 13:1-19

DISCIPLINE — training that teaches
 instructs, corrects

by parents, Proverbs 23:13-26; "How to
 Raise Children," p. 555

by God, Hebrews 12:1-13

DISCOURAGEMENT (see also
 COMFORT)

overcoming, Psalm 42; Psalm 77:1-15,

John 14:1-27; 2 Corinthians

4:7-12, 16-18; "For the Discouraged,"

p. 1010

DIVORCE

Mosaic law on, Deuteronomy 24:1-4

Jesus' teaching on, Matthew 19:1-12,

Mark 10:2-12

Paul's teaching on, 1 Corinthians 7:10-16

DOUBT

(see also FAITH)

of Sarah, Genesis 18:1-15

of Moses, Exodus 4:1-17

of Gideon, Judges 6

of Peter, Matthew 14:22-32

overcoming, Mark 9:14-29

of John the Baptist, Luke 7:18-23

of Thomas, John 20:24-31

DREAMS

interpreted by Joseph, Genesis 37:41

false prophecy through, Jeremiah
 23:25-32

interpreted by Daniel, Daniel 2, 4

at the birth of Jesus, Matthew 2

DRINKING — see WINE, SELF-CONTROL

E

EARTH (see also STEWARDSHIP)

created by God, Genesis 1:1-25

care for, Genesis 1:26-31

exhibits God's love, Psalm 33:1-11

new, 2 Peter 3:3-13; Revelation 21:1-22:5

"The Beauty of Nature," p. 517; "A

Happy Ending after All," p. 1099

ELI — a priest and judge of Israel

life of, 1 Samuel 1-4

ELIJAH — Israelite prophet well known
 for his confrontation with the priests of
 Baal (see also BAAL, ELISHA)

life of, 1 Kings 17-19

with Baal, 1 Kings 18:16-46; "The
 Contest," p. 304

at transfiguration, Luke 9:28-36

"Replacing a Legend," p. 318

ELISHA — prophet who succeeded Elijah

life of, 2 Kings 2-13

and dead child, 2 Kings 4:8-37

heals Naaman, 2 Kings 5:1-27

"Replacing a Legend," p. 318

ENEMY

love for, Luke 6:27-36

"Cries from the Heart," p. 466; "What
 about Curses?" p. 534

ENVY (see also JEALOUSY, GREED)

of Joseph by brothers, Genesis 37
trouble from, James 3:13-4:10

ESAU — son of Isaac and Rebecca; elder
brother of Jacob

Jacob cheats, Genesis 25:19-34; 27:1-
28:9

forgives Jacob, Genesis 33

ETERNAL LIFE

life everlasting with God, which begins at
conversion (see also BORN AGAIN,
CONVERSION, SALVATION,
HEAVEN)

in Psalms, "Life after Death," p. 474

to inherit, Matthew 19:16-30

through rebirth, John 3:1-21

gift of God, Romans 6:15-23

assurance of, 1 John 5:1-15

EVANGELISM — telling and living the
good news of Christ's salvation (see
also MISSIONS)

call to, Matthew 28:16-20

gift of, Ephesians 4:1-16

EVE — the first woman

life of, Genesis 1:26-5:2

temptation of, Genesis 3

EVIL (see also SATAN, SIN)

introduction of, Genesis 3:1-24

repent of, Jeremiah 18:1-12

problem of, Job 1-42; "The Song of the
Cross," p. 477; "The Problem of Evil,"
p. 796

battle with good, "A Look behind the
Scene," p. 1094

EXORCISM — freeing another from
demons, evil spirits

by false prophets, Matthew 7:15-23

by Jesus, Matthew 8:28-34

EZRA — a leader of the Jews who
returned from exile

life of, Ezra 7-10, Nehemiah 8, 12

"Ezra, a Man of the Heart," p. 410



FAITH

trust and reliance on God

live by, Matthew 6:25-34

necessary for salvation, Romans 3:21-
5:11

heroes of, Hebrews 11; "What Is True
Faith?" p. 1056

shown by deeds, James 2:14-26;

"Words Are Not Enough," p. 1059

"When Faith Grows Weary," p. 816;

"Time to Decide," p. 1047

FALSE TEACHERS

"Battling the Cults," p. 1021, "A Threat
from Within," p. 1070, "Who Were the
Gnostics?" p. 1077 "Undesirable
Guests," p. 1079; "Watch Out!" p. 1082

FAME

transience of, Isaiah 14:9-20

unreliability of, Ezekiel 13:30-32

unimportant, 1 Corinthians 3:1-23

FAMILY

relationships within, Ephesians 5:21-6:4;

"Family Battles," p. 38

of God, "For the Discouraged," p. 1010

FASTING — abstinence from food or
drink for a period of time, especially
for spiritual reasons

true, Isaiah 58

Jesus' teaching on, Matthew 6:16-18

disciples', Acts 13:1-3; 14:23

FEAR

fright or alarm; also reverence and awe
for God

of God:

good, Psalm 33

the beginning of wisdom, Proverbs
9:10-12

of others, the future, etc.:

conquering, Isaiah 51:7-16

do not, Jeremiah 1:4-19; Luke 12:4-12

comfort in times of, John 14

"Unlikely Leaders," p. 210; "Five
Dangerous Responses," p. 556

FELLOWSHIP

in church, Ephesians 4:17-5:21

with God, 1 John 1

FESTIVALS — annual periods of worship
in Israel, such as Passover

described, Exodus 12; Leviticus 23:4-43;
Deuteronomy 16; "In Celebration of
God," p. 108

Passover, "Independence Day," p. 60

FLATTERY

displeases God, Psalm 12

FOOD

glorify God through, 1 Corinthians 10:23
-11:1

as god, Philippians 3:19

FORGIVENESS

for sins, Psalm 130

how often, Matthew 18:21-35

through Christ, Colossians 2:6-15;

"A Modern Peace Child," p. 968

examples of:

Joseph, Genesis 45:1-15; 50:15-21

Jesus, Luke 23:26-49

in church, 2 Corinthians 2:5-11

FREEDOM

from law, Romans 8:1-17

in Christ, Galatians 4:21-5:26,

"Legalism," p. 1007

FRIENDSHIP

faithfulness in, Proverbs 27:6,10,17
importance of, Ecclesiastes 4:7-12
with the world, James 4
examples of:

Ruth and Naomi, "A Rare Bond of Love," p. 226
David and Jonathan, 1 Samuel 20
Jesus with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, John 11:1-44

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

defined, Galatians 5:16-26

FUTURE (see also SECOND COMING)

preoccupation with, Matthew 6:25-34;
Luke 12:13-48
uncertain, James 4:13-17
"A Glimpse of Things to Come," p. 634;
"A Happy Ending after All," p. 1099



GABRIEL — an angel who carried messages from God with Daniel, Daniel 8, 9 with Zechariah, Luke 1:5-25 with Mary, Luke 1:26-38

GARDEN OF EDEN

God created, Genesis 2:8-17
expulsion from, Genesis 3

GIDEON — a warrior and leader of Israel
life of, Judges 6-8

"Unlikely Leaders," p. 210

GIFTS — special abilities given to believers through the grace of God
stewardship of, Matthew 25:14-30
use of, Romans 12:3-8
desire for, 1 Corinthians 12-14
God distributes, Ephesians 4:7-13

GIVING

in secret, Matthew 6:1-4
generous, 2 Corinthians 8-9; "Don't Forget the Poor," p. 1000

GOD

his creativity, Genesis 1-2
his name, Exodus 3
his love, Psalm 23
his transcendent holiness, Isaiah 40, "The Book of Purification," p. 87;
"Seeing the Unseen God," p. 700
his revelation in Jesus, John 1:1-18; Colossians 1:15-23

GOLDEN RULE

Jesus gives, Luke 6:27-36

GOSPEL — the "good news"; the message of Christianity

not ashamed of, Romans 1:16-17
account of, Colossians 1:3-23

GOSSIP

error of, Romans 1:29; 2 Corinthians 12:20
"Verbal Dynamite," p. 553

GOVERNMENT

confronting, Exodus 5-14, 2 Samuel 12:1-14; 1 Kings 21
civil disobedience toward, Acts 5:17-42
duty to, Romans 13:1-7
"In the Hands of Tyrants," p. 754

GRACE — the undeserved love and salvation God gives
parable of, Luke 15:11-31
through Christ, Romans 5
for salvation, Ephesians 2

GREED

futility of, Ecclesiastes 5:8-6:12
evil of, 1 Timothy 6:3-10; James 5:1-6

GRIEF — see DISCOURAGEMENT, COMFORT

GUIDANCE

from God's Word, Psalm 119
from God, Psalm 139
from Holy Spirit, John 16:5-16

GUILT

(see also CONFESSION, BACKSLIDING, FORGIVENESS)

overwhelmed by, Psalm 38
acknowledging, Psalm 51
relief from, 1 John 1:5-2:2



HAPPINESS

Jesus' teaching on, Matthew 5:1-12
through servanthood, John 13:1-17
always, Philippians 4:4-9

HEALING

prayers for:
answered, 1 Kings 17:7-24; 2 Kings 5
not answered, 2 Samuel 12:15-25;
2 Corinthians 12:7-10
by Jesus, Matthew 8:1-17; Luke 4:38-41
by disciples, Acts 5:12-16
encouraged, James 5:13-18

HEART — the center of a person; that which gives direction to a person
God knows, 1 Samuel 16:1-13
cleansing of, Psalm 51
leads to action, Matthew 12:33-37

HEAVEN

a place of perfect happiness and eternal communion with God

treasure in, Matthew 6:19-24

for righteous, Matthew 25:31-46

citizenship in, Philippians 3:12-4:1

inhabitants of, Hebrews 11

"Life after Death," p. 474; "A Happy Ending after All," p. 1099

HELL — a place of eternal punishment and sorrow to avoid, Matthew 5:21-10, Romans 8:13

for evil-doers, Matthew 11:24-10, 36-41
punishment in 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12
keep others from, Jude 17-21

HEROD — name of a line of rulers of Palestine

the Great, Matthew 2
Antipas, Matthew 14:1-12
Agrippa I, Acts 12:1-21

HEZEKIAH — king of Judah for 29 years, reopened the temple his father had closed

life of, 2 Kings 18-20
restores worship, 2 Chronicles 29-31
crisis with Isaiah, Isaiah 36-39

HOLY — separated or set apart for God
God's character, Psalm 99
imitate God's holiness, Ephesians 4:17-5:21

The Book of Purification," p. 87;
National Reminders," p. 122

HOLY SPIRIT

the third person of the Trinity; also known as the Comforter, who is active in the lives of believers (see also **FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT**)

comfort from, John 14:15-31

work of, John 16:5-16

the coming of, to the disciples, Acts 2

life through, Romans 8:1-17

in Christians, 1 Corinthians 2:6-16

"The Secret to the Early Church,"
p. 939

HOMOSEXUALITY

result of sin, Romans 1:18-32
listed as sin, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11;
1 Timothy 1:9-11

HONESTY

God desires, Psalm 15

HOPE

without disappointment, Romans 5:1-11
in Christ, Colossians 1:3-27

"A Time for Hope," p. 374; "A New Song," p. 616

HOSPITALITY

Jesus' words on, Luke 14:12-14
responsibility of, Romans 12:13; 1 Peter 4:9

"Undesirable Guests," p. 1079;

"Guidelines for Hospitality," p. 1081

HUMAN BEINGS

creation of, in the image of God,
Genesis 1:26-31

glory of, Psalm 8

"Where We Came From," p. 7

HUMILITY

encouraged, Romans 12:1-21; 1 Peter 5:5-7

of Christ, Philippians 2:1-11

HUSBAND

duty to wife, 1 Corinthians 7:1-5
should love his wife, Ephesians 5:25-31

HYPOCRISY

avoid, Matthew 6:1-24

described, Matthew 23

"A Deceitful Man in God's Family?"

p. 26; "Letting the Inside Match the Outside," p. 829

IDOLATRY — the worship of idols;

putting something before God
commandment against, Exodus 20:3-6
emptiness of, Isaiah 44:6-23
greed is, Colossians 3:5

"The Contest," p. 304; "Why all the Fuss about Idols?" p. 328; "Idolatry," p. 659

INCEST — sexual relations with a family member

forbidden, Leviticus 18:1-18

INFERTILITY

Sarah's, Genesis 18:1-15

Hannah's prayer concerning, 1 Samuel 1:1-2:11

ISAAC — only son of Abraham by Sarah;

born miraculously in their old age

birth predicted, Genesis 18:1-15

as sacrifice, Genesis 22:1-19

marries Rebecca, Genesis 24

blesses sons, Genesis 27

death of, Genesis 35:16-29

ISRAEL — name God gave to Jacob; the father of the Israelite nation (see also **JACOB**)

given name, Genesis 32:22-32

twelve sons of, Genesis 49

ISRAEL — nation of God's chosen

people, composed of 12 tribes, its history makes up much of the Old Testament

future of, Romans 11

"Catastrophes Through God's Eyes,"
p. 599

JACOB — son of Isaac and Rebekah; younger brother of Esau (see also **ISRAEL**)

life of, Genesis 25-49

steals birthright, Genesis 25:19-34

steals blessing, Genesis 27

dream of, Genesis 28:10-22

wrestles God, Genesis 32

"A Deceitful Man in God's Family?" p. 26

JAMES — son of Zebedee; an apostle and brother of apostle John

call of, Matthew 4:18-22

at transfiguration, Matthew 17:1-13

HEALING

of God. *Revelation* 22:15-22
between people. *1 Corinthians* 3:1-23
"The Healing Response," p. 556

BERNARD — city near the Dead Sea,
renowned for Joshua and later rebuilt
by King David. *Joshua* 5:13-14

Israel's healing. *Matthew* 20:29-34

BERLEAF — capital of Israel and a
symbol for a spiritual home as well
often called Zion or the city of God.
David captures. *2 Samuel* 5:6-7
temple built there. *2 Chronicles* 3:1
temple destroyed. *2 Chronicles* 36:18-19

Jerusalem. "A City in Ruins," p. 693
rebuilding of temple. *Ezra* 3:1-6
Jesus' words over. *Luke* 19:28-44

Jerusalem of Christian church. *Acts* 2:14

JERUSALEM — the city of David,
the city of the People Who Refuse to
be ruled.

Jerusalem's struggle with "The
City of David." p. 943
Paul's vision for. *Romans* 9-11

Jerusalem. "The City of David," p. 944

JOHN THE APOSTLE — one of three
disciples closest to Jesus; author of the
Fourth Gospel, three letters, and the
Book of Revelation.

John's baptism. *Mark* 14:32-42

John's baptism. *John* 1:26-27

John's baptism. *John* 1:27

John's baptism. *John* 1:27

JOHN THE BAPTIST — forerunner of
Jesus; preached repentance to prepare
the way for the Messiah.

John's baptism. *Matthew* 11:1-19

John's baptism. *Mark* 1:4-5

John's baptism. *Mark* 1:4-5

John's baptism. *Mark* 1:4-5

John's baptism. *Mark* 1:4-5

JONATHAN — son of King Saul; loyal
friend of David.

Jonathan's death. *Samuel* 31:1-6

Jonathan's death. *Samuel* 31:1-6

Jonathan's death. *Samuel* 31:1-6

JOSPH — son of Rachel and Jacob.

Joseph's death. *Genesis* 50:26

Joseph's death. *Genesis* 50:26

Joseph's death. *Genesis* 50:26

Joseph's death. *Genesis* 50:26

Joseph's death. *Genesis* 50:26

Joseph's death. *Genesis* 50:26

JOY

in salvation. *Isaiah* 12

for repentance. *Luke* 15

fruit of Spirit. *Galatians* 5:13-26

in suffering. *James* 1:2-18; *1 Peter*

4:12-19; "Like a Joy-filled Musical,"

p. 875; "Cheerful Sounds from a Jail

Cell," p. 1016

JUDAS ISCARIOT — the disciple who
betrayed Jesus.

as betrayer. *Matthew* 26:47-56

death of. *Matthew* 27:1-10; *Acts* 1:18-19

as betrayer. *John* 12:1-8

JUDGING OTHERS

Jesus' words on. *Matthew* 7:1-5

with mercy. *James* 2:1-13

JUDGMENT

final. *Matthew* 24:36-25:46

JUSTICE

God executes. *Psalms* 146

as true worship. *Isaiah* 58

justice condemned. *Amos* 5

God wants. *Micah* 6

"Justice," p. 72

JUSTIFICATION — to be freed from

guilt or blame.

by faith. *Romans* 3:21-31; 4:1-5:11

Galatians 2:15-21

K**KING**

Israel asks for. *1 Samuel* 8

Samuel's comments on. *1 Samuel* 12

The First King, p. 237

KINGDOM OF GOD (or KINGDOM

OF HEAVEN) — wherever God is

reigning; also the people experiencing
God's reign.

parables of. *Matthew* 13:18, 20:1-16,

21:28-46; 22:1-14; 25

"What Should a Leader Look Like?"

p. 836

L**LAMB OF GOD** — a title John the

Baptist gave to Jesus.

removes sin. *John* 1:29-42

receives praise. *Revelation* 5

A startling image of Jesus," p. 1089

LAUGHTER

of Sarah. *Genesis* 18:1-15

time for. *Ecclesiastes* 3:1-8

LAW — a set of commandments given by

God.

given to Moses. *Exodus* 19:1-24:8

A National Law Library, p. 104; "Who

Needs Laws?" p. 162

of purification. "An Invisible Danger,"

p. 96

after exile, "A People of the Book,"

p. 422

love for, "A Love Poem to God's Law,"

p. 526

fulfillment of. *Matthew* 5:17-48

in hearts. *Hebrews* 8

not enough for salvation. "No

Second-Class Christians," p. 1004

legalism. "Legalism," p. 1007

LAZARUS — brother of Mary and

Martha, close friend of Jesus.

Jesus raises. *John* 11:1-44

LAZARUS — character in story Jesus told

and the rich man. *Luke* 16:19-31

LAZINESS

warnings against, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15
 "The Problem with Laziness," p. 559

LEADERSHIP

following, Hebrews 13:7-17
 qualities of, 1 Timothy 3:1-10
 "Leaving Moses' Shoes," p. 196; "What Leadership Requires," p. 230; "A Man of Action," p. 415

LEVITE — a descendant of Levi who served God and worked in the temple. (Priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests. Some Levites had lesser duties.)

duties established, Numbers 3,
 1 Chronicles 23-24

LIFE

shortness of, Psalm 39
 saving your, Matthew 16:24-28
 eternal, John 3:16-21, 6:25-69
 living water, John 4:1-26
 "Life after Death," p. 474; "A Matter of Life and Death," p. 566

LIGHT

of the world, Matthew 5:14-16
 Jesus as, John 1:1-18

LION

Samson kills, Judges 14
 Daniel in den, Daniel 6
 Christ as, Revelation 5:1-5

LONELINESS

cry of, Psalm 22
 experienced by:
 Jesus, Matthew 26:36-46
 Paul, 2 Timothy 4:16-18

LORD'S PRAYER

taught, Matthew 6:5-15

LORD'S SUPPER — a ritual sharing bread and wine; also called communion and Eucharist

Jesus began, Luke 22:7-23
 instructions concerning, 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

LOT — nephew of Abraham who settled in the land near Sodom
 parts with Abram, Genesis 13
 in Sodom, Genesis 18:16-19:38

LOVE

between man and woman, "Whom Should You Marry?" p. 545; "An Intoxicating Love," p. 578

of God for his people; "A Lover's Quarrel," p. 646

commanded, Mark 12:28-34

described, 1 Corinthians 13

fruit of Spirit, Galatians 5:13-26

of the world, 1 John 2:15-17

God is, 1 John 4:7-21

LUST — intense desire

sexual, Matthew 5:27-30

"Samson — A Weakness for Women," p. 217
 "Adultery and Murder," p. 267

LYING

penalty for, Leviticus 6:1-7

mark of old nature, Ephesians 4:17-5:21

M

MAGIC see **ASTROLOGY, WITCHCRAFT**

MARRIAGE

(see also **DIVORCE, HUSBAND, WIFE**)

God ordained, Genesis 2:18-25

importance of, Matthew 19:1-12

relationship, Ephesians 5:22-33

Paul's advice on, 1 Corinthians 7

"Whom Should You Marry?" p. 545

MARTHA — sister of Mary and Lazarus;
 friend of Jesus

Jesus in her home, Luke 10:38-42

at Lazarus's death, John 11

MARY — mother of Jesus; wife of Joseph
 Jesus born to, Matthew 1:18-2:23, Luke 1:26-56; Luke 2

concerned for Jesus, Mark 3:20-35

at Jesus' first miracle, John 2:1-11

at crucifixion, John 19:16-27

MEDITATION — see **QUIET TIME**

MELCHIZEDEK — priest and king

blessed Abram, Genesis 14:17-20

pointed to Christ, Psalm 110; Hebrews 5:1-10; 7

"A Mysterious Figure," p. 523

MERCY

of God, Psalm 123; Luke 1:46-79

for the merciful, James 2:12-13

MESSIAH — a king and deliverer
 expected by the Jewish people

prophecies concerning, Psalms 2; 110;

Isaiah 9:1-7; 11; 53; 61; Daniel 7:13-14

Jesus as, Matthew 11:1-6; Luke 4:14-21

"The Song of the Cross," p. 477;

"A Wedding Fit for a King," p. 489; "A

Mysterious Figure," p. 523; "The

Suffering Servant," p. 629

MICHAEL — the archangel appointed to
 guard the Jewish people

with Daniel, Daniel 10, 12

war in heaven, Revelation 12

MILLENNIUM — the Latin word for

"thousand years"; used in connection

with a period in the last days

described, Revelation 20:1-15

MINISTER — one who serves the church
 lifestyle of, 1 Timothy 3-4

instructions for, 2 Timothy 1:8-4:8

"The Hardest Job," p. 1032

MIRACLES — an extraordinary event

done through the power of God

to glorify God, John 11:1-44

lead to belief, John 4:43-54

"Day of the Locusts," p. 56; "When God

Was Obvious," p. 74; "John's Reason

for Writing," p. 914

MIRIAM — prophetess, sister of Moses and Aaron

led singing/dancing, Exodus 15: 19-21
disagreed with Moses, Numbers 12

MISSIONS (see also **EVANGELISM**)

signs and wonders, "Catastrophes Through God's Bless," p. 324

command to, Matthew 28: 19-20

Barnabas and Saul sent, Acts 13: 1-3

Paul's journeys, Acts 13-28

MONEY

teaching, Matthew 19: 16

parable concerning, Luke 12: 1-21

love of, "Timothy," 1: 14

MOSES — used by God to deliver

Israelites from slavery in Egypt; God

gave him the Ten Commandments

see of Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
birth of, Exodus 2

and named, Exodus 3-4

escape from Egypt, Exodus 5-15

received law, Exodus 12-17

wilderness wanderings, Numbers 13-36

death of, Deuteronomy 32

Free at Last, 7: 92 "A Personal Plea
p. 140

MURDER

crime of Abel, Genesis 4

law concerning, Genesis 9: 5-6; Exodus
21: 12; Numbers 35: 16-34

Jesus teaching on, Matthew 5: 21-26

MUSIC

new, encouraged, Psalm 98

in praise, Psalm 150

praises for the living God, p. 482

MYSTERY — something formerly hidden

but now revealed in the gospel

of God, Colossians 1: 24-25

O

OBEEDIENCE

taught after exile, "The Procter Who
Got Results," p. 324

essential for Christian, Luke 2: 46-48

in love, "John," 1: 24

OCCULT

avoid, Leviticus 19: 26-31

OLD AGE

God's concern, Psalm 71

value in, Proverbs 16: 31; 20: 29

ORPHAN

care for, James 1: 27

PAIN

questioning, Job 1-42; Jeremiah 15: 15-21
parable of, p. 14

wiped away, Revelation 21: 4

PARABLE — a story told to illustrate an
idea

purpose of, Matthew 13: 10-17

list of, "Parables of Jesus," pp. 1228-1229

"Living Parables," p. 675 "Handling

Truth," Questions, p. 855

PARENTS

as teachers, Proverbs 1: 8-4: 4

joyful, Ephesians 6: 1-4

"How to Raise Children," p. 555

PAUL — an apostle converted after Jesus
resurrection who had a special mission
of bringing the gospel to the Gentiles;
author of many New Testament letters
to new churches

converted, Acts 9: 1-31 "Recruiting from
the Opposition," p. 947

first missionary journey, Acts 13: 1-14: 28

second missionary journey, Acts 15: 36-

18: 22 "On the Road with the Apostle
Paul," p. 951

third missionary journey, Acts 18: 23-
19: 41

to Rome, Acts 27: 1-28: 31 "Rome at
Last," p. 961

relations with Corinth, "A Book of Joy
and Sadness," p. 954 "A Mysterious
Visit," p. 956

his enemies, "Paul Has Had Enough,"
p. 1001

imprisonment, "Letters from Prison,"
p. 1013 "A Letter from a Death Cell,"
p. 1041

success in ministry, "What Made Paul
Successful," p. 1025

letters to, Romans 1 and 2; Corinthians
Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians,
Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians,
1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon

N

NAZIRITE — Israelite consecrated to
God for special service

described, Numbers 6: 1-21 "National
Reminders," p. 122

NEBUCHADNEZZAR — ruler of

Babylonian Empire who destroyed

Jerusalem and took Jews into captivity

takes Jerusalem, 2 Kings 25: 1-26

with Daniel, Daniel 1-4

NEHEMIAH — a leader of the Jews who
returned from exile

see of "A Man of Action," p. 415

NEIGHBOR

identification of, Luke 10: 25-37

NICODEMUS — important Pharisee

attracted to Jesus

talks to Jesus, John 3: 1-21

helps in Jesus' burial, John 19: 38-
40

NINEVEH — important city in Assyria

repentance of, Jonah 3-4

destruction predicted, Nahum

NOAH

ark and flood, Genesis 6-8

covenant with, Genesis 9

PEACE

seek, Psalm 34:11-14; Colossians 3:15;
1 Peter 3:8-12
in the kingdom of God, Isaiah 2:1-5
Prince of, Isaiah 9:1-7
Jesus gives, John 14:25-27
with God, Romans 5:1-11
fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5:13-26
Jesus Christ is, Ephesians 2:14-18
coming from God, Philippians 4:4-9

PENTECOST — Jewish holiday, also called the Feast of Weeks
instituted, Leviticus 23:15-21
Holy Spirit given during, Acts 2

PERSECUTION

rejoice in, Matthew 5:11-12; James 1:1-18; 1 Peter 4:12-19
help in, Romans 8:28-39
patience in, James 5:7-11; 1 Peter 3:8-22
"The Danger in Being a Christian," p. 943; "A Word to the Suffering," p. 1064

PETER

one of the disciples closest to Jesus (and the one most frequently mentioned in the Gospels); a strong leader in the early church

call of, Matthew 4:18-22
denied Christ, Matthew 26:31-75
reinstated, John 21
in early church, Acts 2:1-5:42
vision of, Acts 10:1-11:18
as source for Gospel of Mark, "Eyewitness Reports," p. 861
changes in him, "A Man Named 'The Rock,'" p. 1067

PHARAOH — title of ancient Egyptian rulers
with Joseph, Genesis 39-41
with Moses, Exodus 1-15
"Free at Last," p. 50

PHARISEES — a strict Jewish sect; careful observers of the law, known for their piety
Jesus confronted, Matthew 23; Mark 7:1-23; Luke 11:37-54
parable concerning, Luke 18:9-14
Paul's history, Acts 23:6-11
'Out to Destroy Jesus,' p. 842

PHILIP — an evangelist of the early church
with eunuch, Acts 8:26-40

PHILISTINES — people who migrated to and lived in an area of Canaan during Old Testament times and who frequently warred with Israelites

Samson fights, Judges 13:1-16:31
David fights, 1 Samuel 17:1-58;
1 Chronicles 14:8-17

PILATE — a Roman ruler in Palestine during Jesus' lifetime
with Jesus, John 18:28-19:22

PLEASURE

eternal, Psalm 16
God's, Psalm 147:10-11
earthly, Ecclesiastes 2:1-16

POLITICS — see GOVERNMENT

POOR

God's care for, Deuteronomy 10:17-19; 24:19-22; Luke 1:39-56
responsibility to, Deuteronomy 15:1-11
oppression of, Amos 2:6-16
Jesus' identification with, Matthew 25:31-46
equal treatment of, James 2:1-13
"What Makes People Poor?" p. 552;
"A Physician Looks at the Poor," p. 881; "Conflicts of Rich and Poor," p. 1063

POPULARITY

seeking, Philippians 2:1-11
judging by, James 2:1-13

POWER (see also MIRACLES)

of God, 1 Chronicles 29:10-13; Ephesians 1:15-23
of the gospel, Romans 1:16-17
seeking, Philippians 2:1-11

PRAISE

God worthy of, Psalm 18, Revelation 4-5
for Christ and salvation, Ephesians 1:3-14

PRAYER

communication with God

answered, Psalm 34
Jesus' teaching on, Matthew 6:5-15; 7:7-12; Luke 18:1-14
submission in, Matthew 26:36-46
confidence in, John 15:1-8
Jesus', for disciples, John 17
Paul's, Romans 1:8-12; Ephesians 1:15-19; 3:14-18; Colossians 1:9-14
when suffering, Romans 8:18-27
for wisdom, James 1:5-7
answer different from request, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

PREDESTINATION — doctrine that God chooses those he wishes to save in foreknowledge, Romans 8:28-30
in love, Ephesians 1:3-14

PRIDE (see also **HUMILITY**)

God will humble, Isaiah 2:10-22
to avoid, Romans 12

God opposes, James 4:4-6

Five Dangerous Responses," p. 556

PRIEST — one designated to perform sacred rites and act as an intermediary between people and God (see also **AARON**, **MELCHIZEDEK**)

Old Testament, Exodus 28-29, 39,
Leviticus 8-10

Jesus as, Hebrews 4:14-5:10

Christians as, 1 Peter 2:4-12

PRISON (see also **PAUL**)

visit those in, Matthew 25:31-46

Peter's escape from, Acts 12:1-19

PROFANITY

command against, Exodus 20:7;

Ephesians 4:29-32

dangerous effects, James 3:1-12

PROMISE (see also **COVENANT**)

Christ's, John 14

believing, Romans 4:13-25

God's, Hebrews 6:13-20; 7:18-8:13

PROPHECY — an inspired revelation about future events (see also **MESSIAH**, **MILLENNIUM**, **SECOND COMING**)

gift of, 1 Corinthians 12:1-14:25

Revelation's Use of Symbols," p. 1091

PROSTITUTION — sexual intercourse engaged in for money

condemned, Leviticus 19:29

warning against, Proverbs 6:20-35

Q

QUIET TIME — a period set aside for prayer, meditation, and Bible study

for renewal, Psalm 119:9-48

practiced by Jesus, Matthew 14:22-23;

Luke 5:15-16; 6:12-13

to overcome temptation, Mark 14:32-38

for strength, Ephesians 6:10-20

R

RACHEL — favored wife of Jacob;
mother of Joseph and Benjamin

lile of, Genesis 29:14-31:55; 35:16-20

The Women of the Bible," p. 29

RACISM — belief that one race is superior to others

abolished in Christ, Galatians 3:26-

4

RAHAB — a prostitute who helped the Israelites capture Jericho

took in spies, Joshua 2, 6

example of faith, James 2:25-26

RAPE — sexual intercourse forced on one person by another

penalty for, Deuteronomy 22:25-29

at Sodom, Genesis 19:1-8

at Gibeah, Judges 19:16-28

of Tamar, 2 Samuel 13

REBEKAH — wife of Isaac; mother of Esau and Jacob

marries Isaac, Genesis 24

helps Jacob, Genesis 25:19-34; 27:1-28:9

REBELLION

against God, Romans 1:18-32

against authority, 1 Peter 2:13-25

"When God Was Obvious," p. 74; "Forty Years of Misery," p. 114

RECONCILIATION — to settle

differences; to be in harmony again

between people, Matthew 5:23-26;

Philippians 4:2-3

to God, 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2;

Ephesians 2:11-22

REDEEMER — one who frees or rescues another, especially from sin

God as, Isaiah 54:1-8

Christ as, Hebrews 9:11-14

"A Modern Peace Child," p. 968

RELIGION

true, Matthew 22:34-40

pure, James 1:26-27

REPENTANCE

to feel sorry for and turn from sins; a common theme of Old Testament prophets

preached by Jesus, Matthew 4:12-17

parable concerning, Luke 18:9-14

preached by Peter, Acts 2:38-41

RESPONSIBILITY

for sin, Ezekiel 18

to love others, 1 John 3:11-24

REST

day of, Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8

for weary, Matthew 11:25-30

RESURRECTION

of Jesus, Matthew 27:57-28:20; "Final

Glimpses of Jesus," p. 899; "More than a Ghost," p. 936

of the dead, 1 Corinthians 15; "The Worst Danger of All," p. 992

REVENGE

do not take, Matthew 5:38-47; Romans 12:17-21

REWARD

in heaven, Matthew 5:3-12; Mark

10:29-31; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15

RICHES — see **WEALTH**, **MONEY**, **POOR**

ROME — capital of the Roman Empire;

ruled Palestine during the time of

Christ; a church was started here

Paul travels to, Acts 27:1-28:31

letter to church in, Romans; "A Most Demanding Audience," p. 964

S

SABBATH — a day of worship and rest;

traditionally Saturday for Jews

keep holy, Ezekiel 20:1-29

made for people, Mark 2:23-3:6

SACRIFICE — offering of something valuable to God
 Cain's and Abel's, Genesis 4:1-4
 Noah's, Genesis 8:20-22
 Abraham's, Genesis 22:1-19
 under law, Leviticus 1-7, "The Reason for Sacrifice," p. 91
 Christ as, Isaiah 53; Hebrews 10
 our lives as, Romans 12:1-2
SADDUCEES — a small but powerful Jewish sect in Christ's time; denied life after death and the spirit world
 Jesus warns against, Matthew 16:1-12
 opposed early church, Acts 4:1-22, 13:1-42
 opposed Paul, Acts 23:1-11

SALVATION

deliverance from danger or evil; especially deliverance from all that separates people from God (see also **CONVERSION**, **JUSTIFICATION**, **REPENTANCE**)

Jesus' mission of, Luke 19:1-10
 through belief, Acts 16:16-34
 for everyone, Romans 10:1-13
 through grace, Ephesians 2:1-10

SAMARITAN — an inhabitant of Samaria, a people held in contempt by the Jews
 woman with Jesus, John 4:1-42
 the good, Luke 10:25-37

SAMSON — one of the last judges of Israel, a Nazirite known for his physical strength
 life of, Judges 13-16
 and Delilah, Judges 16
 Samson: A Weakness for Women," p. 217

SAMUEL — the last of the judges of Israel

early years, 1 Samuel 1:1-3:21
 leads Israel, 1 Samuel 5:1-8:22
 with Saul, 1 Samuel 9:1-15:35
 anoints David, 1 Samuel 16:1-13
 man of faith, Hebrews 11:32

What Leadership Requires," p. 230

SANCTIFICATION — process by which a believer conforms more and more to the image of Christ

Christ's power in, 2 Peter 1:3-11
 by pressing on, Philippians 3:12-4:1

SANHEDRIN — highest Jewish court during Roman times

Jesus before, John 18
 Apostles before, Acts 4:1-22; 5:17-42
 Paul before, Acts 23:1-11

SARAH — wife of Abraham, gave birth to Isaac in her 90s

life of, Genesis 11:29-12:20; 16:1-18:15; 23:1-25:1-26

The Women of the Bible," p. 29

SATAN — the enemy of God; also called the devil, Lucifer, Beelzebub
 tempts Eve, Genesis 3

torments Job, Job 1-2
 tempts Jesus, Matthew 4:1-11
 father of lies, John 8:42-47
 resist, 1 Peter 5:8-11
 children of, 1 John 2:28-3:10
 final victory over, Revelation 20

SAUL — the first king of Israel, became extremely jealous of David
 early days as king, 1 Samuel 9:1-15
 and David, 1 Samuel 16:1-30:35
 death of, 1 Samuel 31:1-13
 "Why Saul Was Rejected," p. 243

SAVIOR — one who rescues from danger or saves; used in connection with Christ
 prophecy concerning, Isaiah 59:15-21
 Jesus as, Acts 13:13-52

SECOND COMING

the belief that Christ will come again as king

Jesus' teaching on, Matthew 24; John 14:1-4; Acts 1:6-8

with resurrection, 1 Corinthians 15:12-28

unexpected, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

"Preparing for the End," p. 1028;
 "A Patient Who Didn't Follow Orders," p. 1029; "A Book Full of Mysteries," p. 1084

SELF-CONTROL

fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5:22-23

importance of, 2 Peter 1:3-11

"Athlete in Training," p. 1035

SELFISHNESS — see AMBITION

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

words of, Matthew 5-7

SEX

joy in, Song of Songs; "An Intoxicating Love," p. 578

self-control, "Samson: A Weakness for Women," p. 217

adulterous, Proverbs 5; 6:20-7:27

in marriage, Proverbs 5:15-20;

1 Corinthians 7:1-7

avoid immoral, 1 Corinthians 6:9-20;
 Colossians 3:5-6

SHEPHERD

comfort of, Psalm 23

bad, Jeremiah 23:1-4

God as, Ezekiel 34

at Jesus' birth, Luke 2:8-20

Jesus as good, John 10:1-21 — A Good Shepherd," p. 920

SIN

ALL THE FAULT-FINDING
CONCEALING

Adam's and Eve's, Genesis 3

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

A Sinner in Christ, p. 1-2 "Adultery

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

SINAI — name of the mountain where
the Lord spoke to Moses

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

the Lord's, Psalm 139:1-4

SUFFERING

to endure physical or emotional loss and
pain (see also COMFORT)

DISCOURAGEMENT PAIN

the problem of Job 1-2, "When Bad

Things Happened to a Good

Person" p. 11 "What Not to Say

to a Suffering Person" p. 113 "What

Job Teaches about Suffering,"

p. 4-6

God knows our Psalm 69

God's presence in Psalm 139

Christ's 1 Peter 2:13-25

for doing right 1 Peter 3:12-19

"The Song of the Cross" p. 4-7 "New

King New Kingdom," p. 81-2

SUTHER — see also SAUL JUDAS
PASCARIOT

John's saved from Acts 16:22-36

SWEARING — taking an oath making a
solemn promise (see also PROFANEITY)

Jesus teaching on Matthew 5:33-37

TABERNACLE — place of worship for
Israelites from the time of the
wilderness experience to the
completion of the temple when
Solomon was king

building instructions Exodus 25-26

A Portable Cathedral p. 81

spiritual Hebrews 9

TAXES

Jesus response to Matthew 22:15-22

Paul's words on, Romans 13:1-7

TEMPLE — the Israelite place of
worship the first and most
magnificent was built by Solomon
Solomon's 1 Kings 5-8

rebuilt Ezra 1-6

Ezekiel's vision Ezekiel 40-43 "The
Turning Point" p. 7-8

moneychangers in John 2:12-25

heavenly Hebrews 8:1-12 Revelation
21-22

TEMPTATION

something that tests a person's strength of character and righteousness

Jesus' temptation, Luke 4:1-13

a way out, 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

resist, Ephesians 6:10-20

origin of, James 1:13-18

TEN COMMANDMENTS — the moral laws given to Moses by God
Moses receives, Exodus 19-20
Moses repeats, Deuteronomy 5
Jesus enlarges, Matthew 5-7

THANKFULNESS

for God's care, Psalm 30

Paul's, Ephesians 1:15-23; Philippians 1:3-8; 4:10-20; Colossians 1:3-7
express, Colossians 3:15-17

THOMAS — one of the 12 disciples, called "doubting Thomas"
courage of, John 11:1-16
doubt of, John 20:19-31

TIMOTHY — helper to Paul on missionary journeys; while still a young man he took on the responsibilities of guiding the church in Ephesus

with Paul, Acts 16:1-5

letters to, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy

"Passing the Torch," p. 1038

TITHE — a tenth of one's income that is given to God

Old Testament command, Leviticus 27:30-33

not enough, Luke 11:42; 18:9-14

Abraham's, Hebrews 7:1-10

TONGUE

control of, James 3:1-12

"Verbal Dynamite," p. 553

TONGUES — God-given gift of praise in other languages

early church, Acts 2:1-13; 10:44-48

orderly use of, 1 Corinthians 12-14

TRIALS — tests or ordeals that people go through

perseverance through, James 1:2-18

refine faith, 1 Peter 1:3-9

TRIBULATION — trouble in one's life; often associated with the Great Tribulation, a period of suffering sent by God in the end times

prophesied, Daniel 12:1-4

Jesus' teaching on, Matthew 24

survivors of, Revelation 7:9-17

TRINITY — the Christian doctrine of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three-in-one

in name of, Matthew 28:16-20

in salvation, Titus 3:3-8

TRUST — see FAITH

TRUTH

worship in, John 4:19-26

Jesus is, John 14:5-14

U

UNITY

goodness of, Psalm 133

Jesus' prayer for, John 17

in Christ, Ephesians 4:1-16

V

VINE

used figuratively for the kingdom of God, Psalm 80:8-18; Isaiah 5:1-7; John 15:1-17

VIRGIN BIRTH — the birth of Jesus Christ while his mother Mary was a virgin

described, Luke 1:26-38

VISIONS — revelations; things seen through something other than ordinary sight

Isaiah's, Isaiah 6

Ezekiel's, Ezekiel 1-3; 37:1-14

in last days, Joel 2:28-32

of Peter, Acts 10:1-11.18

of John, Revelation

W

WAR (see also PEACE)

holy, "Is a War Ever Holy?" p. 190

Israel's strategy, "Lessons from the Battlefield," p. 385

God's deliverance in, Psalm 79

will end, Isaiah 2:1-5

WEALTH (see also MONEY, POOR)

Solomon's, "The Man Who Had Everything," p. 283

arrogance in, Amos 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 6:3-19

Jesus' teaching on, Matthew 19:16-30

no favoritism toward, James 2:1-13

"Healthier, Wealthier, and Wiser,"

p. 156; "What Makes People Poor?" p. 552

WIDOW — a woman whose husband is dead; in ancient Israel a husband's death usually brought poverty and powerlessness

special to God, Exodus 22:22-24;

Deuteronomy 24:17-22

example of, Ruth 1-4

in the church, 1 Timothy 5:3-16;

1 Corinthians 7:8-9

WIFE (see also HUSBAND, MARRIAGE)

virtuous, Proverbs 31:10-31

relationship to husband, Ephesians 5:21-33

WILL OF GOD

submission to, Matthew 26:36-46

discovering, Romans 12:1-8

WINE

drunkenness from, Proverbs 23:29-35; Ephesians 5:18

in the Lord's Supper, Matthew 26:17-30

water into, John 2:1-11

WISDOM — practical insight; the skill of living successfully
 praise of, Proverbs 1:20-4:27; 8:1-9:18
 spiritual, 1 Corinthians 2:6-16; James 1:5-8
 "The Supreme Gift of Wisdom,"
 p. 561

WITCHCRAFT

displeases God, Leviticus 20:6-7;
 Galatians 5:19-21
 Saul's consulting, 1 Samuel 28
 inadequacy of, Isaiah 8:19-22

WORD OF GOD

Jesus as, John 1:1-18
 sharper than a sword, Hebrews 4:12-13

WORK (see also REST, SABBATH)

God's, Psalm 104:24-32
 satisfaction in, Isaiah 28:23-29;
 Ecclesiastes 2:17-26
 importance of, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15

WORKS — actions or accomplishments, often in the sense of attempts to please God through moral living (see also FAITH)

not for salvation, Ephesians 2:1-10
 outgrowth of faith, James 2:14-26;
 "Words Are Not Enough," p. 1059

WORLD — values, ideas, practices, and relationships of the culture at-large, especially those that are not God-directed

conforming to, Romans 12:1-8
 friendship with, James 4:1-12

WORRY — see ANXIETY

WORSHIP

giving reverence and honor to God (see also PRAISE, PRAYER)

commanded, Deuteronomy 6:13-17;

Matthew 4:10

foundations of Israel's, "Hope in a Time of Sorrow," p. 358

with joy, Psalm 100

true, Amos 5:18-27

instructions, 1 Corinthians 11-14

Y

YOUTH (see also CHILDREN)

remember God in, Ecclesiastes 11:7-12:7
 be example in, 1 Timothy 4:11-16

Z

ZACCHAEUS — a tax collector from Jericho

meets Jesus, Luke 19:1-10

ZION — one of the hills on which

Jerusalem stood, also used to refer to all Jerusalem, to the Jewish people, or to heaven (see also JERUSALEM, HEAVEN)

David captures, 2 Samuel 5:6-16
 as heaven, Hebrews 12:22-29

ABBREVIATIONS FOR THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

| | | | |
|---------------|------|-----------------|------|
| Genesis | Ge | Nahum | Na |
| Exodus | Ex | Habbakuk | Hab |
| Leviticus | Lev | Zephaniah | Zep |
| Numbers | Nu | Haggai | Hag |
| Deuteronomy | Dt | Zechariah | Zec |
| Joshua | Jos | Malachi | Mal |
| Judges | Jdg | Matthew | Mt |
| Ruth | Ru | Mark | Mk |
| 1 Samuel | 1Sa | Luke | Lk |
| 2 Samuel | 2Sa | John | Jn |
| 1 Kings | 1Ki | Acts | Ac |
| 2 Kings | 2Ki | Romans | Ro |
| 1 Chronicles | 1Ch | 1 Corinthians | 1Co |
| 2 Chronicles | 2Ch | 2 Corinthians | 2Co |
| Ezra | Ezr | Galatians | Gal |
| Nehemiah | Ne | Ephesians | Eph |
| Esther | Est | Philippians | Php |
| Job | Job | Colossians | Col |
| Psalms | Ps | 1 Thessalonians | 1Th |
| Proverbs | Pr | 2 Thessalonians | 2Th |
| Ecclesiastes | Ecc | 1 Timothy | 1Ti |
| Song of Songs | SS | 2 Timothy | 2Ti |
| Isaiah | Isa | Titus | Tit |
| Jeremiah | Jer | Philemon | Phm |
| Lamentations | La | Hebrews | Heb |
| Ezekiel | Eze | James | Jas |
| Daniel | Da | 1 Peter | 1Pe |
| Hosea | Hos | 2 Peter | 2Pe |
| Joel | Joel | 1 John | 1Jn |
| Amos | Am | 2 John | 2Jn |
| Obadiah | Ob | 3 John | 3Jn |
| Jonah | Jnh | Jude | Jude |
| Micah | Mic | Revelation | Rev |

Dictionary-Concordance

Dictionary-Concordance

Aaron—the brother of Moses; he served as Moses' spokesman before Pharaoh (Ex 4:14-16, 27-31; 7:1-2); Israel's first high priest (Ex 28:1; Nu 17; Heb 5:1-4).

Abba—the word for *father* in Aramaic, one of the three languages Jesus spoke.

Ro 8:15 And by him we cry "A, Father."

Gal 4:6 the Spirit who calls out, "A, Father"

Abel—the second son of Adam (Ge 4:2); he offered the proper sacrifice to God (Ge 4:4; Heb 11:4), but was murdered by his brother Cain (Ge 4:8; Mt 23:35; 1Jn 3:12).

abhor—to hate or to turn away from

Abigail—the wife of Nabal; she helped save David's life (1Sa 25:14-35) and later became his wife (1Sa 25:36-42)

abolish—to destroy completely; to put an end to

abomination—a thing to be hated.

abound—to be more than enough; to overflow

Abraham—the father of the Jewish nation. God established a covenant with him in which God promised that he would make a mighty nation of Abraham's children and would give them the land of Canaan (Ge 15; 17; 22; Ro 4; Heb 6:13-15). A son, Isaac, was born to Sarah and Abraham in their old age (Ge 17:16; 18:9-15; 21:1-7; Heb 11:11-12). Later, as a test, God told him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice (Ge 22; Heb 11:17-19) but withdrew this command when Abraham showed that he would trust the Lord even in this matter

Absalom—a son of David (2Sa 3:3); he fled from Israel after murdering his half-brother Amnon (2Sa 13). Upon his return, he plotted to take David's throne. He met death when his long hair became entangled in an oak tree and Joab, David's commander, thrust javelins into his heart (2Sa 14-18).

abstain—to keep yourself from doing something

accordance—agreement.

accredited—officially approved.

accursed—to be condemned or doomed by a curse

Achan—an Israelite who kept spoil from the conquest of Jericho for himself; as a result of Achan's stealing what belonged to God, the Israelites were defeated at Ai and he and his family were stoned to death (Jos 7; 22:20)

acknowledge—to know and to say that something is true

acquit—to free from punishment or blame.

acts—deeds.

Ps 150:2 Praise him for his *a* of power

Isa 64:6 all our righteous *a* are like filthy

Adam—the first man God created (Ge 1:26-2:25); he sinned by disobeying God (Ge 3) thereby bringing all people under the curse of sin (Ro 5:12-21)

admonish—to give warning or advice in a caring way.

adorn—to make more beautiful.

adultery—having sexual relations with someone other than one's husband or wife.

Ex 20:14 You shall not commit *a*

Mt 5:28 lustfully has already committed *a*

adversary—enemy; opponent.

advocate—1. (*v.*) to speak in favor of. 2. (*n.*) someone who speaks in another person's defense. Jesus is our advocate.

affliction—trouble or pain that lasts a long time.

Ro 12:12 patient in *a*, faithful in prayer.

afterthought—thought about or planned ahead of time

Ahab—a wicked king of Israel; the husband of Jezebel (1Ki 16:31). He caused Israel to worship Baal rather than God (1Ki 16:31-33) and was opposed by God's prophet Elijah (1Ki 17:1; 18; 21).

alabaster—a hard marblelike material that can be made into jars, vases or sculptures.

alien—a foreigner or stranger.

Ex 22:21 "Do not mistreat an *a*

Eph 2:19 no longer foreigners and *a*, but fellow citizens

1Pe 2:11 as *a* and strangers in the world

alienate—to make unfriendly; to turn a person's interest or affection away from another person or thing.

allot—to divide and give away in parts. In Old Testament times the land of Canaan was allotted to the twelve tribes of Israel.

Almighty—a name used to show how strong and powerful God is.

Ge 17:1 "I am God *A*; walk before me

Isa 6:3 "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord *A*

altar—a raised platform, made of stones, metal, dirt or wood, on which sacrifices were made.

Amen—So be it; Let it become true.

Ananias—1. the husband of Sapphira, he was struck dead for lying to God (Ac 5:1-11). 2. the disciple who baptized Saul (Ac 9:10-

19); 3. the high priest before whom Paul was tried in Jerusalem (Ac 22:30-24:1)

Ancient of Days—a name for God that was often used to tell of his wisdom and dignity

Andrew—one of the twelve apostles, the brother of Peter (Mt 4:18, 10:2; Ac 1:13)

angel—a heavenly being

Is 34:7 The *a* of the Lord encamps

Heb 1:14 Are not all *a* ministering spirits

Heb 2:7 made him a little lower than the

1Pe 1:12 Even *a* long to look

annals—historical writings.

annihilate—to destroy completely.

anoint—to pour oil on a person's head.

antichrist—a person who is against Christ.

1Jn 2:18 have heard that the *a* is coming

1Jn 2:22 *a* man is the *a*—he denies

anxiety—worry.

1Pe 5:7 Cast all your *a* on him

Apollos—a Christian from Alexandria who knew the Scriptures well (Ac 18:24-28) and helped Paul to minister in Corinth (Ac 19:1; 1Co 1:12)

apostle—1. the twelve men Jesus chose to work with him during his earthly ministry; after being equipped by the Holy Spirit, they were sent out to preach about Jesus; The twelve are: Andrew, James the son of Alphaeus, James the son of Zebedee, John, Judas Iscariot, Matthew, Nathanael (Bartholomew), Peter, Philip, Simon, Thaddaeus (Judas), and Thomas. 2. later, someone who had been with Jesus, had seen his miracles and then taught others about him.

Mk 3:14 twelve—designating them *a*—

1Co 12:28 God has appointed first of all *a*

1Co 15:9 For I am the least of the *a*

aqueduct—a channel for bringing water from one place to another.

Aquila—the husband of Priscilla; Aquila and Priscilla were co-workers with Paul in Corinth (Ac 18, Ro 16:3).

Aramaic—the main language used in the countries east of the Mediterranean Sea during Jesus' earthly ministry.

archangel—an angel of high rank; a leader of other angels.

archives—the official records of a government

ark of the Testimony—a large gold-covered box housed in the Tabernacle, with two gold cherubim on its lid. It contained the Ten Commandments (Tablets of Testimony), a jar of manna and Aaron's staff, and was kept inside the Most Holy Place in the Tent of Meeting. It was a sign to the Israelites of God's presence with them, and was also the

place where God revealed to his people through the priests, what was his will for them

Armageddon—the site of the final battle between God and Satan

Rev 16:16 that in Hebrew is called *A*

armor—protective clothing worn in battle, usually made of metal

Eph 6:11 Put on the full *a* of God

Arrogant—proud, conceited

ascend—to go up. Jesus ascended to heaven to return to God the Father.

ascribe—to think of as caused by, coming from or belonging to

1Ch 16:28 *a* to the Lord glory and strength

assert—to say positively

astray—mistaken; not on the right path; lost.

atone—to make right, by paying the penalty, the relationship between God and humans that we broke through sin. In the Old Testament people atoned symbolically for their sins by offering sacrifices to God. In the New Testament Jesus corrected the relationship between God and people once and for all by dying for our sins.

atonement—the payment that corrects the relationship between God and humans that we broke through sin

Lev 17:11 it is the blood that makes *a*

Lev 23:27 this seventh month is the Day of *A*.

Ro 3:25 presented him as a sacrifice of *a*,

Heb 2:17 that he might make *a* for the sins

authority—the right and power to give orders.

Mt 9:6 the Son of Man has *a* on earth

Mt 28:18 "All *a* in heaven and on earth has

Ro 13:1 for there is no *a* except that which

Heb 13:17 your leaders and submit to their *a*

avenge—to get back at or punish someone who has done wrong

Dt 32:35 It is mine to *a*, I will repay.

awe—respect and wonder; a holy fear of God because of his great power

Ecc 5:7 Therefore stand in *a* of God.

Ac 2:43 Everyone was filled with *a*

Heb 12:28 acceptably with reverence and *a*

Baal—the name of many false gods in Canaan. Each section of Canaan had its own Baal, for example, Baal of Peor, Baal of Hermon, Baal-Berth.

1Ki 18:25 Elijah said to the prophets of *B*

Babylon—the beautiful capital of Babylonia, it was a powerful and influential city in the Near East from the eighteenth to the sixth

centuries *a c*. The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem in 602 *a c* and took many Israelites, such as Daniel and his friends, to Babylon. These captives lived there for about seventy years. In the New Testament, Babylon represents the godless city.

Ps 137:1 By the rivers of *B* we sat and wept

Balaam—a seer who tried to curse Israel during their journey to the promised land, but God would not allow it (*Nu 22-24*).

balm—a skin cream used to heal sores and relieve pain

banish—to force a person away from a place

baptize—a religious ceremony in which water is used, as a symbol of cleansing from sin. Some churches today baptize by sprinkling or pouring water over a person. Baptism is a sign that our sins are washed away and that Jesus has taken us to be his own.

Mk 1:9 and was *b* by John in the Jordan.

Mk 16:16 believes and is *b* will be saved.

Ac 1:5 but in a few days you will be *b*

Ac 2:38 Repent and be *b*, every one of you,

Ac 16:33 he and all his family were *b*.

Ac 18:8 heard him believed and were *b*.

Barabbas—the Jews chose this criminal, rather than Jesus, to be released by Pilate (*Mt 27:26*).

Barnabas—an apostle; he was a co-worker with Paul on his first missionary journey (*Ac 9:27*; *chs 13-15*).

barren—1. unable to have children. 2. unable to produce crops.

Bartholomew—one of the twelve apostles (*Mt 10:3*; *Ac 1:13*). He was also probably known as Nathanael (*Jn 1:45-49*; *21:2*).

Bathsheba—the wife of Uriah; she committed adultery with David and later became his wife (*2Sa 11*); the mother of Solomon (*2Sa 12:24*).

Beelzebub—the prince of demons; Satan.

Lk 11:15, "By *B*, the prince of demons,

believe—to accept as true, to trust; to have faith.

Mk 1:15 Repent and *b* the good news!"

Mk 9:24 "I do *b*; help me overcome my

Jn 1:7 that through him all men might *b*.

Jn 3:18 does not *b* stands condemned

Jn 20:27 Stop doubting and *b*."

Ac 16:31 They replied, "*B* in the Lord Jesus,

Ro 3:22 faith in Jesus Christ to all who *b*

1Th 4:14 We *b* that Jesus died and rose again.

Benjamin—the twelfth son of Jacob. Rachel was his mother and he was the younger brother of Joseph (*Ge 35:16-24*; *chs. 42-45*).

DICTIONARY-CONCORDANCE

bereaved—left alone, especially because of the death of a close friend or relative.

besiege—to surround a city or town completely with an army, so that nothing can go in or out.

bestow—to give.

Bethlehem—the city in Judaea where Jesus was born (*Mt 2:1*).

betray—to turn a friend over to his or her enemies; to be unfaithful to.

betroth—to promise to marry.

bewildered—confused; puzzled.

bier—a platform on which a coffin or dead body is carried.

birthright—the special rights of the first-born son. In the Old Testament, after the father died the oldest son received the father's power and right to make decisions for the entire family. He also got twice as much money and property as each of his brothers.

Ge 25:34 So Esau despised his *b*.

blameless—without fault.

Ge 17:1 walk before me and be *b*.

1Co 1:8 so that you will be *b* on the day

Php 2:15 so that you may become *b* and pure.

blaspheme—to speak carelessly, falsely or insultingly about God or holy things.

Mk 3:29 whoever *b* against the Holy Spirit

blemish—a spot or mark that makes something imperfect.

bless—1. to make holy; 2. to show favor to; 3. to ask God to show favor to.

Ge 2:3 And God *b* the seventh day.

Ge 12:3 I will *b* those who *b* you,

Mt 5:3 saying "B are the poor in spirit

Ro 12:14 *b* those who persecute you; *b*

blight—a disease in plants that makes them shrivel up and die.

blood—

Ex 12:13 and when I see the *b*, I will pass

Mt 26:28 This is my *b* of the covenant

Ro 5:9 have now been justified by his *b*

Eph 1:7 we have redemption through his *b*

Heb 9:12 once for all by his own *b*

Rev 5:9 with your *b* you purchased men

Rev 7:14 white in the *b* of the Lamb.

boast—to brag.

Ps 34:2 My soul will *b* in the Lord

Gal 6:14 May I never *b* except in the cross

Boaz—a wealthy man who lived in Bethlehem in the days of the judges; he married Ruth (*Ru 2:4*).

body—

Ro 6:13 Do not offer the parts of your *b*

Ro 12:1 to offer your *b* as living sacrifices,

1Co 6:19 not know that your *b* is a temple

1Co 12:12 The *b* is a unit, though it is made up

Eph 5:30 for we are members of his *b*.

bondage—slavery.

Ezr 9:9 God has not deserted us in our *b*.

booty—valuables taken from a conquered people.

branch—

Isa 4:2 In that day the *B* of the LORD will

Jer 33:15 I will make a righteous *B* sprout

Jn 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the *b*."

bread—

Dt 8:3 that man does not live on *b* alone

Pr 30:8 but give me only my daily *b*.

Isa 55:2 Why spend money on what is not *b*

Mt 6:11 Give us today out daily *b*.

Jn 6:35 Jesus declared, "I am the *b* of life."

breastpiece—a decorated square of linen cloth worn by the high priest when he entered the Holy Place. The breastpiece was worn chest-high and over a robe. On it were twelve gems, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Ex 28:15 "Fashion a *b* for making decisions

breastplate—a chest-covering made of metal or leather, worn by soldiers for protection

brother—

Ge 4:9 "Am I my *b* keeper?"

Ps 133:1 is when *b* live together in unity!

Mt 18:15 'If your *b* sins against you

burden—a heavy load.

Mt 11:30 my yoke is easy and my *b* is light.

Gal 6:2 Carry each other's *b*

Caesar—the title of many Roman emperors.

Lk 2:1 In those days *C* Augustus

Mt 22:21 "Give to *C* what is Caesar's

Cain—Adam and Eve's first-born son; he murdered his brother Abel (Ge 4:1-16).

calamity—a disaster, usually causing great loss and suffering

caldron—a large clay or metal pot.

Caleb—one of the twelve men who spied out Canaan. He came back with a positive report and encouraged the Israelites to take possession of Canaan. His faith allowed him to enter Canaan (Nu 13:6-14:38; Dt 1:36) whereas those Israelites who believed the report of the other ten spies died during Israel's forty years of wandering in the wilderness.

call (v.)—

2Ch 7:14 if my people, who are *c*

Ps 145:18 near to all who *c* on him

Isa 65:24 Before they *c* I will answer

Mt 9:13 come to *c* the righteous

Jn 10:3 He *c* his own sheep by name

Ro 8:30 And those he predestined, he also

c

Ro 10:12 and richly blesses all who *c* on him

1Pe 2:9 of him who *c* you out of darkness

call, calling (n)—

Ro 11:29 gifts and his *c* are irrevocable

Eph 4:1 worthy of the *c* you have received

2Pe 1:10 all the more eager to make your

c

Canaan—1. the land God promised to the nation of Israel; 2. the promised land

1Ch 16:18 "To you I will give the land of

C

capstone—the stone that holds two walls together; the stone that finishes a wall.

1Pe 2:7 has become the *c*

censer—a bowl or dish used for carrying hot coals or for burning incense.

centurion—a Roman army officer in charge of one hundred soldiers.

chaff—the seed covering of a grain such as wheat. In Bible times the grain and chaff were separated by tossing the grain into the air so the wind could blow the chaff away.

Ps 1:4 they are like *c*

Mt 3:12 up the *c* with unquenchable fire

chariot—a two-wheeled vehicle pulled by horses.

2Ki 6:17 and *c* of fire all around Elisha

chasten—to correct or improve by punishment or suffering.

cheerful—

Pr 15:13 A happy heart makes the face *c*

2Co 9:7 for God loves a *c* giver.

cherub—an angel, with an appearance something like a human being. The word for more than one cherub is *cherubim*.

children—

Ps 8:2 from the lips of *c* and infants

Pr 17:6 Children's *c* are a crown

Mt 19:14 "Let the little *c* come to me

Ro 8:16 with our spirit that we are God's

c.

Eph 6:1 *C*, obey your parents in the Lord,

Eph 6:4 do not exasperate your *c*, instead

1Jn 3:1 that we should be called *c* of God

choose—

Jos 24:15 then *c* for yourselves this day

Jn 15:16 You did not *c* me,

Jn 15:16 But I *c* you to go and bear fruit

Eph 1:4 he *c* us in him before the creation

2Th 2:13 from the beginning God *c* you

chosen—

Mt 22:14 For many are invited, but few are

c

Jn 15:19 but I have *c* you out of the world

1Pe 2:9 But you are a *c* people, a royal

Christ—the official title of Jesus, meaning "the Anointed One." It is a Greek word, and it means the same as the Hebrew word *Messiah*.

Mt 1:16 was born Jesus, who is called C.
Mt 16:16 Peter answered, "You are the C."
Jn 1:41 found the Messiah" (that is, the C).
Jn 20:31 you may believe that Jesus is the C.

Ro 5:8 While we were still sinners, C died.
1Co 1:23 but we preached C crucified.
1Co 12:27 Now you are the body of C.
Eph 5:2 as C loved us and gave himself up.
Eph 5:23 as C is the head of the church.
Php 1:21 to live is C and to die is gain.
2Th 2:1 the coming of our Lord Jesus C.

Christian—a believer in or follower of Christ.

Ac 11:26 The disciples were first called C.
1Pe 4:16 as a C, do not be ashamed,

chronicles—a history of events in the order in which they took place.

church—

Mt 16:18 and on this rock I will build my C.

Eph 5:23 as Christ is the head of the C.
Col 1:24 the sake of his body, which is the C.

circumcise—to cut off the loose fold of skin at the end of the penis.

Ge 17:10 Every male among you shall be C.

cistern—a pit dug into the ground for storing rain water.

citadel—a tower or building equipped for war, especially one in a city.

city of refuge—one of six cities set aside by Moses and Joshua for those who had accidentally killed someone. Such people would be safe there until a fair trial could be held.

clean animals—animals God allowed the Israelites to sacrifice and eat.

cleanse—to make clean; to wash.

cloak—a loose-fitting coat without sleeves.

co-heir—one of two persons who receive an inheritance. Because of Christ's death and resurrection, we are co-heirs with him of our inheritance in God.

Ro 8:17 heirs of God and C with Christ

comfort—

Ps 23:4 rod and your staff, they C me.

Zec 1:17 and the LORD will again C Zion.

2Co 1:4 so that we can C those

commandment—an order given by God. God gave the Ten Commandments to the Israelites while they were encamped in the area of Mt. Sinai.

Ex 20:6 who love me and keep my C

DICTIONARY-CONCORDANCE

Mt 22:38 This is the first and greatest C.
Jn 13:34 "A new C I give you. Love one

commemorate—to remember an event with a special celebration or ceremony.

commend—1. to praise, 2. to hand over to someone for safekeeping.

compassion—sympathy, pity.

Ps 103:4 and crowns me with love and C.

Mt 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had C.

Ro 9:15 and I will have C on whom I have C.

Col 3:12 clothe yourselves with C, kindness,

compassionate—

Ne 9:17 gracious and C, slow to anger.

complacent—contented; unconcerned.

conceive—1. to become pregnant; 2. to think up or imagine.

Mt 1:20 what is C in her is from the Holy

1Co 2:9 no mind has C.

concubine—in Bible times, a woman who belonged to a man but did not have the rights of a wife. She was often one of the spoils of war, and her primary purpose was to bear children for the man.

condemn—to give out punishment to; to pronounce guilty.

Jn 3:17 Son into the world to C the world,

Ro 8:34 Who is he that C? Christ Jesus.

condemnation—

Ro 8:1 there is now no C for those who are

confess—1. to say what you believe; 2. to tell your sins to someone.

Lev 26:40 "But if they will C their sins

Ro 10:9 That if you C with your mouth

Php 2:11 every tongue C that Jesus Christ is

1Jn 1:9 If we C our sins, he is faithful

conform—to agree with and try to be like someone; to do what others say to do.

Ro 8:29 predestined to be C to the likeness

1Pe 1:14 do not C to the evil desires you had

conscience—the sense of knowing if something is good or bad; a sense of right and wrong.

Ro 2:15 their C also bearing witness

Tit 1:15 their minds and C are corrupted.

Heb 9:14 cleanse our C from acts that lead

conscript—1. to take for government use; 2. to force to serve in an army.

consecrate—to set aside or dedicate for God's use.

Ex 13:2 "C to me every firstborn male

Lev 20:7 "C yourselves and be holy

console—to comfort.

conspire—to plan together to do evil.

consume -1. to use up or eat up, 2. to destroy completely

Jn 7:17 "Zest for your house will consume you"

Heb 12:24 for our God is a consuming fire

contempt -lack of respect, looking down on someone or something as being worthless

Pr 14:11 He who oppresses the poor shows contempt

1Th 5:20 do not treat prophecies with contempt

content -
Php 4:11 to be content whatever the circumstances

Heb 13:5 and be content with what you have

contrite -to feel sorry for one's sins, to feel repentant

Ps 51:17 a broken and contrite heart

Isa 66:2 he who is humble and contrite in spirit convert—a person who has changed from one belief to another

1Ti 3:6 He must not be a recent convert

convict—1. to prove one wrong; 2. to make a person feel sorrow

Jn 16:8 he will convict the world of guilt in regard to

convulsion—a wild shaking of the body; violent contraction and expansion of one's muscles

Cornelius—a Roman to whom Peter preached the gospel; he became the first Gentile Christian (Ac 10).

cornerstone—the first or most important stone laid when constructing a building

Eph 2:20 with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone

corrupt—1. (v.) to change from good to bad; 2. (adj.) wicked

Ge 6:11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight

1Co 15:33 "Bad company corrupts good character."

counsel—to give advice to

Counselor—another name for the Holy Spirit

Jn 14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit,

Jn 15:26 "When the Counselor comes, whom I will

covenant—1. an agreement between two people or two groups of people, in which usually both make specific promises. 2. the promises of God for salvation

Ge 9:9 "I now establish my covenant with you"

Ge 17:2 I will confirm my covenant between me

Ex 19:5 if you obey me fully and keep my covenant

Jer 31:31 "when I will make a new covenant"

Eze 37:26 I will make a covenant of peace with them

1Co 11:25 "This cup is the new covenant in my blood"

Heb 9:15 Christ is the mediator of a new covenant

crave -to want for, to desire, to long for

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

crave -to want for, to desire, to long for

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

1Co 12:13 "We have all been baptized by the Spirit"

Mt 4:1 in the last *d*

Lk 11:3 Give us each *d* our daily bread

1Ch 12:2 in these last *d* he has spoken to us

2Pe 3:8 With the Lord a *d* is like

deacon—a church leader chosen to take care of money matters and to give money to the widows and the poor

1Ti 3:8 *D*, likewise, are to be men worthy

death

Ps 23:4 the valley of the shadow of *d*,

Ecc 7:2 for *d* is the destiny of every man,

Isa 25:8 he will swallow up *d* forever

Ro 6:23 For the wages of sin is *d*,

1Co 15:21 For since *d* came through a man

1Co 15:55 Where, O *d*, is your sting?"

Rev 1:18 And I hold the keys of *d* and Hades

Rev 21:4 There will be no more *d*

debauchery—living an immoral life or a life without religion, living to please only yourself

Deborah—a prophetess who led Israel to victory over the Canaanites (Judg 4-5)

debt—something that one person owes another (Also, debtor)

Mt 6:12 Forgive us our *d*,

deceive—(v.) to fool or trick, to lie (n. deceit, deception, adj. deceitful).

Ge 3:13 "The serpent *d* me, and I ate."

1Co 3:18 Do not *d* yourselves.

Gal 6:7 Do not be *d*. God cannot be

1Jn 1:8 we *d* ourselves and the truth is not

decree—an order or law given by someone with power and authority

dedicate—to set apart for a special purpose, often for God's use

defect—imperfection; fault

defile—to make something that is good and pure impure or unclean

defraud—to cheat someone by trickery

Deity—God

Col 2:9 of the *D* lives in bodily form.

deliver—to rescue, to set free

demon—evil spirit. A demon-possessed person is one who is controlled by evil spirits.

Mk 5:15 possessed by the legion of *d*

Ro 8:38 neither angels nor *d*, neither

1Co 10:20 of pagans are offered to *d*,

1Ti 4:1 spirits and things taught by *d*

Jas 2:19 Good! Even the *d* believe that

Rev 16:14 of *d* performing miraculous signs

denarius—a small Roman coin made of silver. During Jesus' earthly ministry, one denarius was the payment for about one day's work

denounce—to say a person or thing is evil

depraved—evil or sinful

Php 2:15 fault in a *cracked* and *d* generation

depravity—

Ro 1:29 of wickedness, evil, greed and *d*

2Pe 2:19 they themselves are slaves of *d*

desecrate—to treat without respect or reverence

desolate—not lived in, lonely; deserted

destine—(v.) to decide ahead of time (n. destiny).

destitute—not having necessary things such as money and food

detest—to hate

devil—

Lk 4:2 forty days he was tempted by the *d*.

1Ph 4:27 and do not give the *d* a foothold

1Ph 6:11 stand against the *d* schemes

2Ti 2:26 and escape from the trap of the *d*,

Jas 4:7 Resist the *d*, and he will flee

1Pe 5:8 Your enemy the *d* prowls

1Jn 3:8 was to destroy the *d* work

Rev 12:9 that ancient serpent called the *d*

devote—to set apart for a special person or for a special reason, to set apart for God's use

devout—religious; giving much time to prayer and worship.

die—

Ge 2:17 when you eat of it you will surely *d*

2Ki 14:6 each is to *d* for his own sins."

Ecc 3:2 a time to be born and a time to *d*

Eze 3:18 that wicked man will *d* for his sin

Eze 18:4 soul who sins is the one who will *d*.

Jn 11:26 and believes in me will never *d*

Ro 14:8 and if we *d*, we *d* to the Lord

1Co 15:22 in Adam all *d*, so in Christ all will

Php 1:21 to live is Christ and to *d* is gain.

Rev 14:13 Blessed are the dead who *d*

dirge—a song of deep sadness, usually sung at funerals.

discern—to understand, to come to know the difference between two or more things

Php 1:10 you may be able to *d* what is best

disciple—a follower or student, especially one who believes what the leader teaches. Anyone who believes in Jesus is his disciple

Lk 14:27 and follow me cannot be my *d*

Jn 13:35 men will know that you are my *d*

discipline—(v.) to correct; to teach what is right, (n.) training that corrects, molds or perfects moral character

Ps 39:11 You rebuke and *d* men for their sin

Pr 15:5 A fool spurns his father's *d*
Pr 29:17 *D* your son, and he will give you
Heb 12:6 the Lord *d* those he loves
Rev 3:19 Those whom I love I rebuke and
d.

disclose—to show or reveal.

discourse—1. (v.) to talk together; 2. (n.) a conversation or speech.

discriminate—to make a difference where no such difference should or does exist; to treat two persons or things differently because one seems better than the other.

Jas 2:4 have you not *d* among yourselves

disgrace—to bring shame to.

disown—to reject someone or something so completely that it no longer belongs to you.

Mt 26:35 to die with you, I will never *d* you "

2Ti 2:12 if we *d* him,

disperse—to scatter; to spread around.

disension—disagreement; quarreling.

dissipation—living only for your own pleasure; wasting your life on foolish or evil pleasures.

divination—seeing into the future by magic.

Lev 19:26 "Do not practice *d* or sorcery.

divine—given by God; belonging to God.

Ro 1:20 his eternal power and *d* nature

2Co 10:4 they have *d* power

divorce—

Mal 2:16 "I hate *d*," says the LORD God

Mt 19:3 for a man to *d* his wife for any

1Co 7:11 And a husband must not *d* his wife.

doctrine—teachings or beliefs about God.

1Ti 4:16 Watch your life and *d* closely.

Tit-2:1 is in accord with sound *d*.

dominion—power; rule.

Ps 22:28 for *d* belongs to the LORD

Eph 1:21 far above all rule and authority, power and *d*

doom—1. (v.) to make certain something will fail or be destroyed; 2. (n.) fate; condemnation; ruin

door—

Mt 7:7 and the *d* will be opened to you.

Rev 3:20 I stand at the *d* and knock.

doubt—

Mt 21:21 if you have faith and do not *d*

Mk 11:23 and does not *d* in his heart

Jas 1:6 he must believe and not *d*

dropsy—puffiness or swelling of the body caused by a disease of the kidneys, liver or heart

earth—

Ge 1:1 God created the heavens and the *e*.

Ps 24:1 *e* is the LORD's and everything

Mt 6:10 done on *e* as it is in heaven

Mt 24:35 Heaven and *e* will pass away

Lk 2:14 on *e* peace to men

Php 2:10 in heaven and on *e* and under the *e*

2Pe 3:13 to a new heaven and a new *e*

edict—an order or law made by a person who has the power to enforce it

edify—to teach someone to live a godly life, or to help someone to live in such a way

1Co 14:4 but he who prophesies *e* the church

elders—1 the older men of a town or nation. They were the leaders of their community and made all the important decisions. Each town had its own groups of elders. After the Jews returned from exile in Babylon, the elders made up the Sanhedrin, the ruling council of the Jews. 2 the leaders of the church.

1Ti 5:17 The *e* who direct the affairs

Tit 1:5 and appoint *e* in every town

election—

Ro 9:11 God's purpose in *e* might stand

2Pe 1:10 to make your calling and *e* sure.

Eli—the high priest with whom Samuel spent the early years of his life (1Sa 2:11-26).

Elijah—a prophet of the Lord during the reign of Ahab. He predicted a famine in Israel (1Ki 17:1), and defeated the prophets of Baal at Carmel in the test of whose God would set fire to the altar (1Ki 18:16-46). He was taken to heaven in a whirlwind (2Ki 2:11-12) and later appeared with Moses at the transfiguration of Jesus (Mk 9:1-8).

Elisha—the prophet who succeeded Elijah. He was present when God took Elijah to heaven, and he took his place as prophet to Israel (2Ki 2:1-18).

Elizabeth—the mother of John the Baptist. She became pregnant when she was very old; Mary went to visit her when she found out she, too, was pregnant (Lk 1:5-58).

enchanter—a magician or snake charmer.

endure—to continue; to keep on going; to bear something that is difficult or painful.

Ps 136:1 His love *e* forever.

Mal 3:2 who can *e* the day of his coming

2Ti 2:3 *E* hardship with us like a good

enmity—hatred or bad feelings that make two people or two groups enemies.

Ge 3:15 And I will put *e*

Enoch—a man who "walked with God." Later in life, God "took him away" (Ge 5:18-24).

envy—to want for yourself something that belongs to another person.

1Co 13:4 It does not *e*, it does not boast

ephod—a linen apron worn by a priest over his robe. It was decorated with gold, blue, purple and scarlet yarns.

Ephraim—1. one of Joseph's sons; 2. one of the tribes of Israel. Its members were descendants of Ephraim. 3. a name for the northern kingdom of Israel after the ten tribes of Israel and the two tribes of Judah separated from each other

Ge 41:52 The second son he named E

Isa 7:17 unlike any since E broke away from Judah

epileptic—a person afflicted with a disorder of the brain that makes one lose control of his or her muscles and sometimes causes unconsciousness. In Bible times epilepsy was a dreaded disease; but today it can be controlled by medicine.

equity—fairness.

Esau—the firstborn son of Isaac and twin of Jacob (Ge 25:21-26). He sold his birthright to Jacob for a pot of stew (Ge 25:29-34) and was tricked out of his blessing by this same brother (Ge 27). Later in his life he and Jacob met and were reconciled (Ge 33).

esteem—1. (v.) to value; to consider important; 2. (n.) high regard or respect.

Esther—a Jewish woman who lived in Persia (Est 2:7). Xerxes chose her to be queen (Est 2:8-18). Upon being told of a plot by Haman to kill the Jews, she went to the king and pleaded for the Jewish people and thus saved them (Est 3-4; 7-9).

eternal—without beginning or end; forever; timeless. God is eternal.

Dt 33:27 The e God is your refuge,

Jn 3:16 him shall not perish but have e life.

Ro 6:23 but the gift of God is e life

1Jn 5:13 you may know that you have e life

eunuch—1. the most important official after the king or queen; 2. a man whose sex organs have been removed so that he cannot produce children.

evangelist—a person who preaches the good news about Jesus.

Ac 21:8 stayed at the house of Philip the e

Eph 4:11 some to be prophets, some to be e

Eve—the first woman God created (Ge 2:20-24). Her name means, Mother of all the living (Ge 3:20)

everlasting—forever; without end.

Ps 90:2 from e to e you are God.

Isa 9:6 E Father, Prince of Peace

Isa 55:3 I will make an e covenant with you

Jn 6:47 the truth, he who believes has e life.

2Th 1:9 punished with e destruction

DICTIONARY-CONCORDANCE

evil—wicked; doing things against God's will

Ge 2:9 of the knowledge of good and e

Ps 23:4 I will fear no e

Isa 13:11 I will punish the world for its e

Isa 55:7 and the e man his thoughts.

Mt 6:13 but deliver us from the e one."

Ro 12:9 Hate what is e; cling

Ro 12:17 Do not repay anyone e for e.

Eph 6:16 all the flaming arrows of the e one.

Jas 1:13 For God cannot be tempted by e

exalt—to praise; to raise to an important position.

Ps 118:28 you are my God, and I will e you.

Ps 148:13 for his name alone is e

Pr 14:34 Righteousness e a nation

Mt 23:12 For whoever e himself will be

exile—(v.) to force someone to leave his or her country or home; (n.) forced removal from one's country or home.

2Ch 36:20 He carried into e to Babylon

exodus—the departure of a large group of people from one place to go to another. The book of Exodus is the story of the Israelites' journey from Egypt to Canaan.

exploit—to take unfair advantage of.

extol—to praise.

Ps 34:1 I will e the LORD at all times

Ps 95:2 and e him with music and song.

extortion—something gotten from a person by force or by using other illegal means.

Ezekiel—a priest who was called to be a prophet to the Jewish people when they were in exile in Babylon (Eze 1-3). He had many visions from the Lord (Eze 37; 40).

Ezra—a priest and teacher of the Law; he led a group of Jewish exiles back to Israel and helped them reestablish the temple of God and restore proper worship (Ezr 7-8).

faction—a group of people trying to get its own way or promote its own interests.

faith—belief and trust in God; knowing that God is real, even though we can't see him.

Hab 2:4 but the righteous will live by his f

Mt 17:20 if you have f as small as a mustard

Lk 7:9 I have not found such great f

Ro 1:17 "The righteous will live by f."

Ro 3:22 comes through f in Jesus Christ

1Co 13:2 and if I have a f that can move

2Co 5:7 We live by f, not by sight.

Eph 6:16 to all this, take up the shield of f.

1Ti 6:12 Fight the good fight of the f.

Heb 11:1 f is being sure of what we hope for

Heb 11:8 By *f* Abraham, when called to go
Heb 12:2 the author and perfecter of our

f
Jas 2:26 so *f* without deeds is dead

faithful—trustworthy; loyal. God is faithful.

Ps 145:13 the LORD is *f* to all his promises
Mt 25:21 "Well done, good and *f* servant!
Ro 12:12 patient in affliction, *f* in prayer
1Co 10:13 And God is *f*, he will not let you be

1Jn 1:9 he is *f* and just and will forgive us
Rev 1:5 who is the *f* witness, the firstborn

faithfulness—

Ps 86:15 to anger, abounding in love and
f
La 3:23 great is your *f*.
Gal 5:22 patience, kindness, goodness, *f*

falsehood—a lie

family—

Ps 68:6 God sets the lonely in *f*
Lk 9:61 go back and say good-bye to my *f* "
Lk 12:52 in one *f* divided against each other
1Ti 3:4 He must manage his own *f* well
1Ti 5:4 practice by caring for their own *f*

father

Ge 2:24 this reason a man will leave his *f*
Ge 17:4 You will be the *f* of many nations.
Ex 20:12 "Honor your *f* and your mother
Pr 23:22 Listen to your *f*, who gave you life
Mt 6:9 "Our *F* in heaven
Lk 11:11 "Which of you *f*, if your son asks
Lk 23:34 Jesus said, "*F*, forgive them
Jn 10:30 I and the *F* are one."
Jn 14:2 In my *F* house are many rooms
Jn 14:6 No one comes to the *F*

fear—(v.) 1. to respect highly; to feel reverence and awe for; 2. to be afraid of. (n.) profound reverence toward God; anticipation or awareness of danger

Dt 6:13 *F* the LORD your God, serve him
Job 1:8 a man who *f* God and shuns evil."
Ps 91:5 You will not *f* the terror of night
Ps 111:10 *f* of the LORD is the beginning
Isa 41:10 So do not *f*, for I am with you
Php 2:12 to work out your salvation with
f

fellowship—companionship or friendship.

1Jn 1:6 claim to have *f* with him yet walk
1Jn 1:7 we have *f* with one another,

fig—1. a brownish pear-shaped fruit that grows in countries near the Mediterranean Sea, 2. the tree that grows this fruit.

firstborn—a family's first male child. The firstborn son became the head of the family when his father died. He also received twice as much money and property as each of his brothers.

Ex 11:5 Every *f* son in Egypt will die

firstfruits—the first vegetables, fruits and grains harvested from the field.

Ex 23:19 "Bring the best of the *f* of your soil

flawless—without fault or defect; perfect.

flog—to beat with a stick or a whip.

forbearance—patience; tolerance.

forefather—a male ancestor.

foreknow—to know ahead of time.

Ro 8:29 For those God *f* he

Ro 11:2 not reject his people, whom he *f*

forgive—to pardon or excuse; no longer to blame or be angry with someone who had done you wrong

Mt 6:14 For if you *f* men when they sin

Lk 23:34 Jesus said, "Father, *f* them

Col 3:13 *F* as the Lord forgave you. "

1Jn 1:9 and just and will *f* us our sins

forsake—to leave another completely alone, with no hope that you will ever return

Jos 1:5 I will never leave you or *f* you

Isa 55:7 Let the wicked *f* his way

Mt 27:46 my God, why have you *f* me?

frankincense—an incense burned for its sweet smell.

free—

Jn 8:32 and the truth will set you *f*."

Ro 6:18 You have been set *f* from sin

freedom—

2Co 3:17 the Spirit of the Lord is, there is
f.

Gal 5:13 But do not use your *f* to indulge

friend—

Pr 18:24 there is a *f* who sticks closer

Jn 15:13 that one lay down his life for his
f.

Jas 4:4 Anyone who chooses to be a *f*

fruitful—productive; yielding much fruit.

Ge 1:22 "Be *f* and increase in number

Jn 15:2 clean so that it will be even more
f.

fulfill—to complete a promise or project.

Ps 116:14 I will *f* my vows to the LORD

Mk 14:49 But the Scriptures must be *f*."

Lk 24:44 Everything must be *f* that is

fulfillment—

Ro 13:10 Therefore love is the *f* of the law.

Gabriel—the angel who announced the births of John the Baptist and Jesus (Lk 1:11-20; 26-38).

Galilee—the northern part of Palestine. Palestine had three main parts: Galilee, Samaria and Judea. Jesus grew up, preached and did most of his miracles in Galilee. Today this area is in northern Israel.

gall—1. a plant with an extremely bitter-tasting fruit; 2. the liquid made by the liver.

Mt 27:34 mixed with *g*; but after tasting it

genealogy—a list of a person's ancestors or descendants, a family tree.

generation—the entire number of people born and living at about the same time. Grandparents, parents and children are three different generations.

Ps 102:12 your renown endures through all g

Lk 1:48 now on all g will call me blessed

Gentile—anyone who is not a Jew

Ro 3:9 and G alike are all under sin.

Ro 11:13 as I am the apostle to the G

Eph 3:6 the gospel the G are heirs together

Gideon—a judge who freed Israel from the rule and terror of the Midianites (Jdg 6-8). He asked for a sign from God, and God showed him his will by means of dew and a fleece (Jdg 6:36-40).

gift—

Ro 6:23 but the g of God is eternal life

1Co 12:4 There are different kinds of g,

2Co 9:15 be to God for his indescribable g!

gleanings—the grain or fruit left behind after harvesting. Poor people were allowed to pick up and use these leftovers.

glory—1. honor; praise; 2. a source of pride or worthiness.

Ps 8:5 and crowned him with g and honor.

Ps 19:1 The heavens declare the g of God

Lk 2:14 saying, "G to God in the highest

Jn 1:14 We have seen his g, the g of the one

1Co 10:31 whatever you do, do it all for the g

Rev 4:11 to receive f and honor and power

glutton—a person who eats too much.

gnash—to grind (one's teeth) together.

God—

Ge 1:1 in the beginning G created

Ge 17:1 "I am G Almighty; walk before me

Ge 50:20 but G intended it for good

Ex 8:10 is no one like the LORD our G.

Ex 20:5 the LORD your G, am a jealous G

Nu 23:19 G is not a man, that he should lie

Dt 4:31 the LORD your G is a merciful G

Dt 6:4 LORD our G, the LORD is one.

Dt 6:5 Love the LORD your G

Dt 32:4 A faithful G who does no wrong

Ne 9:17 But you are a forgiving G

Ps 46:1 G is our refuge and strength

Ps 71:22 harp for your faithfulness, O my G

Jn 1:18 ever seen G, but G the only Son

Jn 3:16 "For G so loved the world that he

Jn 4:24 G is spirit, and his worshipers must

1Co 10:13 G is faithful; he will not let you be

1Co 14:33 For G is not a G of disorder

DICTIONARY-CONCORDANCE

Heb 12:10 but G disciplines us for our good

Jas 1:13 For G cannot be tempted by evil

1Jn 4:16 G is love.

Rev 4:8 holy is the Lord G Almighty

Golgotha—the hill outside Jerusalem where Jesus was hung on a cross.

Jn 19:17 (which in Aramaic is called G).

Goliath—the Philistine giant who was killed by David (1Sa 17; 21:9).

gospel—1. the good news that Jesus died for our sins and rose again; 2. Gospel, any of the first four books of the New Testament.

Ro 1:16 I am not ashamed of the g

Ro 15:16 duty of proclaiming the g of God

1Co 9:16 Woe to me if I do not preach the g!

1Co 15:2 By this g you are saved

2Co 9:13 your confession of the g

1Th 2:4 by God to be entrusted with the g

grace—an undeserved favor or gift; the undeserved forgiveness, kindness and mercy that God gives us.

Ro 3:24 and are justified freely by his g

Ro 5:20 where sin increased, g increased all

2Co 12:9 "My g is sufficient for you

Eph 2:5 it is by g you have been saved.

Tit 3:7 having been justified by his g

guilty—having broken a law or commandment; deserving punishment.

Ex 34:7 does not leave the g unpunished

1Co 11:27 in an unworthy manner will be g

Heb 10:22 to cleanse us from a g conscience

Jas 2:10 at just one point is g of breaking all

Hades—hell; the place where the spirits of the dead live.

Mt 16:18 the gates of H will not overcome it.

Hagar—a servant of Sarah and one of Abraham's wives; the mother of Ishmael (Ge 16:1-6; 25:12). After giving birth to Isaac, Sarah drove Hagar away (Ge 21:9-21).

Haggai—a prophet who encouraged the Israelites who returned from exile in Babylon to rebuild the temple (Ezr 5:1; Hag 1-2).

hallelujah—praise the Lord; a song of praise.

Rev 19:1 "H! Salvation and glory and power

hallow—to make holy; to set apart as special.

Hannah—the wife of Elkanah; she prayed for a son and God gave her Samuel. She

dedicated him to God and he lived in the temple as a boy and became a prophet and judge (Isa 1:2).

harlot—a woman who lets a man use her body for sex in exchange for money.

haughty—proud.

Ps 16:18 *a h spirit before a fall*

heart

De 6:5 Love your God with all your *h*

Isa 16:7 but the Lord looks at the *h*

Ec 1:28 for the Lord searches every *h*

Ps 51:10 Create in me a pure *h* O God

Ps 119:11 I have hidden your word in my *h*

Ps 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my *h*

Jer 29:13 when you seek me with all your *h*.

Eze 36:26 I will give you a new *h*

Mt 5:8 Blessed are the pure in *h*

Mt 22:37 the Lord your God with all your *h*

Ro 10:10 is with your *h* that you believe

heaven—

Ge 1:4-9 Creator of *h* and earth

Mt 19:23 man to enter the kingdom of *h*

Mk 16:19 he was taken up into *h*

Php 3:20 But our citizenship is in *h*.

Rev 21:1 Then I saw a new *h* and a new earth

Hebrew—1. another name for an Israelite; a descendant of Abraham; 2. the language spoken by the Jews. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew.

heir—someone who receives the property or blessings of a person who has died. In Bible times an heir was usually male.

Ro 8:17 then we are *h*—*h* of God

Eph 3:6 gospel the Gentiles are *h* together

heresy—false teaching about God.

Herod—the family name of five kings who ruled Palestine under the Roman emperor: Herod the Great (Mt 2:16); Herod Antipas (Mk 6:14-29); Herod Philip (Mt 14:3; Mk 6:17); Herod Agrippa I (Ac 12:1-4, 19-23); Herod Agrippa II (Ac 23:35; 25:13-26:32).

Herodias—the wife of Herod Antipas; she persuaded her daughter to ask Antipas for the head of John the Baptist (Mk 6:17).

Hezekiah—a king of Judah; he restored the temple, re-instituted proper worship and sought the Lord's help against the Assyrians. He showed his faith when, suffering from a serious illness, he prayed to God and was healed; yet he also showed the Babylonians his treasures and God punished him and the Israelites for this (2Ch 29-31; 2Ks 18-20).

high priest—the chief religious official in

the Jewish religion. In the Old Testament he offered the most important sacrifices to God in behalf of the people. In Jesus' time he was also the head of the Sanhedrin (the highest Jewish court) and a powerful political leader—even having a small army.

hinder—to hold back, to prevent, to delay.

holy—(v) set apart for God (adj) belonging to God, pure, godly.

Ex 20:8 the Sabbath day by keeping it *h*

Lev 11:44 and be *h*, because I am *h*

Isa 6:3 *H h h* is the Lord Almighty

Ro 12:1 as living sacrifices, *h* and pleasing

Rev 4:8 *H, h, h* is the Lord Almighty

Holy Spirit—the third person of the Trinity, the Spirit lives and works in our hearts and minds. Jesus promised his disciples that he would send his Spirit (Jn 14:16-26), and it came at Pentecost in a powerful way (Ac 2). Other names are: the Spirit, Counselor and Comforter.

Homage—honor; respect.

homosexual—someone who has sexual relations with a person of the same sex.

1Co 6:9 male prostitutes nor *h* offenders

hope (v, n)—

Ps 42:5 Put your *h* in God

Isa 40:31 but those who *h* in the Lord

Ro 8:24 But *h* that is seen is no *h* at all

1Co 15:19 for this life we have *h* in Christ

Heb 11:1 faith is being sure of what we *h* for

hosanna—a Hebrew word of praise meaning "save."

Mt 21:9 "*H in the highest!*"

hospitality—welcoming people into one's home, sharing one's home and food with others.

Ro 12:13 Practice *h*

1Pe 4:9 Offer *h* to one another

humble—(v) to make humble in spirit or manner, (adj) not proud, not pretending to be important.

Ps 147:6 The Lord sustains the *h*

Mt 23:12 whoever exalts himself will be *h*

Jas 4:10 *H* yourselves before the Lord

humiliate—to make humble, to reduce to a lower position, to make ashamed.

1Co 11:22 and *h* those who have nothing?

hymn—a song of praise to God.

hypocrite—a person who pretends to love God.

Mt 6:5 when you pray, do not be like the *h*

Mt 7:5 you *h*, first take the plank out

hyssop—a plant used to sprinkle water or blood for religious cleansing.

Ps 51:7 with *h*, and I will be clean

idol—a statue made by people and worshiped as if it had the power of a god; anything that takes the place of God in a person's life. Worshiping idols is called idolatry.

1Co 8:4 We know that an *idol* is nothing at all.
Col 3:5 evil desires and greed, which is *idol*.

Immanuel—a name for Jesus meaning "God with us."

Isa 7:14 birth to a son, and will call him *Immanuel*.
Mt 1:23 and they will call him *Immanuel*.

immortal—free from death; not able to die.

1Ti 1:17 Now to the King eternal, *immortal*,

immortality—

1Co 15:53 and the mortal with *immortality*.

imperishable—not able to die or to be destroyed.

1Pe 1:23 not of perishable seed, but of *imperishable*.

impure—not pure; not clean.

1Th 4:7 For God did not call us to be *impure*.

incense—1. spices burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, as a way of worshiping God; 2. the sweet smell or the smoke of burning spices.

Ps 141:2 my prayer be set before you like *incense*.

Mt 2:11 him with gifts of gold and of *incense*.

incensed—very angry; filled with rage.

indignation—anger.

infirmity—physical weakness; disease.

Isa 53:4 Surely he took up our *infirmities*.

inherit—to receive money, property or keepsakes from a person after his or her death.

Mt 5:5 for they will *inherit* the earth.

Mk 10:17 "what must I do to *inherit* eternal life?"

inheritance—money, property or keepsakes received from a person after his or her death.

Dt 4:20 to be the people of his *inheritance*.

1Pe 1:4 and into an *inheritance* that can never perish.

iniquity—sin; wickedness.

Ps 51:2 Wash away all my *iniquity*.

Ps 103:10 or repay us according to our *iniquity*.

Isa 53:6 the *iniquity* of us all.

Mic 7:19 and hurl all our *iniquity* into the depths.

injustice—unfairness.

inscription—1. the writing on a coin; 2. a written title or message.

insolent—proud, in an insulting way.

institute—to establish; to begin.

insurrection—revolt or rebellion against a government.

integrity—complete honesty.

intercede—to beg or plead for another person.

Ro 8:26 but the Spirit himself *intercedes* for us.

intercession—

Isa 53:12 and made *intercession* for the transgressors.

intermarry—to marry someone from a different race or religion.

Dt 7:3 Do not *intermarry* with them.

irrevocable—not able to be taken back or changed.

Isaac—the promised son of Abraham and Sarah (Ge 17:19, 21:1-7), offered as a sacrifice by Abraham (Ge 22), married Rebekah (Ge 24) and was the father of Esau and Jacob (Ge 25). Rebekah and Jacob plotted together to trick Isaac into blessing Jacob instead of Esau (Ge 27).

Isaiah—prophet called by God (Isa 6) to prophesy to Judah (Isa 1:1). Some of his prophecies are about the coming Messiah (Isa 53).

Ishmael—the son of Abraham and Hagar (Ge 16), he was not to be the son of the covenant (Ge 17:18-21). Sarah and Abraham sent both Hagar and Ishmael away from them (Ge 21:8-21).

Israel—1. the nation made up of descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob. Israel became a nation when God took his people out of Egypt (Ex 1:14). 2. the new name God gave to Jacob (Ge 32:28). 3. the northern ten tribes after they separated from Judah and Benjamin.

Dt 6:4 Hear, O *Israel*: The LORD our God.

Eze 39:23 of *Israel* went into exile for their sin.

Lk 22:30 judging the twelve tribes of *Israel*.

Eph 3:6 Gentiles are heirs together with *Israel*.

Israelites—the people of Israel.

Ex 14:22 and the *Israelites* went through the sea.

Ro 9:27 the number of the *Israelites* be like the sand.

Jacob—the second son of Isaac and Rebekah, he was the twin brother of Esau (Ge 25:21-26). He bought Esau's birthright for a pot of stew (Ge 25:29-34) and later tricked Isaac into giving him the blessing that belonged to Esau (Ge 27:1-37). After running away from Esau, he wrestled with God, and his name was changed to Israel (Ge 32:22-32). He had twelve sons and all of them eventually went to Egypt during a famine (Ge 42-43). He settled in Egypt, but was buried by his son Joseph in Canaan, the promised land (Ge 46, 50).

James—1. one of the twelve apostles, the brother of John (Mt 4:21-22). He was present at the transfiguration (Mt 17:1-13), he was later killed by Herod (Ac 12:2). 2. one of the twelve apostles, the son of Alphaeus (Mt 10:3). 3. the brother of Jesus (Mk 6:30). He waited with the believers for the promised Holy Spirit after Christ's ascension (Ac 2:1-3); became a leader in the church in Jerusa-

lem (Ac 12:17, 15:21-18, Gal 2:9), author of the epistle of James (Jas 1:1)

Japheth—one of the sons of Noah (Ge 5:32); he was blessed because he covered his father's nakedness (Ge 9:18-28)

jealous 1. afraid of losing someone's love or affection 2. angry or unhappy because of what someone else has 3. careful to guard or keep what one has

Joel 2:18 the Lord will be *j* for his land

2Co 11:2 I am *j* for you with a godly jealousy

jealousy

Gal 5:20 hatred, discord, *j*, fits of rage

Jeremiah—a prophet called by God (Jer 1) to prophesy to Judah (Jer 1:1-3). His life was in danger because of what he prophesied (Jer 11:18-23-26), and he was subsequently put in stocks (Jer 20:1-2), imprisoned (Jer 37), and thrown in a cistern (Jer 38). He was forced to flee to Egypt from the Babylonians (Jer 43). He is often referred to as the prophet of gloom, because he prophesied about the destruction of Judah.

Jeroboam—an official in Solomon's court; he rebelled and became the first king of Israel (the northern ten tribes) (1Ki 11:26-40, 12:1-20)

Jerusalem—the political and religious center of Judah.

2Ki 23:27 and I will reject *J*, the city I chose

Ne 2:17 Come, let us rebuild the wall of *J*

Ps 137:5 If I forget you, O *J*

Jn 4:20 where we must worship is in *J*."

Rev 21:2 I saw the Holy City, the new *J*

Jeshua—see Joshua (2).

Jew—an Israelite, one of the chosen people of God, a descendant of Abraham through Jacob.

Mt 2:2 who has been born king of the *J*?

Ro 3:29 Is God the God of *J* only?

Gal 3:28 There is neither *J* nor Greek

Jezebel—the Sidonian wife of King Ahab (1Ki 16:31). She promoted Baal worship in Israel (1Ki 16:32-33); had many prophets of God killed (1Ki 18:4,13); and opposed the prophet Elijah (1Ki 19:1-2). Elijah prophesied her death (1Ki 21:17-24).

Joash—the boy-king of Judah; he repaired the temple (2Ki 12).

Job—a wealthy man from the land of Uz who feared God (Job 1:1-5). His righteousness was tested by disaster (Job 1:6-22) and personal affliction (Job 2), but, in the end, God restored wealth and honor to him (Job 42)

John—1. John the Baptist (Mk 1:2-8); the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth (Lk 1). He preached in the desert, preparing the

people for Jesus (Mt 3:11-12), baptized Jesus in the Jordan River (Mt 3:13-17); was arrested (Mk 1:14) and executed by Herod (Mk 6:14-29). 2. one of the twelve apostles, brother of the apostle James (Lk 5:1-10). He was present at Jesus' transfiguration (Lk 9:28-36), became one of the leaders of the church at Jerusalem (Ac 4:1-3), wrote the gospel of John, the epistles of John (2Jn 1, 3Jn 1) and the book of Revelation (Rev 1:1, 22:8)

John, Mark (see Mark, John)

Jonah—a prophet in the days of Jeroboam II of Israel (2Ki 14:25). He was called to preach to Nineveh but instead fled to Tarshish (Jnh 1:1-3). While at sea a great storm arose because of his disobedience, he was thrown into the sea and was swallowed by a large fish (Jnh 1:4-17). He then repented and went to Nineveh and preached, telling the people to repent (Jnh 3).

Jonathan—a son of King Saul (1Sa 13:16). He had a special friendship with David (1Sa 18:1-4, 19:20, 23:16-18). When he was killed (1Sa 31) David mourned greatly for him (2Sa 1).

Jordan—a river in Palestine that flows between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. Jos 4:22 Israel crossed the *J* on dry ground."

Mt 3:6 baptized by him in the *J* River.

Joseph—1. the son of Jacob and Rachel (Ge 30:24). He was favored by his father, but hated by his brothers (Ge 37:3-4). He was sold into slavery by his brothers (Ge 37:12-36), taken to Egypt and there served Potiphar until put in prison on a false charge (Ge 39). While in prison he interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh's servants (Ge 40), and then interpreted Pharaoh's dreams (Ge 41:4-40). For this, he was given a high position under Pharaoh (Ge 41:41-57). During a famine his brothers came to Egypt to buy grain, and so Joseph was reunited with his aged father and with his brothers (Ge 42-47); 2. the husband of Mary and childhood father of Jesus (Mt 1:16-24; 2:13-19); 3. a disciple of Jesus from Arimathea; he gave his tomb for Jesus' burial (Mt 27:57-61); 4. the original name of Barnabas (Ac 4:36).

Joshua—1. the son of Nun (Nu 13:8); Moses' aide on Mt. Sinai, when God revealed how Israel was to live as his chosen people (Ex 24:13); spied out the land of Canaan (Nu 13); and he and Caleb, though members of the generation of Israelites who had showed a lack of faith forty years earlier, were allowed to enter the promised land (Nu 14:6,30). As the successor of Moses (Dt 31:1-18), he led the Israelites across the Jordan River into Canaan (Jos 3-4), was the commander in the

conquest of Jericho (Jos 6). At (Jos 7-8), and a large part of Canaan (Jos 10-12), oversaw the dividing up of the promised land among the twelve tribes of Israel (Jos 13-22), 2. the high priest in Israel during the rebuilding of both the temple (Hag 1-2) and the altar (Ezr 3:2-8); also called Jeshua.

Judah—1. Jacob's fourth son; 2. the tribe of Israel whose members were descendants of Judah, 3. a name for the southern kingdom after Judah and Benjamin separated from the northern ten tribes.

Ge 29:35 So she named him *J*.

Jer 13:19 All *J* will be carried into exile,

Zec 10:4 From *J* will come the cornerstone.

Judaism—the teachings of the Jewish religion.

Judas—1. one of the twelve apostles (Lk 6:16, Ac 1:13); was probably also called Thaddaeus (Mt 10:3); 2. one of the brothers of Jesus (Mt 13:55), author of the last epistle in the New Testament (Jude 1), 3. one of the twelve apostles, also called Iscariot, he betrayed Jesus (Mk 3:19; 14:10-50) and then hung himself (Mt 27:3-5).

judge—to decide if something is good or bad, to condemn.

Ps 9:8 He will *J* the world in righteousness.

Mt 7:1 Do not *J*, or you too will be judged.

2Ti 4:1 who will *J* the living and the dead.

judgment—1. a decision or opinion; 2. a decision of guilt or innocence made by a judge in a court of law; punishment decided on by a court; 3. a decision from God, especially the final judgment when God will reward those who believe in him and condemn all others to hell.

Dt 1:17 of any man, for *J* belongs to God.

Ps 119:66 Teach me knowledge and good *J*.

Isa 66:16 the Lord will execute *J*.

Mt 5:21 who murders will be subject to *J*.

Mt 12:36 have to give account on the day of *J*.

Jn 5:22 but has entrusted all *J* to the Son.

Ro 14:10 stand before God's *J* seat.

2Co 5:10 appear before the *J* seat of Christ.

jurisdiction—one's power and right to rule.

justice—fairness.

Isa 30:18 For the LORD is a God of *J*.

Isa 61:8 "For I, the LORD, love *J*."

Zec 7:9 "Administer true *J*; show mercy."

Lk 11:42 you neglect *J* and the love of God.

justification—God's action in treating us as if we had never sinned.

Ro 4:25 and was raised to life for our *J*.

Ro 5:18 of righteousness was *J* that brings

justify—to erase someone's sins; to declare righteous.

Ac 13:39 him everyone who believes is *J*

DICTIONARY-CONCORDANCE

Ro 3:24 and are *J* freely by his grace.

Ro 5:1 since we have been *J* through faith.

Gal 3:24 to Christ that we might be *J* by faith.

kingdom—

1x 19:6 you will be for me a *k* of priests.

Mt 6:33 But seek first his *k* and his

Mt 16:19 the keys of the *k* of heaven.

Jn 18:36 "My *k* is not of this world."

1Co 15:24 hand over the *k* to God the Father.

Rev 11:15 of the world has become the *k* kingdom of heaven (also called, kingdom of God)—God's rule in the lives of his chosen people and in his creation. Anyone who is born again by believing in Jesus enters this kingdom.

Mt 3:2 "Repent, for the *k* of heaven is near."

Mt 5:3 for theirs is the *k* of heaven.

kinsman-redeemer—a close male relative who had the right to marry a widow and buy ("redeem") her husband's property.

Ruth 3:9 over me, since you are a *k*."

Laban—the brother of Rebekah (Ge 24:29-51) and father of Rachel and Leah (Ge 29:31).

lamb—

Isa 53:7 he was led like a *l* to the slaughter.

1Co 5:7 our Passover *l*, has been sacrificed.

Rev 5:6 Then I saw a *L*, looking

Lamb of God—a name for Jesus that reminds us that he is like the lambs offered for sacrifice in the Old Testament.

Jn 1:29 *L* of God, who takes away the sin.

lament—a cry of grief. (Also, lamentation).

law—1. God's rules, which help his people know what is right and wrong. The Ten Commandments are part of God's law; 2. Law, the first five books of the Bible, written by Moses.

Ne 8:8 from the Book of the *L* of God.

Ps 1:2 and on his *l* he meditates day

Ps 19:7 the *l* of the LORD is perfect.

Ps 119:97 Oh, how I love your *l*!

Mt 22:40 All the *L* and the Prophets hang

Ro 8:3 For what the *l* was powerless to do

Ro 13:10 love is the fulfillment of the *l*.

Gal 3:24 So the *l* was put in charge to lead us.

Lazarus—1. the poor man in one of Jesus' parables (Lk 16:19-31); 2. the brother of Mary and Martha; Jesus raised him from the dead (Jn 11:1-12:19).

Leah—the wife of Jacob; she had six sons and one daughter (Ge 29:16-30:21).

legion—1. a group of 6,000 soldiers in the Roman army; 2. any very large group of people or things.

leprosy—a word used in the Bible for many different skin diseases and infections

Levite—a member of the tribe of Levi. The Levites took care of the temple. Only Levites could become priests, but not all Levites were priests.

Nu 1:53 The *L* are to be responsible

lewd—indecent; wicked.

life—

physical life

Ge 2:7 into his nostrils the breath of *l*

Ps 23:6 all the days of my *l*

Jer 10:23 that a man's *l* is not his own

Mk 10:45 to give his *l* as a ransom for many."

Jn 15:13 lay down his *l* for his friends.

Eph 4:1 I urge you to live a *l* worthy

Col 1:10 order that you may live a *l* worthy spiritual life

Mt 6:25 is not *l* more important than food

Mt 10:39 Whoever finds his *l* will lose it

Jn 1:4 In him was *l*, and that *l* was

Jn 3:15 believes in him may have eternal *l*.

Jn 3:36 believes in the Son has eternal *l*

Jn 11:25 "I am the resurrection and the *l*.

Jn 14:6 am the way and the truth and the *l*.

Jn 20:31 that by believing you may have *l*

Ro 6:13 have been brought from death to *l*

Ro 6:23 but the gift of God is eternal *l*

1Jn 3:14 we have passed from death to *l*

light—

Ge 1:3 "Let there be *l*," and there was *l*

2Sa 22:29 LORD turns my darkness into *l*.

Ps 27:1 LORD is my *l* and my salvation

Ps 119:105 and a *l* for my path.

Isa 9:2 have seen a great *l*

Mt 5:16 let your *l* shine before men

Jn 8:12 he said, "I am the *l* of the world.

2Co 4:6 made his *l* shine in our hearts

1Jn 1:5 God is *l*; in him there is no

live—

Ex 20:12 so that you may *l* long

Ro 1:17 "The righteous will *l* by faith."

2Co 5:7 We *l* by faith, not by sight.

Php 1:21 to *l* is Christ and to die is gain.

locusts—a type of grasshopper. When they would settle in a grain field, orchard or other cultivated area in Bible times, they could devastate the crop.

Lord—

Mt 3:3 'Prepare the way for the *L*

Mt 22:37 "Love the *L* your God

Lk 2:9 glory of the *L* shone around them

Ac 16:31 replied, "Believe in the *L* Jesus

Ro 10:13 on the name of the *L* will be saved

Php 2:11 confess that Jesus Christ is *L*

Heb 13:6 *L* is my helper

2Pe 1:16 and coming of our *L* Jesus Christ

Rev 17:14 he is *L* of lords and King of kings

Rev 22:20 Come, *L* Jesus

LORD (Yahweh)—

Ge 2:4 When the *L* God made the earth

Ex 20:2 "I am the *L* your God, who

Ps 23:1 The *L* is my shepherd, I shall lack

Ps 103:1 Praise the *L*, O my soul

Pr 1:7 The fear of the *L* is the beginning

Isa 6:3 Holy, holy is the *L* Almighty

Isa 55:6 Seek the *L* while he may be found

Lot—the nephew of Abraham (Ge 12:5). He chose to live in Sodom (Ge 13). At one point Abraham rescued him from four kings (Ge 14), and later he pleaded with God for Lot's life when God was about to destroy Sodom (Ge 19:1-29).

lot—one of the ways used in Bible times to find out God's will about a matter. It is something like drawing straws.

Mt 27:35 divided up his clothes by casting *l*.

Ac 1:26 Then they drew *l*, and the *l* fell

love (v ; n)—

Ex 20:6 showing *l* to thousands who *l* me

Ps 23:6 Surely goodness and *l* will follow

Ps 136:1-26 His *l* endures forever.

Isa 61:8 "For *l*, the LORD, *l* justice

Mt 3:17 "This is my Son, whom *l* *l*

Mt 5:44 *L* your enemies and pray

Mt 19:19 and '*l* your neighbor as your-self'"

Jn 13:34 I give you: *L* one another

Jn 15:13 Greater *l* has no one than this

Ro 13:10 Therefore *l* is the fulfillment

Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is *l*, joy

Eph 1:4 in *l* he predestined us

1Jn 3:10 anyone who does not *l* his brother

1Jn 3:16 This is how we know what *l* is

1Jn 4:7 for *l* comes from God

1Jn 4:10 This is *l*, not that we loved God

1Jn 4:16 God is *l*.

Luke—a co-worker with Paul, he wrote the books of Luke and Acts (Col 4:14).

lust—a strong desire for something wrong.

Pr 6:25 Do not *l* in your heart

Ro 1:26 God gave them over to shameful *l*.

lute—a stringed musical instrument, with a pear-shaped body and neck. It is played in the same way as a guitar.

lyre—a small lap harp with three to twelve strings.

Magi—men of Arabia and Persia who studied the stars. People thought they had the power to tell the meaning of dreams.

Mt 2:1 *M* from the east came to Jerusalem

maimed—crippled; having lost a part of one's body, such as an arm or leg

majestic—great and powerful

Ex 15:6 was *m* in power

Ps 8:1 how *m* is your name in all the earth!

Ps 111:3 Glorious and *m* are his deeds

malice—hatred, wishing harm on someone else

manger—a feedbox for cows or other animals

Lk 2:7 in strips of cloth and lying in a *m*.

manna—the special food God gave daily to the Israelites until they reached the promised land

Ex 16:31 people of Israel called the bread *m*

In 6:49 Your forefathers ate the *m*

Mark, John—the cousin of Barnabas (Col 4:10), a helper to Paul and Barnabas (Ac 13:5), later a co-worker with Barnabas (Ac 15:39) and then Paul (Phm 24), author of the second gospel, according to early church tradition

marriage—

Mt 22:30 neither marry nor be given in *m*

Ro 7:2 she is released from the law of *m*.

Heb 13:4 by all, and the *m* bed kept pure

Martha—the sister of Mary and Lazarus, the man whom Jesus raised from the dead (Jn 11, 12:2)

martyr—a person who suffers greatly or dies for what he or she believes in

marvel—to be surprised; to be filled with wonder

Mary—1. the mother of Jesus (Mt 1:16-25; Mk 3:31, Jn 19:25-27; Ac 1:14), 2. Mary Magdalene—a woman whom Jesus freed from demons (Lk 8:2); became a supporter of Jesus' ministry (Lk 8:1-3); was present at the cross (Mk 15:40); and was one of the women who came on Easter morning to the tomb (Mt 27:61), where she saw the angel (Lk 24:1-12) and the resurrected Jesus (Jn 20:1-18), 3. the sister of Martha and Lazarus, the man whom Jesus raised from the dead (Jn 11), she washed Jesus' feet with expensive perfume (Jn 12:1-8)

Matthew—a tax collector who became one of the twelve apostles (Mt 9:9-13), also called Levi (Mk 2:14-17)

mediator—one who makes peace between two people or two groups who are displeased and/or angry with each other. Jesus is the mediator between us and God.

1Ti 2:5 and one *m* between God and men

Heb 9:15 For this reason Christ is the *m*

meditate—to think seriously and carefully.

Ps 1:2 and on his law he *m* day and night.

Ps 119:15 I *m* on your precepts

DICTIONARY-CONCORDANCE

medium—a person who can supposedly talk with the spirits of people who have died

meek—patient; mild; gentle.

Mt 5:5 Blessed are the *m*

mercy—kindness and forgiveness, especially when given to a person who doesn't deserve it

Mic 6:8 To act justly and to love *m*

Ro 9:15 "I will have *m* on whom I have *m*

1Pe 1:3 In his great *m* he has given us new

Messiah—the "Anointed One"; Christ, the one the Jews expected to come and be their king.

Jn 1:41 "We have found the *M*" (that is

Methuselah—a man in early Bible times who lived 969 years (Ge 5:27)

midwife—a woman who helped with the birth of a baby.

millstone—one of a pair of stones used to crush grain for flour.

Lk 17:2 sea with a *m* tied around his neck

minister—(v.) to serve; to give care or attention to; (n.) one who serves; one who gives care or attention to.

1Sa 3:1 The boy Samuel *m*

2Co 3:6 as *m* of a new covenant

1Ti 4:6 you will be a good *m*

miracle—an unusual happening, one that goes against the normal laws of nature. Miracles are done by the power of God

Ps 77:14 You are the God who performs *m*

Jn 14:11 the evidence of the *m* themselves.

Ac 2:22 accredited by God to you by *m*

Heb 2:4 it by signs, wonders and various

m

Miriam—the sister of Moses and Aaron (Nu 26:59); led the Israelites in praising God in dance and song after he had parted the waters of the Red Sea (Ex 15:20-21); later temporarily struck with leprosy because she criticized Moses (Nu 12).

money—

Ecc 5:10 Whoever loves *m* never has *m*

Mt 6:24 You cannot serve both God and *M*

1Co 16:2 set aside a sum of *m* in keeping

1Ti 6:10 For the love of *m* is a root

mortal—human; able to die.

1Co 15:53 and the *m* with immortality.

Moses—the leader of Israel, from the flight out of Egypt to their arrival outside the promised land. As a baby, his mother and sister placed him in a basket in the Nile River to save his life; he was discovered here by Pharaoh's daughter (Ex 2:1-10), who raised him at the royal court. After killing an Egyptian he fled to Midian (Ex 2:11-15), where he was called by the Lord to deliver Israel (Ex

3-4). Pharaoh refused to listen to God's warnings (Ex 5), and God punished him and his people with ten plagues (Ex 7-11). Moses instructed the people in their initial observance of the Passover and led them in the exodus out of Egypt, culminating in their passing through the Red Sea (Ex 12-14). He received the law of God at Sinai (Ex 19-23) and gave it to the people of Israel. He supervised the building of the tabernacle (Ex 36-40), set apart Aaron and priests to lead the Israelites in worshipping God (Ex 8-9), and, under his supervision, twelve spies were sent into Canaan (Nu 13). When ten of the spies returned with a pessimistic report, the Israelites believed this account, thereby showing a lack of faith in God. God in turn punished them with forty years of wandering outside the promised land (Nu 14). Moses was allowed to view the land of Canaan from the top of Mount Nebo, but died without entering it (Nu 20:1-13; Dt 34:5-12).

muster—to gather together, especially to gather soldiers for war.

mute—unable to speak.

myrrh—the sweet-smelling sap of the myrrh bush. It was used to make the sacred anointing oil.

Mt 2:11 of gold and of incense and of *m*.

Naomi—the mother-in-law of Ruth (Ru 1); she advised Ruth to seek marriage with Boaz (Ru 2-4).

nard—a pleasant-smelling oil from the spikenard, a plant that grew in India. Since this oil had to be brought from India to Israel, it was very expensive.

Nathanael—one of the twelve apostles (Jn 1:45-49); was probably also called Bartholomew (Mt 10:3).

Nazarene—1. a person who lived in or came from the town of Nazareth in Galilee. 2. a member of an early sect of Jewish converts to Christianity who retained the Mosaic ritual.

Mk 16:6 looking for Jesus the *N*

Nazirite—a person who separated himself or herself by taking a vow to do special work for God. This included a promise not to cut one's hair and not to drink wine.

Jdg 13:5 because the boy is to be a *N*

Nehemiah—the Jewish "cupbearer" of King Artaxerxes of Persia (Ne 2:1); a trusted and highly placed official in the court of Artaxerxes; temporarily appointed governor of Judah; while in Jerusalem rebuilt the walls of the city (Ne 2-6) and with Ezra reestablished the worship of God there after the Babylonian exile (Ne 8).

Nicodemus—a Pharisee who visited Jesus at night (Jn 3) and learned about being born

again With Joseph of Arimathea, he prepared Jesus' body for burial (Jn 19:38-42).

Noah—"a righteous man" in early Bible times; he built an ark, as God commanded him (Ge 6-8). God made a covenant with him never again to cover the entire earth with a flood (Ge 9).

nullify—to make of no value; to make unimportant.

oath—a promise in which one asks God to witness that something is true.

obey—to do as asked; to yield to someone's commands or wishes.

Dt 6:3 careful to *o* so that it may go well
Dt 13:4 Keep his commands and *o* him
1Sa 15:22 To *o* is better than sacrifice
Jn 14:23 loves me, he will *o* my teaching.
Ac 5:29 "We must *o* God rather than men!"
Eph 6:1 *o* your parents in the Lord

offend—to make someone angry by what you do.

offering—1. something given to God as an act of worship; 2. the killing of an animal to make the relationship between God and man right again. In the Old Testament, animals and grains were regularly used as offerings, in an attempt to bring the people closer to God.

Ge 22:8 provide the lamb for the burnt *o*
Isa 53:10 the Lord makes his life a guilt *o*
Mk 12:33 is more important than all burnt *o*

Eph 5:2 as a fragrant *o* and sacrifice to God.

offshoot—a branch off the main stem of a tree or plant.

offspring—children.

Ge 3:15 and between your *o* and hers
Ge 12:7 "To your *o* I will give this land."

omen—an event or sign believed to foretell the future.

oppress—to control people unfairly and cruelly by the use of one's power.

Isa 53:7 He was *o* and afflicted
Zec 7:10 Do not *o* the widow

oracle—1. a saying or answer; 2. the word of the Lord.

ordain—1. to set apart for a specific office or duty; 2. to order or command.

ordinance—1. an official law; 2. a law made or commanded by God.

overseer—a person who watches over and takes care of others. *Overseer* was one of the terms used for leaders in the early church.

Ac 20:28 the Holy Spirit has made you *o*.
1Ti 3:2 Now the *o* must be above reproach

pagan—a person who does not worship

God, especially someone who worships idols.

1Pe 2:12 such good lives among the *p* that
papyrus—1. a large water plant, similar to the reed, that grows in marshes and lakes. Moses' mother put him in a basket made from papyrus (Ex 2:3); 2. a paper made from this plant

parable—a story that tells a special lesson or truth Jesus told many parables.

paradise—a perfect place; heaven.

Lk 23:43 today you will be with me in *p*."

paralytic—a person who is unable to move certain parts of his or her body

Mk 2:3 bringing to him a *p*, carried by four

parents—

Pr 17:6 and *p* are the pride of their children

Eph 6:1 Children, obey your *p* in the Lord

Col 3:20 obey your *p* in everything

Passover—an annual Jewish holiday that yet today reminds the Jewish people of how God freed them from slavery in Egypt. At the Passover feast, the Jews eat bread made without yeast (unleavened bread), bitter herbs and lamb. With the unleavened bread they remember that they left Egypt hastily. There was no time to wait for yeast bread to rise. Bitter herbs remind them of their suffering in Egypt. The lamb reminds them of the lamb they killed at the first Passover and how they put its blood on their doorframes. The Lord "passed over" the homes so marked, but he killed all the other firstborn in Egypt.

Ex 12:11 Eat it in haste; it is the Lord's *P*.

Passover Lamb—the lamb killed on the Passover as a sacrifice. Jesus is our Passover Lamb. He was sacrificed for our deliverance from sin, in the same way a lamb was sacrificed to show deliverance from Egypt.

1Co 5:7 our *P* lamb, has been sacrificed.

patience—

Gal 5:22 joy, peace, *p*, kindness, goodness

patient—able to put up with problems or pain without complaining or becoming angry.

Ro 12:12 Be joyful in hope, *p* in affliction

1Co 13:4 Love is *p*, love is kind.

patriarch—the father and ruler of a family; the head of a tribe.

Paul—a Pharisee from Tarsus (Ac 9:11); named Saul at birth (Ac 13:9). Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus, and in this way God turned one of the fiercest persecutors of the Christian church into one of its mightiest servants (Ac 9:4-9; 26:12-18). Paul became an apostle (Gal 1), and preached the Good News to the Gentiles.

His first missionary journey was to Cyprus and Galatia (Ac 13:14), his second journey, with Silas, took him to Macedonia (Ac 16:10). After his return to Jerusalem, he was arrested (Ac 21), but continued to preach (Ac 23:1-11). He was then transferred to Caesarea (Ac 23:12-35), where he was tried before Felix (Ac 24). After being imprisoned for two years Paul was tried further, first before Festus and then before King Agrippa (Ac 25, 26). Despite shipwreck on the way to Rome (Ac 27), he arrived safely and was put under house arrest (Ac 28). It is obvious from Paul's writings that he was released from this first Roman imprisonment and that he ministered further to the growing Christian church. He died, perhaps beheaded, in Rome. Paul's writings make up a significant portion of the New Testament, and range from intricate theology to passionate letters to struggling churches.

peace—freedom from disturbance, calm

Isa 9:6 Everlasting Father, Prince of *P*

Lk 2:14 on earth *p* to men on whom has

Jn 14:27 *P* I leave with you, my *p*

Ro 5:1 we have *p* with God

Gal 5:22 joy, *p*, patience, kindness

1Pe 3:11 he must seek *p* and pursue it

Pentecost—a Jewish feast celebrated fifty days after the Passover. Today the Christian church celebrates Pentecost because it was the day the Holy Spirit came to dwell with Christ's followers.

Ac 2:1-4

people—

Jer 24:7 They will be my *p*

Ac 15:14 from the Gentiles a *p*

2Co 6:16 and they will be my *p*."

1Pe 2:9 you are a chosen *p*

perishable—able to spoil; able to be destroyed.

1Co 15:42 the body that is sown is *p*

perjurer—a person who lies under oath.

persecute—to continually treat someone cruelly and unfairly, even though that person has done nothing wrong. The early Christians were persecuted for believing in Jesus as the Son of God.

Jn 15:20 they *p* me, they will *p* you

Ro 12:14 Bless those who *p* you; bless

persecution—

Ro 8:35 or hardship or *p* or famine

perseverance—

Ro 5:3 we know that suffering produces *p*

Ro 5:4 *p*, character; and character, hope.

Heb 12:1 run with *p* the race marked out

persevere—to refuse to give up; to keep on trying; to continue in one's actions or beliefs in spite of problems.

Heb 10:36 You need to *p* so that

pervert—to use wrongly; to turn from what is right

pestilence—a plague, a disease that spreads quickly and kills many people

Peter—one of the twelve apostles; the brother of Andrew; also called Simon (Lk 6:14) and Cephas (Jn 1:42). Although Jesus predicted that Peter would deny him (Mk 14:27-31) and though he did deny Jesus three times (Mk 14:66-72), after his resurrection Jesus commissioned Peter to shepherd his flock (Jn 21:15-20). At Pentecost he becomes bold and preaches a sermon (Ac 2), and he continues to heal (Ac 3:1-10) and preach (Ac 3:11-26), even though challenged by the Sanhedrin (Ac 4:1-22). Later God speaks to him in a vision and Peter goes to the Gentile Cornelius to tell him about Jesus (Ac 10).

Pharisees—a group of Jews who obeyed very strictly both God's laws and all their own rules about God's laws.

Mt 5:20 surpasses that of the P

Philip—1. one of the twelve apostles (Mt 10:3), 2. a deacon (Ac 6:1-7) and evangelist in Samaria; he witnessed to an Ethiopian (Ac 8:4-40)

phylactery—a small leather box containing verses from the Old Testament; male Jews wore these boxes on their foreheads and left arms when they prayed

Mt 23:5 They make their *p* wide

piety—love and reverence for God; devotion to God

Pilate—the governor of Judea who questioned Jesus (Lk 22:66-23:25) and then sent him to Herod (Lk 23:6-12). Pilate finally consented to Jesus' crucifixion when the crowds chose Barabbas rather than Jesus to be released (Lk 23:13-25)

plague—1. a disease that kills many people, such as the plague of boils; 2. an event that causes much suffering or loss, especially a trouble in which there is a great number of offending agents, such as the plague of locusts

plowshare—the pointed part of the plow; it cuts into the soil to make rows.

Isa 2:4 They will beat their swords into *p*

plunder—1. (v.) to loot or rob during a war; 2. (n.) property taken by plundering.

pomegranate—a reddish fruit about the size of an orange. It has many seeds and a juicy pulp

poor—

Dt 15:4 there should be no *p* among you

Ps 82:3 maintain the rights of the *p*

Pr 14:31 oppresses the *p* shows contempt

Isa 61:1 me to preach good news to the *p*.

Mt 5:3 "Blessed are the *p* in spirit

Mt 26:11 the *p* you will always have

1Co 13:3 If I give all I possess to the *p*

2Co 8:9 yet for your sakes he became *p*

praise—(v.) to glorify, to say good things about someone or something, (n.) approval, worship

1s 45:2 He be my God, and I will *p* him

Ps 119:175 Let me live that I may *p* you

1Ph 1:12 might be for the *p* of his glory

pray—

2Ch 7:14 will humble themselves and *p*

Mt 6:5 "But when you *p*, do not be like

Ro 8:26 do not know what we ought to *p*

1Th 5:16,17 Be joyful always, *p* continually

precept—command, law, rule

Ps 19:8 the *p* of the Lord are right

Ps 119:69 I keep your *p* with all my heart

predetermine—to decide or decree ahead of time

Ro 8:30 And those he *p*, he also called

Eph 1:5 In love he *p* us to be adopted

prevail—to triumph or succeed.

pride—

Pr 8:13 I hate *p* and arrogance

Pr 16:18 *P* goes before destruction

Gal 6:4 Then he can take *p* in himself

priest—a Levite who offered sacrifices and prayers to God for the people.

Heb 4:14 have a great high *p* who has gone

Heb 7:26 Such a high *p* meets our need

proclaim—to announce or declare

1Ch 16:23 *p* his salvation day after day

Ps 19:1 the skies *p* the work of his hands.

1Co 11:26 you *p* the Lord's death

profane—to make a holy thing impure by treating it with disrespect or irreverence.

Lev 22:32 Do no *p* my holy name.

prone—naturally inclined; having a tendency toward or liking for.

prophecy—a message from God that a prophet brings to the people.

1Co 13:8 where there are *p*, they will cease

2Pe 1:20 you must understand that no *p*

prophecy—to give the message of God to the people.

Joel 2:28 Your sons and daughters will *p*

1Co 14:39 my brothers, be eager to *p*

prophet—a person who receives messages from God to tell to his people. A prophet is called by God to speak for him.

Dt 18:18 up for them a *p* like you

Lk 24:25 believe all that the *p* have spoken!

Ac 10:43 All the *p* testify about him that

2Pe 1:19 word of the *p* made more certain

prostitute—a person who lets someone use his or her body for sexual relations, in exchange for money.

Lk 15:30 property with *p* comes home

1Co 6:9 male *p* nor homosexual offenders

prostrate—lying facedown on the ground

provoke—to make angry; to cause trouble

psalm—poetry written to praise God

1 Pt 3:19 Speak to one another with p

purify—to make pure or clean

1 Jn 1:7 of Jesus, his Son, p us from all sin.

1 Jn 1:9 and p us from all unrighteousness

Purim—an annual Jewish holiday for celebrating Queen Esther's rescue of the Jews when Haman plotted to destroy them.

Rachel—the daughter of Laban (Ge 29:16), she became Jacob's wife (Ge 29:28) and bore him two sons, Joseph and Benjamin (Ge 30:22-24, 35:16-24)

ransom—the price paid to get back a person who is held as a slave. Because we were slaves of sin, a ransom had to be paid for us. That ransom was the death of a sinless person—Jesus, the perfect one, paid our ransom when he died on the cross for us.

Mt 20:28 and to give his life as a r for many

Heb 9:15 as a r to set them free

reap—1. to cut down grain at harvest time; to gather a crop together; 2. to get as a result or reward

Gal 6:7 A man r what he sows.

Rebekah—the sister of Laban and Isaac's wife (Ge 24); the mother of Esau and Jacob (Ge 25:19-26). With her encouragement Jacob tricked his father into giving him the blessing that belonged to Esau (Ge 27:1-17).

rebel—1. (v.) to disobey and turn against those in authority; 2. (n.) a person who disobeys and flaunts authority

rebuke—to scold sharply.

2 Ti 4:2 correct, r and encourage

Rev 3:19 Those whom I love I r

recompense—to pay or repay; to make up for

reconcile—to return to friendship after a quarrel

Mt 5:24 First go and be r to your brother

Ro 5:10 we were r to him through death

reconciliation—

Ro 5:11 whom we have now received r.

2 Co 5:18 and gave us the ministry of r

2 Co 5:19 committed to us the message of

redeem—1. to free from evil by paying a price (Gal 3:13); 2. to buy back.

Ex 6:6 slaves to them and will r you

Gal 3:13 Christ r us from the curse

redemption—the act of being bought back.

Eph 1:7 In him we have r through his blood

Col 1:14 in whom we have r, the forgiveness

Rehoboam—the son of Solomon; he became king after his father's death (1 Ki 11:43). The cause of his harsh treatment of the people Israel was divided into two kingdoms (1 Ki 12:1-24, 14:21-31)

rejoice—to express joy or gladness

1 Pt 1:18:24 let us r and be glad in it

1 K 1:47 and my spirit r in God my Savior

Php 4:4 R in the Lord always.

repent—to turn away from sin; to be sorry for what you have done and to promise not to do it again.

Mt 4:17 "R, for the kingdom of heaven is Lk 13:3 unless you r, you too will all perish.

Ac 2:38 Peter replied, "R and be baptized,

repentance—

1 K 3:8 Produce fruit in keeping with r.

2 Co 7:10 Godly sorrow brings r that leads

reproach—1. (v.) to blame or accuse, 2. (n.) something for which one can be blamed or criticized; blame, criticism.

restore—to bring back; to return something to its former condition.

Ps 23:3 he r my soul.

Ps 51:12 R to me the joy of your salvation

resurrection—the act of coming back to life after being dead.

Jn 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the r

Ro 1:4 Son of God by his r from the dead

1 Co 15:12 some of you say that there is no r

retribution—punishment for doing wrong.

Jer 51:56 For the Lord is a God of r

revelation—the act of making known or telling about.

Gal 1:12 I received it by r from Jesus Christ.

Rev 1:1 r of Jesus Christ, which God gave

revenge—to hurt or punish a person who has wronged you; to get back at someone who has hurt you.

Lev 19:18 "Do not seek r or bear a grudge

Ro 12:19 Do not take r, my friends

revere—to feel respect for.

reverence—a feeling of respect and honor.

Ps 5:7 in r will I bow down

Col 3:22 of heart and r for the Lord.

revile—to call someone a bad name; to scold in an insulting way.

reward (v.; n.)—

Ps 127:3 children a r from him.

Jer 17:10 to r a man according to his conduct

Mt 5:12 because great is your r in heaven

Mt 6:5 they have received their r in full.

Rev 22:12 I am coming soon! My r is with me

righteous—without sin; doing what is right.

Isa 64:6 and all our *r* acts are like filthy rags

Mt 13:49 and separate the wicked from the *r*

Ro 1:17 as it is written: "The *r* will live

Ro 3:10 "There is no one *r*, not even one

1Jn 3:7 does what is right is *r*, just as he is *r*.

righteousness—

Ge 15:6 and he credited it to him as *r*.

Ps 23:3 He guides me in paths of *r*

Mt 5:6 those who hunger and thirst for *r*

Mt 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his *r*

Ro 4:3 and it was credited to him as *r*."

2Ti 3:16 correcting and training in *r*

Ruth—a Moabite widow who went with her mother-in-law Naomi to Bethlehem (Ru 1). There she gathered the gleanings from the field of Boaz (Ru 2), whom she later married (Ru 3-4:12). She was an ancestor of David (Ru 4:13-22) and of Jesus (Mt 1:5).

Sabbath—the seventh day of the week; the Jewish day of rest and worship. It extended from Friday sunset until Saturday sunset.

Ex 20:8 "remember the *S* day

sackcloth—a rough cloth, usually woven from goats' hair. Clothing made of sackcloth was worn as a sign of mourning for the dead or as a sign that a person was sorry for his or her sins.

sacred—holy; set apart for God in a special way.

sacrifice—(v.) to offer as a sacrifice, (n.) an offering given to God for the sins of the people. In the Old Testament God commanded the people to pay for their sins by sacrificing cattle, lambs, goats, doves or pigeons. The animals were killed, their blood splattered against the altar and their bodies burned on the altar. People who were very poor could bring flour to be burned on the altar. These sacrifices were pictures of Jesus' coming as a once-for-all sacrifice for sinners.

Ge 22:2 *S* him there as a burnt offering

Ex 12:27 "It is the Passover *s* to the LORD

1Sa 15:22 To obey is better than *s*

Ro 12:1 to offer your bodies as living *s*

Heb 9:28 so Christ was *s* once

1Jn 2:2 He is the atoning *s* for our sins

Sadducees—a group of Jewish leaders, many of them priests, who accepted only the written law of God. They opposed the Pharisees, who had many additional laws that had been passed down to them by their religious teachers. Unlike the Pharisees, the Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection of the dead, but they agreed with the Pharisees in their hatred of Jesus.

Mk 12:18 *S*, who say there is no resurrection

saints—Christians, people whom God has made holy. A saint can be either a Christian who is alive on earth or one who is already in heaven.

Ro 8:27 intercedes for the *s* in accordance Eph 1:1 To the *s* is Ephesus,

salvation—deliverance from the guilt and power of sin. By his death and resurrection, Jesus brings salvation to people who believe in him.

Ps 27:1 The LORD is my light and my *s*

Lk 2:30 For my eyes have seen your *s*

Ac 4:12 *S* is found in no one else,

2Co 7:10 brings repentance that leads to *s*

Php 2:12 to work out your *s* with fear

Heb 2:3 escape if we ignore such a great *s*

Samaritan—a person of late Old Testament or New Testament times who lived in or came from Samaria. The Samaritans were only partly Jewish, and they worshiped God differently than Jews in Israel. Jews from Judea and Galilee hated the Samaritans. They would go out of their way to travel around Samaria (Lk 10:30-37).

Samson—an Israelite judge whose birth was foretold by an angel (Jdg 13). He married a Philistine woman (Jdg 14) and later took vengeance on the Philistines for forcing his wife to tell the answer to the riddle with which he had challenged them (Jdg 15). He was again betrayed by a woman, Delilah, but in the end became obedient to God and was used by God to punish the Philistines (Jdg 16).

Samuel—often called the last of Israel's judges and the first of her prophets (see also Heb 11:32). His birth was earnestly prayed for by his mother Hannah (1Sa 1:10-18), and when he was old enough she brought him to the temple and he was dedicated to the Lord (1Sa 1:21-28). There he was raised by Eli (1Sa 2:11; 18-26) and was called to be a prophet (1Sa 3). He anointed Saul as king (1Sa 9-10), but later announced God's rejection of Saul (1Sa 15). He anointed David as king (1Sa 16) and protected him from Saul (1Sa 19:18-24).

sanctify—to make holy. Our sanctification begins when we become Christians. It is continued by the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

Ro 15:16 to God, *s* by the Holy Spirit.

1Th 5:23 *s* you through and through.

2Th 2:13 through the *s* work of the Spirit

sanctuary—a place where God is worshiped; a holy place.

Sanhedrin—the ruling council of the Jews in Jesus' time. It was made up of seventy men, and the leader was the high priest. Even

though the Romans had conquered Palestine and a Roman governor ruled the country, the Jews were allowed to judge many of their own matters. The Sanhedrin could decide whether someone was innocent or guilty of breaking a Jewish law, but it could not put anyone to death without the permission of the Roman governor.

Mk 14:55 and the whole *S* were looking for evidence

Sarah—the wife of Abraham and mother of Isaac, first called Sarai (Ge 11:29-31). God promised her that, though she had been barren throughout her life, she would give birth to a son in her old age (Ge 17:15-21; 18:10-15).

Satan—the devil; the leader of the fallen spirits; the most powerful enemy of God and humans

Mk 4:15 *S* comes and takes away the word
2Co 11:14 for *S* himself masquerades

Rev 12:9 serpent called the devil or *S*

Saul—1. the first king of Israel (1Sa 9-10). He was anointed by Samuel but was later rejected by God because he failed to destroy all of the Amalekites (1Sa 15). When David killed Goliath (1Sa 17), Saul attempted to kill him (1Sa 18; 19). Although pursued by Saul, David spared the king's life twice (1Sa 24, 26). Saul was wounded by the Philistines in battle and took his own life (1Sa 31). 2. See Paul.

Savior—a name for Jesus that means he saves his people from sin.

Isa 43:11 and apart from me there is no *s*.

Lk 1:47 and my spirit rejoices in God my *S*

1Ti 4:10 who is the *S* of all men

1Jn 4:14 Son to be the *S* of the world

scabbard—the case that a knife, dagger or sword is carried in.

scepter—a rod or stick held by a king or queen as a sign of royal power and authority

scorpion—a spider-like animal with a poisonous stinger at the end of its tail.

scribe—a person with the important task of copying letters, books and legal papers.

Scripture—all or part of the Bible. When the Bible uses this word it means the Old Testament, since the New Testament had not yet been written. Today we call the Old and New Testaments the Bible or Scripture.

Jn 10:35 and the *S* cannot be broken

2Ti 3:16 All *S* is God-breathed

2Pe 1:20 that no prophecy of *S* came about

scroll—a book made of a long piece of leather or paper that was rolled around a stick at both ends.

Eze 3:1 eat what is before you, eat this *s*

DICTIONARY-CONCORDANCE

seal—1 a tool with a design raised on it or cut into it, 2 the mark made by pressing this tool onto wax, paper or other soft material. A seal was used to close a letter or legal paper or to prove the authority of the paper.

2Co 1:22 set his *s* of ownership on us

Rev 5:2 'Who is worthy to break the *s*

sect—a group of people who hold one or more beliefs in common, especially a small religious group that has separated from a larger group

seer—a prophet, a person who, with God's help, can see what will happen in the future

1Sa 9:9 of today used to be called a *s*

self-control—the ability to control your own actions and feelings

Gal 5:23 faithfulness, gentleness and *s*

2Pe 1:6 and to knowledge, *s*, and to *s*

self-indulgence—doing whatever you feel like doing. Self-indulgence is the opposite of self-control.

sensual—appealing to the body's senses; caring too much for physical pleasures

sexual immorality—using sex in ways God says are wrong

1Co 6:13 body is not meant for *s* immorality

1Th 4:3 that you should avoid *s* immorality

shekel—a specific weight of silver, used as money

Shem—one of the three sons of Noah (Ge 5:32). He, along with his brother Japheth, covered his father when he was naked (Ge 9:21-31). Abraham was one of his descendants (Ge 11:10-32).

shepherd—

Ps 23:1 LORD is my *s*, I shall lack nothing.

Jer 31:10 will watch over his flock like a *s*.

Jn 10:11 The good *s* lays down his life

Ac 20:28 Be *s* of the church of God

sickle—a tool with a long, curved blade and a short handle, used for cutting grain.

signet—a ring with a design on it. The design was stamped in wax to seal a letter or legal paper. Signet rings were usually worn by people in authority.

Simon—1. see Peter; 2. one of the twelve apostles; also called the Zealot (Mt 10:4, Ac 1:13); 3. a sorcerer in Samaria who had great influence on the Samaritan people during the early days of the church, he was severely rebuked by Peter (Ac 8:9-24) for attempting to buy the power of the Holy Spirit.

sin—(v) to break the law of God, (n.) the act of not doing what God wants.

Nu 32:23 be sure that your *s* will find you

Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the *s* is love, joy,

Eph 5:18 Instead, be filled with the *s*

squall—a sudden, strong wind often accompanied by rain or snow

staff—a stick used to lean on, a rod used by a shepherd

Ps 23:4 your rod and your *s*

stature—height; normal growth or development

Lk 2:52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and *s*

stiff-necked—stubborn

stone—to kill or to try to kill someone by throwing rocks, or stones, at him or her.

strength—

Ex 15:2 The LORD is my *s* and my song

Dt 6:5 all your soul and with all your *s*.

Ps 46:1 God is our refuge and *s*

Isa 40:31 will renew their *s*.

Php 4:13 through him who gives me *s*

subdue—to bring under control; to conquer

submission—humbleness; obedience.

1Co 14:34 but must be in *s*, as the Law says

1Ti 2:11 learn in quietness and full *s*.

submit—

Ro 13:1 Everyone must *s* himself

Eph 5:21 *s* to one another out of reverence

Col 3:18 Wives, *s* to your husbands

Jas 4:7 *s* yourselves, then, to God.

suffer—

Mk 8:31 the Son of Man must *s* many things

Lk 24:26 the Christ have to *s* these things

1Co 12:26 If one part *s*, every part *s* with it

suffering—

Isa 53:3 of sorrows, and familiar with *s*.

Ac 5:41 worthy of *s* disgrace for the Name.

Ro 8:17 share in his *s* in order that we may

2Ti 1:8 But join with me in *s* for the gospel

supplication—a humble prayer to God; pleading or begging.

sustain—to give support; to help; to comfort.

Ps 18:35 and your right hand *s* me;

Ps 146:9 and *s* the fatherless and the widow,

symbol—an object or action that stands for or suggests something else. The cross is a symbol of Jesus' death.

synagogue—the Jewish place of worship and religious teaching.

Lk 4:16 the Sabbath day he went into the *s*

Ac 17:2 custom was, Paul went into the *s*
tabernacle—the tent used by the Israelites for meeting with God; the place where God

chose to show his presence. The tabernacle was made by God's command and according to his plans. It is described in detail in Exodus 26.

Ex 40:34 the glory of the LORD filled the *t*

talent—a large amount of silver or gold, worth very much money

Mt 25:15 to another one *t*, each according to *teach*

Ex 33:13 *t* me your ways so I may know you

Ps 90:12 *T* us to number our days aright

Lk 11:1 said to him, "Lord, *t* us to pray

Jn 14:26 will *t* you all things and will remind

temperate—moderate; having self-control.

tempest—a violent storm.

temple—1. the place where the Jewish people worshiped and sacrificed in Jerusalem. The first temple was built by King Solomon as a house for God. 2. the human body.

1Ki 8:27 How much less this *t* I have built!

Ac 17:24 does not live in *t* built by hands.

1Co 6:19 you not know that your body is a *t*

2Co 6:16 For we are the *t* of the living God.

tempt—to try to get someone to do wrong

Mt 4:1 into the desert to be *t* by the devil.

1Co 7:5 again so that Satan will not *t* you.

temptation—

Mt 6:13 And lead us not into *t*

1Co 10:13 No *t* has seized you except what is

testimony—a statement made by a witness to prove that something is true.

Lk 18:20 not give false *t*, honor your father

tetrarch—a ruler over one-fourth of a kingdom.

Thaddaeus—one of the twelve apostles (Mk 3:18); son of James and probably also known as Judas (Lk 6:16; Ac 1:13).

thanks—

1Ch 16:8 give *t* to the LORD, call

Ps 100:4 give *t* to him and praise his name.

1Co 15:57 *t* be to God! He gives us the victory

2Co 9:15 *T* be to God for his indescribable

1Th 5:18 give *t* in all circumstances

thanksgiving—

Ps 100:4 Enter his gates with *t*

Php 4:6 by prayer and petition, with *t*

Thomas—one of the twelve apostles (Lk 6:15; Ac 1:13); he doubted Jesus' resurrection but upon seeing Jesus believed (Jn 20:24-28).

threshing floor—the place where grain was trampled by oxen or beaten with a stick to separate it from the stalk.

Timothy—fellow-traveler and official representative of the apostle Paul. He and his

mother and grandmother were led by Paul to see Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Testament law (2Ti 1:3). He joined Paul on his second missionary journey (Ac 16-20), and at one point in this journey Paul sent him to minister to the church at Corinth (1Co 4:17, 16:10). He was the leader of the church at Ephesus (1Ti 1:3) and a co-writer with Paul (1Th 1:1; 2Th 1:1; Phm 1).

tithe—the giving to God of one-tenth of what you earn.

Lev 27:30 "A *t* of everything from the land

Mal 3:8 the whole *t* into the storehouse

Titus—a Gentile co-worker with Paul (Gal 2:1-3, 2Ti 4:10). Paul sent him to Corinth to aid in solving some of the problems there (2Co 2:13; 7-8; 12:18).

tomb—a burial place. In Bible times, tombs often were either caves or were dug into stone cliffs.

Mt 27:65 make the *t* as secure as you know

Lk 24:2 the stone rolled away from the *t*

tongue—

Ps 39:1 and keep my *t* from sin

Ac 2:4 and began to speak in other *t*

Php 2:11 every *t* confess that Jesus Christ

Isa 1:26 does not keep a tight rein on his *t*

tradition of the elders—the rules that the Jewish religious leaders gave to the people and which they in turn passed on to their children; laws added to the Old Testament by the Jewish leaders.

Mt 15:2 break the *t* of the elders?

trance—a condition of being partly awake and partly in a dream-like state.

transfigure—to change the appearance of; to make bright and glorious.

Mt 17:2 There he was *t* before them.

transgression—sin; disobeying the law of God

Ps 32:1 whose *t* are forgiven,

Isa 53:5 But he was pierced for our *t*

Eph 2:1 you were dead in your *t* and sins

treaty—an agreement between two people or groups or nations.

trespass—sin; wrongdoing.

Ro 5:17 For if, by the *t* of the one man

true—

Ps 119:160 All your words are *t*

Jn 17:3 the only *t* God, and Jesus Christ

Ro 3:4 Let God be *t*, and every man a liar.

Php 4:8 whatever is *t*, whatever is noble

trust (v.); (n.)—

Ps 37:3 *T* in the LORD and do good

Pr 3:5 *T* in the LORD with all your heart

Isa 30:15 in quietness and *t* in your strength

In 14:1 *T* in God, *t* also in me

1Co 4:2 been given a *t* must prove faithful truth

1Pe 5:6 Surely you desire *t*

Zec 8:16 are to do; speak the *t* to each other

In 8:32 Then you will know the *t*

Jn 8:32 and the *t* will set you free "

In 14:6 I am the way and the *t* and the life.

Ro 1:25 They exchanged the *t* of God

1Co 13:6 in evil but rejoices with the *t*

1Pe 4:15 Instead, speaking the *t* in love

Heb 10:26 received the knowledge of the *t*

1Jn 1:6 we lie and do not live by the *t*

1Jn 1:8 deceive ourselves and the *t* is not

tunic—a long shirt worn by men in Bible times.

Lk 6:29 do not stop him from taking your *t*.

turban—a head-covering made by winding a cloth around the head.

unbelief—doubt.

Mk 9:24 help me overcome my *u*!

unbeliever—one who does not believe in Jesus.

2Co 6:14 Do not be yoked together with *u*.

unclean animals—animals the Israelites were not allowed to sacrifice or to eat.

unity—being one.

Ps 133:1 when brothers live together in *u*!

Col 3:14 them all together in perfect *u*.

unleavened bread—bread made without yeast. It is usually flat, like a pancake or cracker.

Ex 12:17 "Celebrate the Feast of *U* Bread

unrepentant—not sorry for one's sins.

upright—honest; doing what is right and good.

usury—very high and unfair interest charged on a loan.

Ne 5:10 But let the exacting of *u* stop!

vain—worthless; unsuccessful; foolish. "In vain" means without success or result.

vassal—1. a servant or slave; 2. someone who is under another person's protection. The vassal received land and protection from a lord. In return, he owed the lord his loyalty and obedience, part of his crops, and, in case of war, help in fighting.

vengeance—hurt or punishment done to another person who has done something wrong to you.

Isa 34:8 For the LORD has a day of *v*,

vile—disgusting, evil.

vindicate—to defend; to provide justice for; to set free.

violate—1. to rape; 2. to make something unholy; 3. to fail to obey.

virgin—a woman or girl who has never had sexual intercourse

Isa 7:14 The *v* will be with child

Mt 1:23 "The *v* will be with child

vision—a dream from God

Nu 12:6 I reveal myself to him in *v*

Joel 2:28 your young men will see *v*.

Ac 26:19 disobedient to the *v* from heaven

vow—a solemn promise made before God or to God

Jdg 11:30 Jephthah made a *v* to the LORD

Ps 116:14 I will fulfill my *v* to the LORD

wail—to cry loudly

walk—

Ps 1:1 who does not *w* in the counsel

Isa 2:5 let us *w* in the light of the LORD.

Mic 6:8 and to *w* humbly with your God.

2Jn:6 his command is that you *w* in love.

wash—

Ps 51:7 *w* me and I will be whiter

Ac 22:16 be baptized and *w* your sins away

watch—

Jer 31:10 will *w* over his flock like a shepherd

Mt 26:41 "W and pray so that you will not fall

way—

2Sa 22:31 "As for God, his *w* is perfect

Ps 1:1 or stand in the *w* of sinners

Ps 37:5 Commit your *w* to the LORD

Isa 53:6 each of us has turned to his own *w*

Jn 14:6 "I am the *w* and the truth

2Co 12:31 will show you the most excellent *w*

wicked—sinful.

Ps 1:1 walk in the counsel of the *w*

Isa 55:7 Let the *w* forsake his way

will (*v.*; *n.*)—

Ps 143:10 Teach me to do your *w*

Isa 53:10 Yet it was the LORD's *w*

Mt 6:10 your *w* be done

Mt 26:39 Yet not as I *w*, but as you *w*."

Ro 12:2 and approve what God's *w* is

Eph 5:17 understand what the Lord's *w* is.

1Jn 5:14 we ask anything according to his *w*

Rev 4:11 and by your *w* they were created

work—(*v.*; *n.*)—

Ex 23:12 "Six days do your *w*

Jn 9:4 we must do the *w* of him who sent

Php 2:12 continue to *w* out your salvation

2Ti 3:17 equipped for every good *w*.

world—

Mt 5:14 "You are the light of the *w*.

DICTIONARY-CONCORDANCE

Mk 16:15 into all the *w* and preach the good

Jn 1:29 who takes away the sin of the *w*

Jn 3:16 so loved the *w* that he gave his one

Jn 8:12 he said, "I am the light of the *w*

1Jn 2:15 not love the *w* or anything in the *w*

worldly—loving the things of the world more than the things of God

Tit 2:12 to ungodliness and *w* passions

worship—(*v.*) to give praise, honor and respect to God, (*n.*) reverence given to God

Ps 95:6 Come, let us bow down in *w*

Jn 4:24 and his worshipers must *w* in spirit

worthy—having value; honorable; deserving.

1Ch 16:25 For great is the LORD and most *w*

Eph 4:1 to live a life *w* of the calling you

Rev 5:2 "Who is *w* to break the seals

wrath—great anger; the strong anger of God.

Pr 15:1 A gentle answer turns away *w*

Ro 5:9 saved from God's *w* through him!

wretch—1. a very unhappy person, someone who has had many bad or difficult things happen to him or her; 2. an evil person

yearn—to long for; to want very much.

yoke—1. (*v.*) to join together, 2. (*n.*) a wooden bar that goes over the necks of two animals, usually oxen. The yoke holds the animals together as they pull an object, such as a plow or a cart.

Mt 11:29 Take my *y* upon you and learn

2Co 6:14 Do not be *y* together

zeal—eagerness; strong desire.

Ro 12:11 Never be lacking in *z*

Zealot—a member of the Jewish group that wanted to fight against and overthrow the Roman government.

Zechariah—a prophet and priest who returned to Jerusalem from the Babylonian captivity; he encouraged the Jews to rebuild the temple (Ezr 5:1; 6:14, Zec 1:1).

Zerubbabel—a descendant of David (1Ch 3:19) and heir to the throne of Judah (1Ch 3:17-19); he led the return from the Babylonian captivity and was appointed governor of Judah by Cyrus, king of Persia (Ezr 1-3; Ne 7:7; Hag 1-2; Zec 4).

Zion—1. the hill on which the city of Jerusalem first stood; David's royal palace and the temple were both built on Mount Zion; 2. the entire city of Jerusalem.

Jer 50:5 They will ask the *wav* to *Z*

Ro 11:26 "The deliverer will come from *Z*

Concordance

Introduction

This *NIV Concordance* indexes more than 2,000 words from the New International Version Bible and contains over 13,000 references which we have carefully selected as the most helpful for the average Bible student or layperson.

When determining whether or not to include a verse reference, we gave careful consideration to the passage in which the verse is located. We also encourage you to always consider the larger context of the passage, giving special attention to the flow of the thought from beginning to end. Whenever you look up a verse, your goal should be to discover the intended meaning of the verse in context. Do not use this concordance, or any concordance, merely as a *verse-finder*; it should also be used as a *passage-finder*. The contexts surrounding each entry are longer than those usually found in concordances; but even so, the context excerpts are too brief for study purposes. They serve only to help you locate familiar verses.

In some cases the usual short contextual phrases are ineffective in helping you locate a passage. This is especially true in studying key events in a Bible character's life. Therefore, we have incorporated 134 "block entries" in which we use descriptive phrases that mark the breadth of a passage containing episodes of that person's life. The descriptive phrases replace the brief context surrounding each occurrence of the name.

Often more than one Bible character has the same name. For example, there are more than thirty Zechariahs in the Bible. In these cases we have given the name a block entry, assigning each person a number (1), (2), etc., and have included a descriptive phrase to distinguish each. Insignificant names are not included.

In this concordance there are 223 key word entries that have an exhaustive list of every appearance of that word. When this occurs, the word or block entry is marked with an asterisk (*).

It is our hope that this concordance will become a useful feature of your Bible. Through its use you should become more familiar with God's word by finding favorite or key passages and by exploring new words and people of the Old and New Testaments.

John R. Kohlenberger III
Edward W. Goodrick

AARON

Priesthood of (Ex 28:1, Nu 17, Heb 5:1-4, 7), garments (Ex 28:39), consecration (Ex 29), ordination (Lev 8)

Spokesman for Moses (Ex 4:14-16, 27-31, 7:1-2) Supported Moses' hands in battle (Ex 17:8-13) Built golden calf (Ex 32, 1Th 9:20) Talked against Moses (Nu 12) Priesthood opposed (Nu 16), staff budded (Nu 17) Forbidden to enter land (Nu 20:1-12) Death (Nu 20:22-29, 33:38-19)

ABANDON

Dt 4:31 he will not *a* or destroy you
1Ti 4:1 in later times some will *a* the faith

ABBA

Ro 8:15 And by him we cry, "A, Father"
Gal 4:6 the Spirit who calls out, "A, Father"

ABEL

Second son of Adam (Ge 4:2) Offered proper sacrifice (Ge 4:4, Heb 11:4). Murdered by Cain (Ge 4:8, Mt 23:35, Lk 11:51, 1Jn 3:12).

ABHORS

Pr 11:1 The Lord *a* dishonest scales.

ABIGAIL

Wife of Nabal (1Sa 25:30), pled for his life with David (1Sa 25:14-35) Became David's wife (1Sa 25:36-42)

ABIJAH

Son of Rehoboam, king of Judah (1Ki 14:31-15:8, 2Ch 12:16-14:1)

ABILITY (ABLE)

Ezr 2:69 According to their *a* they gave
2Co 1:8 far beyond our *a* to endure,
8:3 were able, and even beyond their *a*

ABIMELECH

1 King of Gerar who took Abraham's wife Sarah, believing her to be his sister (Ge 20) Later made a covenant with Abraham (Ge 21:22-33)

2 King of Gerar who took Isaac's wife Rebekah, believing her to be his sister (Ge 26:1-11) Later made a covenant with Isaac (Ge 26:12-31)

ABLE (ABILITY ENABLE ENABLED ENABLES)

Eze 7:19 and gold will not be *a* to save them
Da 3:17 the God we serve is *a* to save us
Ro 8:39 will be *a* to separate us
14:4 for the Lord is *a* to make him stand
16:25 to him who is *a* to establish you
2Co 9:8 God is *a* to make all grace abound
Eph 3:20 him who is *a* to do immeasurably
2Ti 1:12 and am convinced that he is *a*
3:15 which are *a* to make you wise
Heb 7:25 he is *a* to save completely
Jude 24 To him who is *a* to keep you
Rev 5:5 He is *a* to open the scroll

ABOLISH

Mt 5:17 that I have come to *a* the Law

ABOMINATION

Da 11:31 set up the *a* that causes desolation

ABOUND (ABOUNDING)

2Co 9:8 able to make all grace *a* to you,
Php 1:9 that your love may *a* more

ABOUNDING (ABOUND)

Ex 34:6 slow to anger, *a* in love
Ps 86:5 *a* in love to all who call to you

ABRAHAM

Covenant relation with the Lord (Ge 12:1-3, 13:14-17, 15:1, 22:15-18, Ex 2:24, Ne 9:8, Ps 105, Mic 7:20 Lk 1:68-75, Ro 4, Heb 6:13-15)

Called from Ur, via Haran, to Canaan (Ge 12:1 Ac 7:2-4, Heb 11:8-10) Moved to Egypt, nearly lost Sarah to Pharaoh (Ge 12:10-20) Divided the land with Lot (Ge 13) Saved Lot from four kings (Ge 14:1-16), blessed by Melchizedek

(Ge 14:17-20; Heb 7:1-20). Declared righteous by faith (Ge 15:6, Ro 4:3, Gal 3:6-9) Fathered Ishmael by Hagar (Ge 16)

Name changed from Abram (Ge 17:5, Ne 9:7) Circumcised (Ge 17 Ro 4:9-12) Entertained three visitors (Ge 18), promised a son by Sarah (Ge 18:9-15, 17:16) Moved to Gerar, nearly lost Sarah to Abimelech (Ge 20) Fathered Isaac by Sarah (Ge 21:1-7, Ac 7:8 Heb 11:11-12), sent away Hagar and Ishmael (Ge 21:8-21 Gal 4:22-30) Tested by offering Isaac (Ge 22, Heb 11:17-19, Jas 2:21-24) Sarah died, bought field of Ephron for burial (Ge 23) Secured wife for Isaac (Ge 24) Death (Ge 25:7-11)

ABSALOM

Son of David by Maacah (2Sa 3:3, 1Ch 3:2) Killed Amnon for rape of his sister Tamar; banished by David (2Sa 13) Returned to Jerusalem, received by David (2Sa 14). Rebelled against David; seized kingdom (2Sa 15-17). Killed (2Sa 18)

ABSTAIN (ABSTAINS)

1Pe 2:11 to *a* from sinful desires.

ABSTAINS* (ABSTAIN)

Ro 14:6 thanks to God, and he who *a*,

ABUNDANCE (ABUNDANT)

Lk 12:15 consist in the *a* of his possessions."
Jude 2 peace and love be yours in *a*

ABUNDANT (ABUNDANCE)

Dt 28:11 will grant you *a* prosperity—
Ps 145:7 will celebrate your *a* goodness
Pr 28:19 works his land will have *a* food,
Ro 5:17 who receive God's *a* provision

ACCEPT (ACCEPTED ACCEPTS)

Ex 23:8 "Do not *a* a bribe.
Pr 10:8 The wise in heart *a* commands,
19:20 Listen to advice and *a* instruction,
Ro 15:7 *A* one another, then, just
Jas 1:21 humbly *a* the word planted in you.

ACCEPTED (ACCEPT)

Lk 4:24 "no prophet is *a* in his hometown

ACCEPTS (ACCEPT)

Ps 6:9 the Lord *a* my prayer
Jn 13:20 whoever *a* anyone I send *a* me.

ACCOMPANY

Mk 16:17 these signs will *a* those who believe
Heb 6:9 your case—things that *a* salvation

ACCOMPLISH

Isa 55:11 but will *a* what I desire

ACCORD

Nu 24:13 not do anything of my own *a*,
Jn 10:18 but I lay it down of my own *a*.
12:49 For I did not speak of my own *a*.

ACCOUNT (ACCOUNTABLE)

Mt 12:36 to give *a* on the day of judgment
Ro 14:12 each of us will give *a* of himself
Heb 4:13 of him to whom we must give *a*

ACCOUNTABLE (ACCOUNT)

Eze 33:6 but I will hold the watchman *a*
Ro 3:19 and the whole world held *a* to God

ACCUSATION (ACCUSE)

1Ti 5:19 Do not entertain *a*

ACCUSATIONS (ACCUSE)

2Pe 2:11 do not bring slanderous *a*

ACCUSE (ACCUSATION ACCUSATIONS)

Pr 3:30 Do not *a* a man for no reason—
Lk 3:14 and don't *a* people falsely—

ACHAN*

Sin at Jericho caused defeat at Ai, stoned (Jos 7, 22:20, 1Ch 2:7)

ACHE*

Pr 14:13 Even in laughter the heart may *a*,

ACKNOWLEDGE

Mt 10:32 *a* him before my Father in heaven.
1Jn 4:3 spirit that does not *a* Jesus is not

ACQUIT

Ex 23:7 to death, for I will not *a* the guilty

ACTION (ACTIONS ACTIVE ACTS)

Jas 2:17 if it is not accompanied by *a*
1Pe 1:13 minds for *a* be self controlled.

ACTIONS (ACTION)

Mt 11:19 wisdom is proved right by her *a*
Gal 6:4 Each one should test his own *a*
Tit 1:16 but by their *a* they deny him

ACTIVE (ACTION)

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and *a*

ACTS (ACTION)

Ps 145:12 all men may know of your mighty *a*
150:2 Praise him for his *a* of power;
Isa 64:6 all our righteous *a* are like filthy
Mt 6:1 not to do your 'a of righteousness'

ADAM

First man (Ge 1:26-2:25, Ro 5:14; 1Ti 2:13)
Sin of (Ge 3; Hos 6:7, Ro 5:12-21) Children of (Ge 4:1-5:5) Death of (Ge 5:5; Ro 5:12-21; 1Co 15:22)

ADD

Dt 12:32 do not *a* to it or take away from it.
Pr 30:6 Do not *a* to his words,
Lk 12:25 by worrying can *a* a single hour
Rev 22:18 God will *a* to him the plagues

ADMIRABLE*

Php 4:8 whatever is lovely, whatever is *a*—

ADMONISH

Col 3:16 and *a* one another with all wisdom,

ADOPTED (ADOPTION)

Eph 1:5 In love he predestined us to be *a*

ADOPTION (ADOPTED)

Ro 8:23 as we wait eagerly for our *a* as sons,

ADORE*

SS 1:4 How right they are to *a* you!

ADORNMENT* (ADORNS)

1Pe 3:3 should not come from outward *a*,

ADORNS (ADORNMENT)

Ps 93:5 holiness *a* your house

ADULTERY

Ex 20:14 "You shall not commit *a*
Mt 5:27 that it was said, 'Do not commit *a*'
5:28 lustfully has already committed *a*
5:32 the divorced woman commits *a*
15:19 murder, *a*, sexual immorality, theft

ADULTS*

1Co 14:20 but in your thinking be *a*

ADVANCED

Job 32:7 *a* years should teach wisdom

ADVANTAGE

Ex 22:22 "Do not take *a* of a widow
Dt 24:14 Do not take *a* of a hired man who is
1Th 4:6 should wrong his brother or take *a*

ADVERSITY

Pr 17:17 and *a* brother is born for *a*

ADVICE

1Ki 12:8 rejected the *a* the elders
12:14 he followed the *a* of the young men
Pr 12:5 but the *a* of the wicked is deceitful
12:15 but *a* wise man listens to *a*
19:20 Listen to *a* and accept instruction,

ARMOR (ARMY)

1Ki 20:11 on his *a* should not boast like one
 Eph 6:11 Put on the full *a* of God
 6:13 Therefore put on the full *a* of God.

ARMS (ARMY)

Da 13:27 underneath are the overhanging *a*
 Ps 18:32 It is God who *a* me with strength
 Pr 31:20 She opens her *a* in the power
 Isa 40:11 He gathers the lambs in his *a*
 Mk 10:16 And he took the children in his *a*.

ARMY (ARM ARMOR ARMS)

Ps 33:16 No king is saved by the size of his *a*
 Rev 19:19 the rider on the horse and his *a*

AROMA

2Co 2:15 For we are to God the *a* of Christ

ARRAYED*

Ps 110: 3 *A* in holy majesty.
 Isa 61:10 and *a* me in a robe of righteousness

ARROGANT

Ro 11:20 Do not be *a* but be afraid

ARROWS

Eph 6:16 you can extinguish all the flaming *a*

ASA

King of Judah (1Ki 15:8-24, 1Ch 3:10; 2Ch 14:16)

ASCENDED

Eph 4:8 "When he *a* on high,

ASCRIBE

1Ch 16:28 *a* to the Lord glory and strength.
 Job 36: 3 I will *a* justice to my Maker
 Ps 29: 2 *A* to the Lord the glory due his

ASHAMED (SHAME)

Lk 9:26 If anyone is *a* of me and my words,
 Ro 1:16 I am not *a* of the gospel.
 2Ti 1: 8 So do not be *a* to testify about our
 2:15 who does not need to be *a*

ASSIGNED

Mk 13:34 with his *a* task, and tells the one
 1Co 3: 5 as the Lord has *a* to each his task
 7:17 place in life that the Lord *a* to him

ASSOCIATE

Pr 22:24 do not *a* with one easily angered.
 Ro 12:16 but be willing to *a* with people
 1Co 5:11 am writing you that you must not *a*
 2Th 3:14 Do not *a* with him.

ASSURANCE

Heb 10:22 with a sincere heart in full *a* of faith

ASTRAY

Pr 10:17 ignores correction leads others *a*
 Isa 53: 6 We all, like sheep, have gone *a*,
 Jer 50: 6 their shepherds have led them *a*
 Jn 16: 1 you so that you will not go *a*
 1Pe 2:25 For you were like sheep going *a*
 1Jn 3: 7 do not let anyone lead you *a*

ATTACIAN

Evil queen of Judah (2Ki 11; 2Ch 23)

ATHLETE*

2Ti 2: 5 if anyone competes as an *a*,

ATONEMENT

Ex 25:17 "Make an *a* cover of pure gold—
 30:10 Once a year Aaron shall make *a*
 Lev 17:11 it is the blood that makes *a*
 23:27 this seventh month is the Day of *A*
 Nu 25:13 and made *a* for the Israelites."
 3:25 presented him as a sacrifice of *a*,
 Heb 2:17 that he might make *a* for the sins

ATTENTION

Pr 4: 1 pay *a* and gain understanding
 5: 1 My son, pay *a* to my wisdom,
 22:17 Pay *a* and listen to the sayings

Th 1:14 and will pay no *a* to Jewish myths

ATTITUDE (ATTITUDES)

Eph 4:23 new in the *a* of your minds.
 Php 2: 5 Your *a* should be the same
 1Pe 4: 1 yourselves also with the same *a*,

ATTITUDES (ATTITUDE)

Heb 4:12 It judges the thoughts and *a*

ATTRACTIVE

Tit 2:10 teaching about God our Savior *a*

AUTHORITIES (AUTHORITY)

Ro 13: 5 it is necessary to submit to the *a*,
 13: 6 for the *a* are God's servants
 13: 7 people to be subject to rulers and *a*
 1Pe 3:22 *a* and powers in submission to him.

AUTHORITY (AUTHORITIES)

Mt 7:29 because he taught as one who had *a*
 9: 6 the Son of Man has *a* on earth
 28:18 All *a* in heaven and on earth has
 Ro 13: 1 for there is no *a* except that which
 13: 2 rebels against the *a* is rebelling
 1Co 11:10 to have a sign of *a* on her head.
 1Ti 2: 2 for kings and all those in *a*,
 2:12 to teach or to have *a* over a man.
 Heb 13:17 your leaders and submit to their *a*

AVENGE (VENGEANCE)

De 32:35 It is mine to *a*, I will repay

AVOID

Pr 20: 3 It is to a man's honor to *a* a strife,
 20:19 so *a* a man who talks too much
 1Th 4: 3 you should *a* sexual immorality;
 5:22 *A* every kind of evil
 2Ti 2:16 *A* godless chatter because those
 Tit 3: 9 But *a* foolish controversies

AWAKE

Ps 17:15 when I *a*, I will be satisfied

AWE (AWESOME)

Job 25: 2 "Dominion and *a* belong to God,
 Ps 119:120 I stand in *a* of your laws
 Ecc 5: 7 Therefore stand in *a* of God
 Isa 29:23 will stand in *a* of the God of Israel.
 Jer 33: 9 they will be in *a* and will tremble
 Hab 3: 2 I stand in *a* of your deeds,
 Mal 2: 5 and stood in *a* of my name.
 Mt 9: 8 they were filled with *a*,
 Lk 7:16 They were all filled with *a*
 Ac 2:43 Everyone was filled with *a*
 Heb 12:28 acceptably with reverence and *a*.

AWESOME (AWE)

Ge 28:17 and said, "How *a* is this place!
 Ex 15:11 *a* in glory,
 Dt 7:21 is among you, is a great and *a* God.
 10:17 the great God mighty and *a*
 28:58 revere this glorious and *a* name—
 Jdg 13: 6 like an angel of God, very *a*.
 Ne 1: 5 of heaven, the great and *a* God.
 9:32 the great, mighty and *a* God,
 Job 10:16 again display your *a* power
 37:22 God comes in *a* majesty
 Ps 45: 4 let your right hand display *a* deeds
 47: 2 How *a* is the Lord Most High.
 66: 5 how *a* his works in man's behalf!
 68:35 You are *a* O God,
 89: 7 he is more *a* than all who surround
 99: 3 praise your great and *a* name—
 111: 9 holy and *a* is his name.
 145: 6 of the power of your *a* works,
 Da 9: 4 'O Lord, the great and *a* God,

BAAL

1Ki 18:25 Elijah said to the prophets of *B*.

BAASHA

King of Israel (1Ki 15:16-16:7; 2Ch 16:1-6).

BABIES (BABY)

Lk 18:15 also bringing *b* to Jesus
 1Pe 2: 2 Like newborn *b*, crave pure

BABY (BABIES)

Isa 49:15 Can a mother forget the *b*
 Lk 1:44 the *b* in my womb leaped for joy
 2:12 You will find *a* *b* wrapped in strips
 Jn 16:21 but when her *b* is born she forgets

BABYLON

Ps 137: 1 By the rivers of *B* we sat and wept

BACKSLIDING

Jer 3:22 I will cure you of *b*
 14: 7 For our *b* is great
 Eze 37:23 them from all their sinful *b*.

BALAAM

Prophet who attempted to curse Israel (Nu 22-24; Dt 23:4-5; 2Pe 2:15; Jude 11). Killed (Nu 31:8; Jos 13:22).

BALM

Jer 8:22 Is there no *b* in Gilead?

BANISH

Jer 25:10 I will *b* from them the sounds of joy

BANQUET

SS 2: 4 He has taken me to the *b* hall,
 Lk 14:13 when you give *a* *b*, invite the poor.

BAPTIZE (BAPTIZED)

Mt 3:11 He will *b* you with the Holy Spirit
 Mk 1: 8 he will *b* you with the Holy Spirit.
 1Co 1:17 For Christ did not send me to *b*.

BAPTIZED (BAPTIZE)

Mt 3: 6 they were *b* by him in the Jordan
 Mk 1: 9 and was *b* by John in the Jordan
 10:38 or be *b* with the baptism I am
 16:16 believes and is *b* will be saved,
 Jn 4: 2 in fact it was not Jesus who *b*,
 Ac 1: 5 but in a few days you will be *b*

BARABBAS

Mt 27:26 Then he released *B* to them

BARF

Nu 33:55 allow to remain will become *b*

BARE

Heb 4:13 and laid *b* before the eyes of him

BARNABAS*

Disciple, originally Joseph (Ac 4:36), prophet (Ac 13:1), apostle (Ac 14:14). Brought Paul to apostles (Ac 9:27), Antioch (Ac 11:22-29; Gal 2:1-13), on the first missionary journey (Ac 13:14). Together at Jerusalem Council they separated over John Mark (Ac 15). Later co-workers (1Co 9:6; Col 4:10)

BARREN

Ps 113: 9 He settles the *b* woman

BARTHOLOMEW*

Apostle (Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lk 6:14; Ac 1:13). Possibly also known as Nathanael (Jn 1:45-49; 21:2)

BATH

Jn 13:10 person who has had *a* *b* needs only

BATHSHEBA

Wife of Uriah who committed adultery with and became wife of David (2Sa 11), mother of Solomon (2Sa 12:24; 1Ki 1:2; 1Ch 3:5)

BATTLE

2Ch 20:15 For the *b* is not yours, but God's
 Ps 24: 8 the Lord mighty in *b*
 Ecc 9:11 or the *b* to the strong.

BEAR (BEARING BIRTH BIRTHRIGHT BORN FIRSTBORN NEWBORN)

Ge 4:13 punishment is more than I can *b*
 Ps 38: 4 like a burden too heavy to *b*
 Isa 53:11 and he will *b* their iniquities
 Da 7: 5 beast, which looked like *a* *b*
 Mt 7:18 A good tree cannot *b* bad fruit.

Ps 2 12 *B* ate all who take refuge in him
 32 12 *B* is the nation whose God is
 41 1 *B* is he who has regard for the weak
 84 5 *B* are those whose strength is
 106 3 *B* are they who maintain justice.
 112 1 *B* is the man who fears the Lord.
 118 26 *B* is he who comes in the name
 Pr 29 18 but *b* is he who keeps the law
 31 28 Her children arise and call her *b*.
 Mr^s 5 3 saying *B* are the poor in spirit.
 5 4 *B* are those who mourn.
 5 5 *B* are the meek
 5 6 *B* are those who hunger
 5 7 *B* are the merciful,
 5 8 *B* are the pure in heart.
 5 9 *B* are the peacemakers.
 5 10 *B* are those who are persecuted
 5 11 "*B* are you when people insult you.
 Lk 1 48 on all generations will call me *b*.
 Jn 12 13 "*B* is he who comes in the name
 Ac 20 35 "It is more *b* to give than to receive
 Tit 2 13 while we wait for the *b* hope—
 Jas 1 12 *B* is the man who perseveres
 Rev 1 3 *B* is the one who reads the words
 22 14 *B* are those who wash their robes.

BLESSING (BLESS)

Eze 34 26 there will be showers of *b*

BLESSINGS (BLESS)

Pr 10 6 *B* crown the head of the righteous.

BLIND

Mt 15 14 a *b* man leads a *b* man, both will fall
 23 16 "Woe to you, *b* guides! You say,
 Jn 9 25 I was *b* but now I see"

BLOOD

Ge 9 6 "Whoever sheds the *b* of man
 Ex 12 13 and when I see the *b*, I will pass
 24 8 "This is the *b* of the covenant that
 Lev 17 11 For the life of a creature is in the *b*.
 Ps 72 14 for precious is their *b* in his sight
 Pr 6 17 hands that shed innocent *b*.
 Mt 26 28 This is my *b* of the covenant.
 Ro 3 25 of atonement, through faith in his *b*.
 5 9 have now been justified by his *b*.
 1Co 11 25 cup is the new covenant in my *b*.
 Eph 1 7 we have redemption through his *b*.
 2 13 near through the *b* of Christ
 Col 1 20 by making peace through his *b*.
 Heb 9 12 once for all by his own *b*
 9 22 of *b* there is no forgiveness
 1Pe 1 19 but with the precious *b* of Christ.
 1Jn 1 7 and the *b* of Jesus, his Son
 Rev 1 5 has freed us from our sins by his *b*.
 5 9 with your *b* you purchased men
 7 14 white in the *b* of the Lamb
 12 11 him by the *b* of the Lamb

BLOT (BLOTS)

Ex 32 32 then *b* me out of the book you have
 Ps 51 1 *b* out my transgressions
 Rev 3 5 I will never *b* out his name

BLOTS (BLOT)

Isa 43 25 "I, even I, am he who *b* out

BLOWN

Eph 4 14 and *b* here and there by every wind
 Jas 1 6 doubts is like a wave of the sea, *b*

BOAST

1Ki 20 11 armor should not *b* like one who
 Ps 34 2 My soul will *b* in the Lord
 44 8 In God we make our *b* all day long.
 Pr 27 1 Do not *b* about tomorrow.
 1Co 1 31 Let him who boasts *b* in the Lord
 Gal 6 14 May I never *b* except in the cross
 Eph 2 9 not by works, so that no one can *b*

BOAZ

Wealthy Bethlehemite who showed favor to
 Ruth (Ru 2), married her (Ru 4) Ancestor of
 David (Ru 4 18 22, 1Ch 2 12-15), Jesus (Mt 1
 5 16, Lk 3 23 32)

BODIES (BODY)

Ro 12 1 to offer your *b* as living sacrifices.
 1Co 6 15 not know that your *b* are members
 Eph 5 28 to love their wives as their own *b*

BODY (BODIES)

Zec 13 6 What are these wounds on your *b*?
 Mt 10 28 afraid of those who kill the *b*
 26 26 saying "Take and eat this is my *b*
 26 41 spirit is willing but the *b* is weak
 Jn 13 10 wash his feet his whole *b* is clean
 Ro 6 13 Do not offer the parts of your *b*
 12 4 us has one *b* with many members.
 1Co 6 19 not know that your *b* is a temple
 11 24 "This is my *b*, which is for you,
 12 12 The *b* is a unit, though it is made up
 Eph 5 30 for we are members of his *b*

BOLD (BOLDNESS)

Ps 138 3 you made me *b* and stouthearted
 Pr 21 29 A wicked man puts up a *b* front,
 28 1 but the righteous are as *b* as a lion

BOLDNESS* (BOLD)

Ac 4 29 to speak your word with great *b*.

BONDAGE

Ezr 9 9 God has not deserted us in our *b*

BOOK (BOOKS)

Jos 1 8 Do not let this *B* of the Law depart
 Ne 8 8 They read from the *B* of the Law
 Jn 20 30 which are not recorded in this *b*
 Php 4 3 whose names are in the *b* of life
 Rev 21 27 written in the Lamb's *b* of life

BOOKS (BOOK)

Ecc 12 12 Of making many *b* there is no end.

BORN (BEAR)

Isa 9 6 For to us a child is *b*.
 Jn 3 7 at my saying, "You must be *b* again
 1Pe 1 23 For you have been *b* again,
 1Jn 4 7 Everyone who loves has been *b*
 5 1 believes that Jesus is the Christ is *b*

BORROWER

Pr 22 7 and the *b* is servant to the lender

BOUGHT

Ac 20 28 which he *b* with his own blood
 1Co 6 20 You are not your own, you were *b*
 7 23 You were *b* at a price, do not
 2Pe 2 1 the sovereign Lord who *b* them—

BOW

Ps 95 6 Come, let us *b* down in worship.
 Isa 45 23 Before me every knee will *b*.
 Ro 14 11 "every knee will *b* before me.
 Php 2 10 name of Jesus every knee should *b*.

BRANCH (BRANCHES)

Isa 4 2 In that day the *B* of the Lord will
 Jer 33 15 I will make a righteous *B* sprout

BRANCHES (BRANCH)

Jn 15 5 "I am the vine, you are the *b*

BRAVE

2Sa 2 7 Now then, be strong and *b*.

BREAD

Dt 8 3 that man does not live on *b* alone
 Pr 30 8 but give me only my daily *b*
 Ecc 11 1 Cast your *b* upon the waters.
 Isa 55 2 Why spend money on what is not *b*
 Mt 4 4 "Man does not live on *b* alone.
 6 11 Give us today our daily *b*
 Jn 6 35 Jesus declared, "I am the *b* of life
 21 13 took the *b* and gave it to them,
 1Co 11 23 took *b*, and when he had given

BREAK (BREAKING BROKEN)

Nu 30 2 he must not *b* his word
 Jdg 2 1 "I will never *b* my covenant
 Isa 42 3 A bruised reed he will not *b*.
 Mt 12 20 A bruised reed he will not *b*

BREAKING (BREAK)

Jas 2 10 —just one point is guilty of *b* all

BREASTPIECE (BREASTPLATE)

Ex 28 15 Fashion a *b* for making decisions—

BREASTPLATE* (BREASTPIECE)

Isa 59 17 He put on righteousness as his *b*
 Eph 6 14 with the *b* of righteousness in place
 1Th 5 8 putting on faith and love as a *b*.

BREATHED (GOD-BREATHED)

Ge 2 7 *b* into his nostrils the breath of life.
 Jn 20 22 And with that he *b* on them

BREEDS*

Pr 13 10 Pride only *b* quarrels,

BRIBE

Ex 23 8 "Do not accept a *b*,
 Pr 6 35 will refuse the *b*, however great it

BRIDE

Rev 19 7 and his *b* has made herself ready,

BRIGHTER (BRIGHTNESS)

Pr 4 18 shining ever *b* till the full light

BRIGHTNESS (BRIGHTER)

2Sa 22 13 Out of the *b* of his presence
 Da 12 3 who are wise will shine like the *b*

BROAD

Mt 7 13 and *b* is the road that leads

BROKEN (BREAK)

Ps 51 17 The sacrifices of God are a *b* spirit;
 Ecc 4 12 of three strands is not quickly *b*
 Jn 10 35 and the Scripture cannot be *b*—

BROKENHEARTED* (HEART)

Ps 34 18 The Lord is close to the *b*
 109: 16 and the needy and the *b*
 147: 3 He heals the *b*
 Isa 61 1 He has sent me to bind up the *b*.

BROTHER (BROTHER'S BROTHERS)

Pr 17 17 and a *b* is born for adversity
 18 24 a friend who sticks closer than a *b*.
 27 10 neighbor nearer than a *b* far away
 Mt 5 24 and be reconciled to your *b*.
 18 15 If your *b* sins against you,
 Mk 3 35 Whoever does God's will is my *b*
 Lk 17 3 "If your *b* sins, rebuke him.
 1Co 8 13 if what I eat causes my *b* to fall
 1Jn 2 10 Whoever loves his *b* lives
 4 21 loves God must also love his *b*

BROTHER'S (BROTHER)

Ge 4 9 "Am I my *b* keeper?" The Lord

BROTHERS (BROTHER)

Ps 133 1 is when *b* live together in unity
 Pr 6 19 who stirs up dissension among *b*
 Mt 25 40 one of the least of these *b* of mine.
 Mk 10 29 or *b* or sisters or mother or father
 Heb 13 1 Keep on loving each other as *b*.
 1Pe 3 8 be sympathetic, love as *b*,
 1Jn 3 14 death to life, because we love our *b*.

BUILD (BUILDING BUILDS BUILT)

Mt 16 18 and on this rock I will *b* my church.
 Ac 20 32 which can *b* you up and give you
 1Co 14 12 excel in gifts that *b* up the church
 1Th 5 11 one another and *b* each other up.

BUILDING (BUILD)

1Co 3 9 you are God's field, God's *b*.
 2Co 10 8 us for *b* you up rather
 Eph 4 29 helpful for *b* others up according

BUILDS (BUILD)

Ps 127 1 Unless the Lord *b* the house,
 1Co 3 10 one should be careful how he *b*
 8 1 Knowledge puffs up, but love *b* up

BUILT (BUILD)

Mt 7 24 is like a wise man who *b* his house

Eph 2:20 *b* on the foundation of the apostles
4:12 the body of Christ may be *b* up

BURDEN (BURDENED BURDENS)

Ps 38: 4 like a *b* too heavy to bear
Mt 11:30 my yoke is easy and my *b* is light "

BURDENED (BURDEN)

Gal 5: 1 do not let yourselves be *b* again

BURDENS (BURDEN)

Ps 68:19 who daily bears our *b*
Gal 6: 2 Carry each other's *b*,

BURIED

Ro 6: 4 *b* with him through baptism
1Co 15: 4 that he was *b*; that he was raised

BURNING

Lev 6: 9 the fire must be kept *b* on the altar
Ro 12:20 you will heap *b* coals on his head "

BUSINESS

Dn 8:27 and went about the king's *b*
1Th 4:11 to mind your own *b* and to work

BUSY

1Ki 20:40 While your servant was *b* here
2Th 3:11 They are not *b*, they are
Tit 2: 5 to be *b* at home, to be kind,

CAESAR

Mt 22:21 "Give to C what is Caesar's,

CAIN

Firstborn of Adam (Ge 4:1), murdered brother
Abel (Ge 4:1-16, 1Jn 3:12)

CALED

Judahite who spied out Canaan (Nu 13:6), al-
lowed to enter land because of faith (Nu 13:30-
14:38, Dt 1:36) Possessed Hebron (Jdg 14:6-15
19)

CALF

Ex 32: 4 into an idol cast in the shape of a *c*,
Lk 15:23 Bring the fattened *c* and kill it

CALL (CALLED CALLING CALLS)

Ps 105: 1 to the Lord, *c* on his name,
145: 18 near to all who *c* on him,
Pr 31:28 children arise and *c* her blessed,
Isa 5:20 Woe to those who *c* evil good
55: 6 *c* on him while he is near
65:24 Before they *c* I will answer,
Jer 33: 3 'C to me and I will answer you
Mt 9:13 come to *c* the righteous,
Ro 10:12 and richly blesses all who *c* on him,
11:29 gifts and his *c* are irrevocable
1Th 4: 7 For God did not *c* us to be impure,

CALLED (CALL)

1Sa 3: 5 and said, "Here I am, you *c* me "
2Ch 7:14 if my people, who are *c*
Ps 34: 6 This poor man *c*, and the Lord
Mt 21:13 "My house will be *c* a house
Ro 8:30 And those he predestined, he also *c*
1Co 7:15 God has *c* us to live in peace
Gal 5:13 You, my brothers, were *c* to be free
1Pe 2: 9 of him who *c* you out of darkness

CALLING (CALL)

Jn 1:23 I am the voice of one *c* in the desert
Ac 22:16 wash your sins away, *c* on his name
Eph 4: 1 worthy of the *c* you have received
2Pe 1:10 all the more eager to make your *c*

CALLS (CALL)

Joel 2:32 And everyone who *c*
Jn 10: 3 He *c* his own sheep by name
Ro 10:13 "Everyone who *c* on the name

CAMEL

Mt 19:24 it is easier for a *c* to go
23:24 strain out a gnat but swallow a *c*

CANAAH

1Ch 16:18 "To you I will give the land of C

CANCELED

Lk 7:42 so he *c* the debts of both
Col 2:14 having *c* the written code,

CAPITAL

Dt 21:22 guilty of a *c* offense is put to death

CAPSTONE (STONE)

Ps 118: 22 has become the *c*,
1Pe 2: 7 has become the *c*,

CARE (CAREFUL CARES CARING)

Ps 8: 4 the son of man that you *c* for him?
Pr 29: 7 The righteous *c* about justice
Lk 10:34 him to an inn and took *c* of him
Jn 21:16 Jesus said, "Take *c* of my sheep "
Heb 2: 6 the son of man that you *c* for him?
1Pe 5: 2 of God's flock that is under your *c*,

CAREFUL (CARE)

Ex 23:13 "Be *c* to do everything I have said
Dt 6: 3 be *c* to obey so that it may go well
Jos 23: 6 be *c* to obey all that is written
23:11 be very *c* to love the Lord your
Pr 13:24 he who loves him is *c*
Mt 6: 1 "Be *c* not to do your 'acts
Ro 12:17 Be *c* to do what is right in the eyes
1Co 3:10 each one should be *c* how he builds
8: 9 Be *c*, however, that the exercise
Eph 5:15 Be very *c*, then, how you live—

CARELESS

Mt 12:36 for every *c* word they have spoken.

CARES (CARE)

Ps 55:22 Cast your *c* on the Lord
Na 1: 7 He *c* for those who trust in him,
Eph 5:29 but he feeds and *c* for it, just
1Pe 5: 7 on him because he *c* for you

CARING* (CARE)

1Th 2: 7 like a mother *c* for her little
1Ti 5: 4 practice by *c* for their own family

CARRIED (CARRY)

Ex 19: 4 and how I *c* you on eagles' wings
Isa 53: 4 and *c* our sorrows,
Heb 13: 9 Do not be *c* away by all kinds
2Pe 1:21 as they were *c* along by the Holy

CARRIES (CARRY)

Dt 32:11 and *c* them on its pinions.
Isa 40:11 and *c* them close to his heart,

CARRY (CARRIED CARRIES)

Lk 14:27 anyone who does not *c* his cross
Gal 6: 2 C each other's burdens,
6: 5 for each one should *c* his own load

CAST

Ps 22:18 and *c* lots for my clothing
55:22 C your cares on the Lord
Ecc 11: 1 C your bread upon the waters,
Jn 19:24 and *c* lots for my clothing "
1Pe 5: 7 C all your anxiety on him

CATCH (CAUGHT)

Lk 5:10 from now on you will *c* men."

CATTLE

Ps 50:10 and the *c* on a thousand hills

CAUGHT (CATCH)

1Th 4:17 and are left will be *c* up together

CAUSE (CAUSES)

Pr 24:28 against your neighbor without *c*,
Ecc 8: 3 Do not stand up for a bad *c*,
Mt 18: 7 of the things that *c* people to sin"
Ro 14:21 else that will *c* your brother
1Co 10:32 Do not *c* anyone to stumble,

CAUSES (CAUSE)

Isa 8:14 a stone that *c* men to stumble
Mt 18: 6 if anyone *c* one of these little ones

CAUTIOUS*

Pr 12:26 A righteous man is *c* in friendship,

CEASE

Ps 46: 9 He makes wars *c* to the ends

CENSER

Lev 16:12 is to take a *c* full of burning coals

CENTURION

Mt 8: 5 had entered Capernaum, a *c* came

CERTAIN (CERTAINTY)

2Pe 1:19 word of the prophets made more *c*,

CERTAINTY* (CERTAIN)

Lk 1: 4 so that you may know the *c*
Jn 17: 8 They knew with *c* that I came

CHAFF

Ps 1: 4 They are like *c*

CHAINED

2Ti 2: 9 But God's word is not *c*.

CHAMPION

Ps 19: 5 like a *c* rejoicing to run his course

CHANGE (CHANGED)

1Sa 15:29 of Israel does not lie or *c* his mind,
Ps 110: 4 and will not *c* his mind
Jer 7: 5 If you really *c* your ways
Mal 3: 6 "I the Lord do not *c*,
Mt 18: 3 unless you *c* and become like little
Heb 7:21 and will not *c* his mind
Jas 1:17 who does not *c* like shifting

CHANGED (CHANGE)

1Co 15:51 but we will all be *c*—in a flash,

CHARACTER

Ru 3:11 that you are a woman of noble *c*,
Pr 31:10 A wife of noble *c* who can find?
Ro 5: 4 perseverance, *c*, and *c*, hope
1Co 15:33 "Bad company corrupts good *c*,"

CHARGE

Ro 8:33 Who will bring any *c*
2Co 11: 7 the gospel of God to you free of *c*?
2Ti 4: 1 I give you this *c*: Preach the Word,

CHARIOTS

2Ki 6:17 and *c* of fire all around Elisha.
Ps 20: 7 Some trust in *c* and some in horses,

CHARM

Pr 31:30 C is deceptive, and beauty is

CHASES

Pr 12:11 he who *c* fantasies lacks judgment.

CHATTER* (CHATTERING)

1Ti 6:20 Turn away from godless *c*
2Ti 2:16 Avoid godless *c*, because those

CHATTERING* (CHATTER)

Pr 10: 8 but a *c* fool comes to ruin
10:10 and a *c* fool comes to ruin

CHEAT* (CHEATED)

Mal 1:14 "Cursed is the *c* who has
1Co 6: 8 you yourselves *c* and do wrong,

CHEATED (CHEAT)

Lk 19: 8 if I have *c* anybody out of anything,
1Co 6: 7 Why not rather be *c*? Instead,

CHEEK

Mt 5:39 someone strikes you on the right *c*,

CHEERFUL* (CHEERS)

Pr 15:13 A happy heart makes the face *c*,
15:15 but the *c* heart has a continual feast
15:30 A *c* look brings joy to the heart,
17:22 A *c* heart is good medicine,
2Co 9: 7 for God loves a *c* giver

CHEERS (CHEERFUL)

Pr 12:25 but a kind word *c* him up

CHILD (CHILDISH CHILDREN)

Pr 20 17 Even a c is known by his actions,
22 6 Train a c in the way he should go,
22 15 Folly is bound up in the heart of a c
23 13 not withhold discipline from a c,
29 15 c left to himself disgraces his mother

Isa 7 14 The virgin will be with c
9 6 For to us a c is born,

11 6 and a little c will lead them
66 13 As a mother comforts her c

Mt 1 23 "The virgin will be with c

18 2 He called a little c and had him
1 42 and blessed is the c you will bear'

1 80 And the c grew and became strong

1Co 13 11 When I was a c, I talked like a c,

1Jn 5 1 who loves the father loves his c

CHILDISH* (CHILD)

1Co 13 11 When I became a man, I put c ways

CHILDREN (CHILD)

Dt 4 9 Teach them to your c
11 19 them to your c, talking about them

Ps 8 2 From the lips of c and infants

Pr 17 6 Children's c are a crown

31 28 Her c arise and call her blessed,

Mt 7 11 how to give good gifts to your c,

11 25 and revealed them to little c

18 3 you change and become like little c

19 14 "Let the little c come to me,

21 16 "From the lips of c and infants

Mk 9 37 one of these little c in my name

10 14 "Let the little c come to me,

10 16 And he took the c in his arms,

13 12 C will rebel against their parents

Lk 10 21 and revealed them to little c

18 16 "Let the little c come to me,

Ro 8 16 with our spirit that we are God's c

2Co 12 14 parents, but parents for their c

Eph 6 1 C, obey your parents in the Lord,

6 4 do not exasperate your c, instead,

Col 3 20 C, obey your parents in everything,

3 21 Fathers, do not embitter your c,

1Ti 3 4 and see that his c obey him

3 12 and must manage his c and his

5 10 bringing up c, showing hospitality,

1Jn 3 1 that we should be called c of God'

CHOOSE (CHOOSES CHOSE CHOSEN)

Dt 30 19 Now c life, so that you

Jos 24 15 then c for yourselves this day

Pr 8 10 C his instruction instead of silver,

16 16 to c understand,ng rather

Jn 15 16 You did not c me, but I chose you

CHOOSES (CHOOSE)

Jn 7 17 If anyone c to do God's will,

CHOSE (CHOOSE)

Ge 13 11 So Lot c for himself the whole plain

Ps 33 12 the people he c for his inheritance

Jn 15 16 but I c you and appointed you to go

1Co 1 27 But God c the foolish things

Eph 1 4 he c us in him before the creation

2Th 2 13 from the beginning God c you

CHOSEN (CHOOSE)

Isa 41 8 Jacob whom I have c

Mt 22 14 For many are invited, but few are c

Lk 10 42 Mary has c what is better

23 35 the Christ of God, the C One "

Jn 15 19 but I have c you out of the world

1Pe 1 20 He was c before the creation

2 9 But you are a c people, a royal

CHRIST (CHRIST'S CHRISTIAN CHRIST)

Mt 1 16 was born Jesus, who is called C

16 16 Peter answered, "You are the C

22 42 "What do you think about the C?"

Jn 1 41 found the Messiah" (that is, the C)

20 31 you may believe that Jesus is the C

Ac 2 36 you crucified both Lord and C

5 42 the good news that Jesus is the C

9 22 by proving that Jesus is the C

Ac 17 3 proving that the C had to suffer
18 28 the Scriptures that Jesus was the C
26 23 that the C would suffer and

Ro 3 22 comes through faith in Jesus C

5 6 we were still powerless. C died

5 8 While we were still sinners, C died

5 17 life through the one man Jesus C

6 4 as C was raised from the dead

8 1 for those who are in C Jesus,

8 9 Spirit of C he does not belong to C

8 35 us from the love of C?

10: 4 C is the end of the law

14 9 C died and returned to life

15 3 For even C did not please himself

1Co 1 23 but we preach C crucified

2 2 except Jesus C and him crucified

3 11 one already laid, which is Jesus C

5 7 For C our Passover lamb

8 6 and there is but one Lord Jesus C

10 4 them and that rock was C

11 1 as I follow the example of C

11 3 the head of every man is C,

12 27 Now you are the body of C,

15 3 that C died for our sins according

15 14 And if C has not been raised,

15 22 so in C all will be made alive

15 57 victory through our Lord Jesus C

2Co 3 3 show that you are a letter from C

4 5 not preach ourselves, but Jesus C

5 10 before the judgment seat of C,

5 17 Therefore, if anyone is in C,

11: 2 you to one husband, to C,

Gal 2 20 I have been crucified with C

3 13 C redeemed us from the curse

6 14 in the cross of our Lord Jesus C,

Eph 1 3 with every spiritual blessing in C

3 8 the unsearchable riches of C,

4 13 measure of the fullness of C

5 2 as C loved us and gave himself up

5 23 as C is the head of the church,

5 25 just as C loved the church

Php 1 21 to live in C and to die is gain

1 27 worthy of the gospel of C

4 19 to his glorious riches in C Jesus

Col 1 27 which is C in you the hope of glory

1 28 may present everyone perfect in C

2 6 as you received C Jesus as Lord,

2 17 the reality however is found in C

3 15 Let the peace of C rule

2Th 2 1 the coming of our Lord Jesus C

1Ti 1 15 C Jesus came into the world

2 5 the man C Jesus who gave himself

2Ti 2 3 us like a good soldier of C Jesus

3 15 salvation through faith in C Jesus,

Tit 2 13 our great God and Savior, Jesus C,

Heb 3 14 to share in C if we hold firmly

9 14 more, then, will the blood of C,

9 15 For this reason C is the mediator

9 28 so C was sacrificed once

10 10 of the body of Jesus C once for all

13 8 Jesus C is the same yesterday

1Pe 1 19 but with the precious blood of C,

2 21 because C suffered for you

3 18 For C died for sins once for all,

4 14 insulted because of the name of C,

1Jn 2 22 man who denies that Jesus is the C

3 16 Jesus C laid down his life for us

5 1 believes that Jesus is the C is born

Rev 20 4 reigned with C a thousand years

CHRIST'S (CHRIST)

2Co 5 14 For C love compels us,

5 20 We are therefore C ambassadors,

12 9 so that C power may rest on me

CHRISTIAN (CHRIST)

1Pe 4 16 as a C, do not be ashamed,

CHRISTS (CHRIST)

Mt 24 24 For false C and false prophets will

CHURCH

Mt 16 18 and on this rock I will build my c,

18 17 if he refuses to listen even to the c,

Ac 20 28 Be shepherds of the c of God,

1Co 5 12 of mine to judge those outside the c

1Co 14 4 but he who prophesies edifies the c

14 12 to excel in gifts that build up the c

14 26 done for the strengthening of the c

Eph 5 23 as Christ is the head of the c

Col 1 24 the sake of his body which is the c

CIRCUMCISED

Ge 17 10 Every male among you shall be c

CIRCUMSTANCES

Php 4 11 to be content whatever the c

1Th 5 18 continually, give thanks in all c.

CITIZENS (CITIZENSHIP)

Eph 2 19 but fellow c with God's people

CITIZENSHIP (CITIZENS)

Php 3 20 But our c is in heaven.

CITY

Mt 5 14 A c on a hill cannot be hidden

Heb 13 14 here we do not have an enduring c,

CIVILIAN*

ZTi 2 4 a soldier gets involved in c affairs--

CLAIM (CLAIMS)

Pr 25 6 do not c a place among great men,

1Jn 1 6 If we c to have fellowship

1 8 If we c to be without sin, we

1 10 If we c we have not sinned,

CLAIMS (CLAIM)

Jas 2 14 if a man c to have faith

1Jn 2 6 Whoever c to live in him must walk

2 9 Anyone who c to be in the light

CLAP

Ps 47: 1 C your hands, all you nations;

Isa 55 12 will c their hands

CLAY

Isa 45 9 Does the c say to the potter,

64 8 We are the c, you are the potter,

Jer 18 6 "Like c in the hand of the potter,

La 4 2 are now considered as pots of c

Da 2 33 partly of iron and partly of baked c

Ro 9 21 of the same lump of c some pottery

2Co 4 7 we have this treasure in jars of c

2Ti 2 20 and c some are for noble purposes

CLEAN

Lev 16 30 you will be c from all your sins.

Ps 24 4 He who has c hands and a pure

Mt 12 44 the house unoccupied swept c

23 25 You c the outside of the cup

Mk 7 19 Jesus declared all foods c

Jn 13 10 to wash his feet, his whole body is c

15 3 are already c because of the word

Ac 10 15 impure that God has made c."

Ro 14 20 All food is c, but it is wrong

CLING (CLINGS)

Ro 12 9 Hate what is evil, c to what is good

CLINGS (CLING)

Ps 63 8 My soul c to you,

CLOAK

2Ki 4 29 "Tuck your c into your belt,

CLOSE (CLOSER)

Ps 34 18 LORD is c to the brokenhearted

Isa 40 11 and carries them c to his heart,

Jer 30 21 himself to be c to me"

CLOSER (CLOSE)

Ez 3: 5 "Do not come any c," God said

Pr 18 24 there is a friend who sticks c

CLOTHE (CLOTHED CLOTHES CLOTHING)

Ps 45 3 c yourself with splendor

Isa 52 1 c yourself with strength

Ro 13 14 c yourselves with the Lord Jesus

Col 3 12 c yourselves with compassion,

1Pe 5 5 c yourselves with humility

CONCEALS (CONCEAL)

Pr 28:13 He who *conceals* his sins does not prosper.

CONCEITED

Ro 12:16 Do not be *conceited*.
Gal 5:26 Let us not become *conceited*, provoking
ITi 6:4 he is *conceited* and understands nothing

CONCEIVED

Mt 1:20 what is *conceived* in her is from the Holy
ICo 2:9 no mind has *conceived*

CONCERN (CONCERNED)

Eze 36:21 I had *concern* for my holy name, which
ICo 7:32 I would like you to be free from *concern*
12:25 that its parts should have equal *concern*
2Co 11:28 of my *concern* for all the churches

CONCERNED (CONCERN)

Joh 4:10 "You have been *concerned* about this vine.
ICo 7:32 An unmarried man is *concerned* about

**CONDEMN (CONDEMNATION
CONDEMNED CONDEMNING
CONDEMNIS)**

Job 40:8 Would you *condemn* me to justify yourself?
Isa 50:9 Who is he that will *condemn* me?
Lk 6:37 Do not *condemn*, and you will not be
Jn 3:17 Sent into the world to *condemn* the world,
12:48 very word which I spoke will *condemn* him
Ro 2:27 yet obeys the law will *condemn* you who,
1Jn 3:20 presence whenever our hearts *condemn* us

CONDEMNATION (CONDEMN)

Ro 5:18 of one trespass was *condemnation* for all men,
8:1 there is now no *condemnation* for those who are

CONDEMNED (CONDEMN)

Ps 34:22 no one will be *condemned* who takes refuge
Mt 12:37 and by your words you will be *condemned*
23:33 How will you escape being *condemned* to hell
Jn 3:18 Whoever believes in him is not *condemned*
5:24 has eternal life and will not be *condemned*
16:11 prince of this world now stands *condemned*
Ro 14:23 But the man who has doubts is *condemned*
ICo 11:32 disciplined so that we will not be *condemned*
Heb 11:7 By his faith he *condemned* the world

CONDEMNING (CONDEMN)

Pr 17:15 the guilty and the innocent—
Ro 2:1 judge the other, you are *condemning* yourself,

CONDEMNIS (CONDEMN)

Ro 8:34 Who is he that, "Christ Jesus,
2Co 3:9 the ministry that *condemns* men is glorious,

CONDUCT

Pr 10:23 A fool finds pleasure in evil *conduct*.
20:11 by whether his *conduct* is pure and right
21:8 but the *conduct* of the innocent is upright
Ecc 6:8 how to *conduct* himself before others?
Jer 4:18 "Your own *conduct* and actions
17:10 to reward a man according to his *conduct*.
Eze 7:3 I will judge you according to your *conduct*.
Php 1:27 *conduct* yourselves in a manner worthy
ITi 3:15 to *conduct* themselves in God's household

CONFESS (CONFESSION)

Lev 16:21 and *confess* over it all the wickedness
26:40 "But if they will *confess* their sins
Nu 5:7 must *confess* the sin he has committed
Ps 38:18 I *confess* my iniquity.
Ro 10:9 That if you *confess* with your mouth,
Php 2:11 every tongue *confess* that Jesus Christ is
Jas 5:16 Therefore *confess* your sins to each other
1Jn 1:9 If we *confess* our sins, he is faithful

CONFESSION (CONFESS)

Eze 10:11 Now make *confession* to the Lord,
2Co 9:13 obedience that accompanies your *confession*

CONFIDENCE

Ps 71:5 my *confidence* since my youth
Pr 3:26 For the Lord will be your *confidence*
11:13 A gossip betrays a *confidence*.
25:9 do not betray another man's *confidence*,

Pr 31:11 Her husband has full *confidence* in her
Isa 32:17 will be quietness and *confidence* forever
Jer 17:7 whose *confidence* is in him
Php 3:3 and who put no *confidence* in the flesh—
Heb 3:14 till the end the *confidence* we had at first
4:16 the throne of grace with *confidence*.
10:19 since we have *confidence* to enter the Most
10:35 So do not throw away your *confidence*.
1Jn 5:14 This is the *confidence* we have

CONFORM* (CONFORMED)

Ro 12:2 Do not *conform* any longer to the pattern
1Pe 1:14 do not *conform* to the evil desires you had

CONFORMED (CONFORM)

Ro 8:29 predestined to be *conformed* to the likeness

CONQUERORS

Ro 8:37 then *conquerors* through him who loved us

CONSCIENCE (CONSCIENCES)

Ro 13:5 punishment but also because of *conscience*.
ICo 8:7 since their *conscience* is weak, it is defiled
8:12 in this way and wound their weak *conscience*
10:25 without raising questions of *conscience*.
10:29 freedom be judged by another's *conscience*?
Heb 10:22 to cleanse us from a guilty *conscience*
1Pe 3:16 and respect, keeping a clear *conscience*.

CONSCIENCES* (CONSCIENCE)

Ro 2:15 their *conscience* also bearing witness,
ITi 4:2 whose *conscience* have been seared
Tit 1:15 their minds and *conscience* are corrupted
Heb 9:14 cleanse our *conscience* from acts that lead

CONSCIOUS*

Ro 3:20 through the law we become *conscious* of sin
1Pe 2:19 of unjust suffering because he is *conscious*

CONSECRATE (CONSECRATED)

Ex 13:2 "C to me every firstborn male
Lev 20:7 "C yourselves and be holy,

CONSECRATED (CONSECRATE)

Ex 29:43 and the place will be *consecrated* by my glory
ITi 4:5 because it is *consecrated* by the word of God

**CONSIDER (CONSIDERATE
CONSIDERED CONSIDERS)**

1Sa 12:24 *consider* what great things he has done
Job 37:14 stop and *consider* God's wonders
Ps 8:3 When I *consider* your heavens,
107:43 and *consider* the great love of the Lord
143:5 and *consider* what your hands have done
Lk 12:24 *Consider* the ravens. They do not sow
12:27 about the rest? "C how the lilies
Php 2:3 but in humility *consider* others better
3:8 I *consider* everything a loss compared
Heb 10:24 And let us *consider* how we may spur one
Jas 1:2 *Consider* it pure joy, my brothers,

CONSIDERATE* (CONSIDER)

Tit 3:2 to be peaceable and *considerate*
Jas 3:17 then peace-loving, *considerate*, submissive,
1Pe 2:18 only to those who are good and *considerate*.
3:7 in the same way be *considerate* as you live

CONSIDERED (CONSIDER)

Job 1:8 "Have you *considered* my servant Job?
2:3 "Have you *considered* my servant Job?
Ps 44:22 we are *considered* as sheep to be slaughtered
Isa 53:4 yet we *considered* him stricken by God,
Ro 8:36 we are *considered* as sheep to be slaughtered

CONSIDERS (CONSIDER)

Pr 31:16 She *considers* a field and buys it,
Ro 14:5 One man *considers* one day more sacred
Jas 1:26 If anyone *considers* himself religious

CONSIST

Lk 12:15 a man's life does not *consist*

CONSOLATION

Ps 94:19 your *consolation* brought joy to my soul

CONSTRUCTIVE*

ICo 10:23 but not everything is *constructive*

CONSUME (CONSUMING)

Jn 2:17 "Zeal for your house will *consume* me"

CONSUMING (CONSUME)

Dr 4:24 For the Lord your God is a *consuming* fire
Hab 12:29 and awe, for our "God is a *consuming* fire"

CONTAIN

1Ki 8:27 the highest heaven, cannot *contain* you
2Pe 1:16 His *containers* some things that are

CONTAMINATES*

2Co 7:1 from everything that *contaminates* the body

CONTEMPT

Pr 14:31 He who oppresses the poor shows *contempt*
17:5 He who mocks the poor shows *contempt*
18:3 When wickedness comes, so does *contempt*
19:12 2 others to shame and everlasting *contempt*.
Ro 2:4 Or do you show *contempt* for the riches
Gal 4:14 you did not treat me with *contempt*
1Th 5:20 do not treat prophecies with *contempt*

CONTEND (CONTENDING)

Jude 3 you to *contend* for the faith that was once

CONTENDING* (CONTEND)

Php 1:27 *contend* as one man for the faith

CONTENT (CONTENTMENT)

Pr 13:25 The righteous eat to their hearts' *content*
Php 4:11 to be *content* whatever the circumstances
4:12 I have learned the secret of being *content*
ITi 6:8 and clothing, we will be *content* with that
Heb 13:5 and be *content* with what you have,

CONTENTMENT (CONTENT)

ITi 6:6 But godliness with *contentment* is great gain

CONTINUAL (CONTINUE)

Pr 15:15 but the cheerful heart has a *continual* feast

CONTINUE (CONTINUAL)

Php 2:12 *continue* to work out your salvation
2Ti 3:14 *continue* in what you have learned
1Jn 5:18 born of God does not *continue* to sin,
Rev 22:11 and let him who is holy *continue* to be holy
22:11 let him who does right *continue* to do right,

CONTRITE*

Ps 51:17 a broken and *contrite* heart.
Isa 57:15 also with him who is *contrite* and lowly
57:15 and to revive the heart of the *contrite*
66:2 he who is humble and *contrite* in spirit,

**CONTROL (CONTROLLED
SELF-CONTROL SELF-CONTROLLED)**

Pr 29:11 a wise man keeps himself under *control*
ICo 7:9 But if they cannot *control* themselves,
7:37 but has *control* over his own will,
1Th 4:4 you should learn to *control* his own body

CONTROLLED (CONTROL)

Ps 32:9 but must be *controlled* by bit and bridle
Ro 8:6 but the mind *controlled* by the Spirit is life
8:8 Those *controlled* by the sinful nature cannot

CONTROVERSIES

Tit 3:9 But avoid foolish *controversies* and genealogies

CONVERSATION

Col 4:6 Let your *conversation* be always full of grace,

CONVERT

ITi 3:6 He must not be a recent *convert*,

CONVERT

Jn 16:8 he will *convert* the world of guilt in regard

CONVINCED (CONVINCING)

Ro 8:38 For I am *convinced* that neither death
2Ti 1:12 and am *convinced* that he is able
3:14 have learned and have become *convinced*

CONVINCING* (CONVINCED)

Ac 1:3 and gave many *convincing* proofs that he was

CUP

- Ps 23 5 my *c* overflows
Mt 10 42 if anyone gives even a *c* of cold water
23 25 You clean the outside of the *c*
26 39 may this *c* be taken from me
1Co 11 24 after supper he took the *c*, saying,

CURSE (CURSED)

- Dt 11 26 before you today a blessing and a *c*
21 23 hung on a tree is under God's *c*
Lk 6 28 bless those who *c* you, pray
Gal 3 11 of the law by becoming a *c* for us,
Rev 22 3 No longer will there be any *c*

CURSED (CURSE)

- Ge 3 17 "C is the ground because of you,
Dt 27 15 C is the man who carves an image
27 16 "C is the man who dishonors his
27 17 "C is the man who moves his
27 18 C is the man who leads the blind
27 19 C is the man who withholds justice
27 20 C is the man who sleeps
27 21 C is the man who has sexual
27 22 C is the man who sleeps
27 23 C is the man who sleeps
27 24 C is the man who kills his
27 25 C is the man who accepts a bribe
27 26 C is the man who does not uphold
9 3 I could wish that I myself were *c*
Ga 3 10 C is everyone who does not

CURTAIN

- Ea 26 33 The *c* will separate the Holy Place
Lk 23 44 the *c* of the temple was torn in two
Heb 10 20 opened for us through the *c*

CYMBAL *

- 1Co 13 1 a resounding gong or a clanging *c*

DANCE (DANCING)

- Ecc 3 4 a time to mourn and a time to *d*,
Mt 11 17 and you did not *d*,

DANCING (DANCE)

- Ps 30 11 You turned my wailing into *d*,
149 3 Let them praise his name with *d*

DANGER

- Pr 27 12 The prudent see *d* and take refuge,
Ro 8 35 famine or nakedness or *d* or sword?

DANIEL

Hebrew exile to Babylon, name changed to Belteshazzar (Da 1 6-7). Refused to eat unclean food (Da 1:8-21). Interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dreams (Da 2, 4), writing on the wall (Da 5). Thrown into lion's den (Da 6). Visions of (Da 7-12).

DARK (DARKNESS)

- Job 34 22 There is no *d* place, no deep
Pr 31 15 She gets up while it is still *d*
Ro 2 19 a light for those who are in the *d*
2Pe 1 19 as to a light shining in a *d* place,

DARKNESS (DARK)

- Ge 1 4 he separated the light from the *d*
2Sa 22 29 the Lord turns my *d* into light
Jn 3 19 but men loved *d* instead of light
2Co 6 14 fellowship can light have with *d*?
Eph 5 8 For you were once *d*, but now you
1Pe 2 9 out of *d* into his wonderful light
1Jn 1 5 in him there is no *d* at all
2 9 but hates his brother is still in the *d*

DAUGHTERS

- Joel 2 28 sons and *d* will prophesy,

DAVID

Son of Jesse (Ru 4 17-22, 1Ch 2 13-15), ancestor of Jesus (Mt 1 1-17, Lk 3 31)

Anointed king by Samuel (1Sa 16 1-13). Musician to Saul (1Sa 16 14-23, 18 10). Killed Goliath (1Sa 17). Relation with Jonathan (1Sa 18 1-4, 19-20, 23 16-18, 2Sa 1). Disfavor of Saul (1Sa 18 6-23 29). Spared Saul's life (1Sa 24, 26). Among Philistines (1Sa 21 10-14, 27-30). La-

ment for Saul and Jonathan (2Sa 1)

Anointed king of Judah (2Sa 2 1 11) of Israel (2Sa 5 1 4, 1Ch 11 1 3). Promised eternal dynasty (2Sa 7 1Ch 17, Ps 132). Adultery with Bathsheba (2Sa 11 12). Absalom's revolt (2Sa 14-18). Last words (2Sa 23 1-7). Death (1Ki 2 10-12, 1Ch 29 28)

DAWN

- Ps 37 6 your righteousness shine like the *d*,
Pr 4 18 is like the first gleam of *d*,

DAY (DAYS)

- Ge 1 5 God called the light *d*
Ex 20 8 "Remember the Sabbath *d*
Lev 23 28 because it is the *D* of Atonement,
Nu 14 14 before them in a pillar of cloud by *d*
Jos 1 8 meditate on it *d* and night,
Ps 84 10 Better is one *d* in your courts
96 2 proclaim his salvation *d* after *d*
118 24 This is the *d* the Lord has made;
Pr 27 1 not know what a *d* may bring forth,
Joel 2 31 and dreadful *d* of the Lord
Ob 15 The *d* of the Lord is near
Lk 11 3 Give us each *d* our daily bread
Ac 17 11 examined the Scriptures every *d*
2Co 4 16 we are being renewed *d* by *d*
1Th 5 2 for you know very well that the *d*
2Pe 3 8 With the Lord a *d* is like

DAYS (DAY)

- Dt 17 19 he is to read it all the *d*, of his life
Ps 23 6 all the *d* of my life,
90 10 The length of our *d* is seventy years
Ecc 12 1 Creator in the *d* of your youth,
Joel 2 29 I will pour out my Spirit in those *d*.
Mic 4 1 In the last *d*
Heb 1 2 in these last *d* he has spoken to us
2Pe 3 3 that in the last *d* scoffers will come,

DEACONS

- 1Ti 3 8 *D*, likewise, are to be men worthy

DEAD (DIE)

- Dt 18 11 or spiritist or who consults the *d*
Mt 28 7 "He has risen from the *d*
Ro 6 11 count yourselves *d* to sin
Eph 2 1 you were *d* in your transgressions
1Th 4 16 and the *d* in Christ will rise first
Jas 2 17 is not accompanied by action, is *d*
2 26 so faith without deeds is *d*

DEATH (DIE)

- Nu 35 16 the murderer shall be put to *d*
Ps 23 4 the valley of the shadow of *d*.
116 15 is the *d* of his saints
Pr 8 36 all who hate me love *d*.
14 12 but in the end it leads to *d*
Ecc 7 2 for *d* is the destiny of every man,
Isa 25 8 he will swallow up *d* forever
53 12 he poured out his life unto *d*,
Jn 5 24 he has crossed over from *d* to life
Ro 5 12 and in this way *d* came to all men,
6 23 For the wages of sin is *d*,
8 13 put to *d* the misdeeds of the body,
1Co 15 21 For since *d* came through a man,
15 55 Where, O *d*, is your sting?
Rev 1 18 And I hold the keys of *d* and Hades
20 6 The second *d* has no power
20 14 The lake of fire is the second *d*
21 4 There will be no more *d*

DEBAUCHERY

- Ro 13 13 not in sexual immorality and *d*,
Eph 5 18 drunk on wine, which leads to *d*

DEBORAH

Prophetess who led Israel to victory over Canaanites (Jdg 4-5)

DEBT (DEBTORS DEBTS)

- Ro 13 8 Let no *d* remain outstanding,
13 8 continuing *d* to love one another,

DEBTORS (DEBT)

- Mt 6 12 as we also have forgiven our *d*

DEBTS (DEBT)

- Dt 15 1 seven years you must cancel *d*
Mt 6 12 Forgive us our *d*

DECAY

- Ps 16 10 will you let your Holy One see *d*
Ac 2 27 will you let your Holy One see *d*

DECEIT (DECEIVE)

- Mk 7 22 greed, malice, *d*, lewdness, envy,
1Pe 2 1 yourselves of all malice and all *d*,
2:22 and no *d* was found in his mouth."

DECEITFUL (DECEIVE)

- Jer 17 9 The heart is *d* above all things
2Co 11:13 men are false apostles, *d* workmen,

DECEITFULNESS (DECEIVE)

- Mk 4:19 the *d* of wealth and the desires
Heb 3:13 of you may be hardened by sin's *d*,

DECEIVE (DECEIT DECEITFUL DECEITFULNESS DECEIVED DECEIVES DECEPTIVE)

- Lev 19:11 "Do not *d* one another
Pr 14 5 A truthful witness does not *d*
Mt 24 5 I am the Christ and will *d* many
Ro 16 18 and flattery they *d* the minds
1Co 3:18 Do not *d* yourselves
Eph 5 6 Let no one *d* you with empty words
Jas 1:22 to the word, and so *d* yourselves
1Jn 1 8 we *d* ourselves and the truth is not

DECEIVED (DECEIVE)

- Ge 3 13 The serpent *d* me, and I ate "
Gal 6 7 Do not be *d* God cannot be
1Ti 2 14 And Adam was not the one *d*
2Ti 3 13 to worse, deceiving and being *d*.
Jas 1 16 Don't be *d*, my dear brothers

DECEIVES (DECEIVE)

- Gal 6 3 when he is nothing, he *d* himself
Jas 1 26 he *d* himself and his religion is

DECENCY*

- 1Ti 2 9 women to dress modestly, with *d*

DECEPTIVE (DECEIVE)

- Pr 31 30 Charm is *d*, and beauty is fleeting,
Col 2 8 through hollow and *d* philosophy,

DECLARE (DECLARED DECLARING)

- 1Ch 16:24 *D* his glory among the nations,
Ps 19 1 The heavens *d* the glory of God;
96 3 *D* his glory among the nations.
Isa 42 9 and new things I *d*,

DECLARED (DECLARE)

- Mk 7 19 Jesus *d* all foods "clean"
Ro 2:13 the law who will be *d* righteous.
3 20 no one will be *d* righteous

DECLARING (DECLARE)

- Ps 71 8 *d* your splendor all day long
Ac 2 11 we hear them *d* the wonders

DECREED (DECREE)

- La 3:37 happen if the Lord has not *d* it?
Lk 22 22 Son of Man will go as it has been *d*,

DECREE (DECREED)

- Lev 10:11 Israelites all the *d* the Lord has
Ps 119:112 My heart is set on keeping your *d*

DEDICATE (DEDICATION)

- Nu 6:12 He must *d* himself to the Lord
Pr 20 25 for a man to *d* something rashly

DEDICATION (DEDICATE)

- 1Ti 5 11 sensual desires overcome their *d*

DEED (DEEDS)

- Col 3:17 you do, whether in word or *d*,

DEEDS (DEED)

- 1Sa 2 3 and by him *d* are weighed
Ps 65 5 with awesome *d* of righteousness,
66 3 "How awesome are your *d*!"

- Ps** 78 4 the praiseworthy *d* of the Lord,
86 10 you are great and do marvelous *d*,
92 4 For you make me glad by your *d*
111 3 Glorious and majestic are his *d*
Hab 3 2 I stand in awe of your *d*, O Lord
Mt 5 16 that they may see your good *d*
Ac 26 20 prove their repentance by their *d*
Jas 2 14 claims to have faith but has no *d*?
2 20 faith without *d* is useless?
1Pe 2 12 they may see your good *d*

DEEP (DEPTH)

- 1Co** 2 10 all things, even the *d* things
1Ti 3 9 hold of the *d* truths of the faith

DEER

- Ps** 42 1 As the *d* pants for streams of water,

DEFEND (DEFENSE)

- Ps** 74 22 Rise up, O God, and *d* your cause.
Pr 31 9 *d* the rights of the poor and needy
Jer 50 34 He will vigorously *d* their cause

DEFENSE (DEFEND)

- Ps** 35 23 Awake, and rise to my *d*?
Php 1 16 here for the *d* of the gospel
1Jn 2 1 speaks to the Father in our *d*—

DEFERRED*

- Pr** 13 12 Hope *d* makes the heart sick,

DEFILE (DEFILED)

- Da** 1 8 Daniel resolved not to *d* himself

DEFILED (DEFILE)

- Isa** 24 5 The earth is *d* by its people;

DEFAUD

- Lev** 19 13 Do not *d* your neighbor or rob him.

DEITY*

- Col** 2 9 of the *D* lives in bodily form,

DELIGHT (DELIGHTS)

- 1Sa** 15 22 "Does the Lord *d*
Ps 1 2 But his *d* is in the law of the Lord
16 3 in whom is all my *d*,
35 9 and *d* in his salvation
37 4 *D* yourself in the Lord
43 4 to God, my joy and my *d*.
51 16 You do not *d* in sacrifice,
119 77 for your law is my *d*
Pr 29 17 he will bring *d* to your soul
Isa 42 1 my chosen one in whom I *d*
55 2 and your soul will *d* in the richest
61 10 I *d* greatly in the Lord,
Jer 9 24 for in these I *d*,
15 16 they were my joy and my heart's *d*,
Mic 7 18 but *d* to show mercy
Zep 3 17 He will take great *d* in you.
Mt 12 18 the one I love, in whom I *d*.
1Co 13 6 Love does not *d* in evil
2Co 12 10 for Christ's sake, I *d* in weaknesses.

DELIGHTS (DELIGHT)

- Ps** 22 8 since he *d* in him
35 27 who *d* in the well-being
36 8 from your river of *d*
37 23 if the Lord *d* in a man's way,
Pr 3 12 as a father the son he *d* in
12 22 but he *d* in men who are truthful
23 24 he who has a wise son *d* in him

DELIHAN*

- Woman who betrayed Samson (Jdg 16 4-22)

DELIVER (DELIVERANCE DELIVERED DELIVERER DELIVERS)

- Ps** 72 12 For he will *d* the needy who cry out
79 9 *d* us and forgive our sins
Mt 6 13 but *d* us from the evil one
2Co 1 10 hope that he will continue to *d* us,

DELIVERANCE (DELIVER)

- Ps** 1 8 From the Lord comes *d*
12 7 and surround me with songs of *d*
33 17 A horse is a vain hope for *d*.

DELIVERED (DELIVER)

- Ps** 34 4 he *d* me from all my fears
Ro 4 25 He was *d* over to death for our sins

DELIVERER (DELIVER)

- Ps** 18 2 is my rock, my fortress and my *d*
40 17 You are my help and my *d*
140 7 O Sovereign Lord, my strong *d*,
144 2 my stronghold and my *d*

DELIVERS (DELIVER)

- Ps** 34 17 he *d* them from all their troubles
34 19 but the Lord *d* him from them all
37 40 The Lord helps them and *d* them
37 40 he *d* them from the wicked

DEMANDED

- Lk** 12 20 This very night your life will be *d*
12 48 been given much, much will be *d*

DEMONS

- Mt** 12 27 And if I drive out *d* by Beelzebul
Mk 5 15 possessed by the legion of *d*
Ro 8 38 neither angels nor *d*, neither
Jas 2 19 Good! Even the *d* believe that—

DEMONSTRATE (DEMONSTRATES)

- Ro** 3 26 he *d* it to *d* his justice

DEMONSTRATES* (DEMONSTRATE)

- Ro** 5 8 God *d* his own love for us in this

DEN

- Da** 6 16 and threw him into the lions' *d*
Mt 21 13 you are making it a *d* of robbers

DENARIUS

- Mk** 12 15 Bring me a *d* and let me look at it."

DENIED (DENY)

- 1Ti** 5 8 he has *d* the faith and is worse

DENIES (DENY)

- 1Jn** 2 23 No one who *d* the Son has

DENY (DENIED DENIES DENYING)

- Ex** 23 6 "Do not *d* justice to your poor
Job 27 5 till I die, I will not *d* my integrity
La 3 35 to *d* a man his rights
Lk 9 23 he must *d* himself and take up his
Tit 1 16 but by their actions they *d* him

DENYING* (DENY)

- Eze** 22 29 mistreat the alien, *d* them justice
2Ti 3 5 a form of godliness but *d* its power
2Pe 2 1 *d* the sovereign Lord who bought

DEPART (DEPARTED)

- Ge** 49 10 The scepter will not *d* from Judah,
Job 1 21 and naked I will *d*
Mt 25 41 "D from me, you who are cursed,
Php 1 23 I desire to *d* and be with Christ,

DEPARTED (DEPART)

- 1Sa** 4 21 "The glory has *d* from Israel"—
Ps 119 102 I have not *d* from your laws,

DEPOSIT

- 2Co** 1 22 put his Spirit in our hearts as a *d*,
5 5 and has given us the Spirit as a *d*,
Eph 1 14 who is a *d* guaranteeing our
2Ti 1 14 Guard the good *d* that was

DEPRAVED (DEPRIVITY)

- Ro** 1 28 he gave them over to a *d* mind
Php 2 15 fault in a crooked and *d* generation.

DEPRIVITY (DEPRAVED)

- Ro** 1 29 of wickedness, evil, greed and *d*

DEPRIVE

- Di** 24 17 Do not *d* the alien or the fatherless
Pr 18 5 or to *d* the innocent of justice
Isa 10 2 to *d* the poor of their rights
29 21 with false testimony *d* the innocent
1Co 7 5 Do not *d* each other

DEPTH (DEEP)

- Ro** 2 23 any pretence, neither hangings nor *d*
11 31 the *d* of the riches of the wisdom

DEPART

- Nu** 12 13 a wanderer in the *d* of my return
Ne 9 14 your fathers abandoned me in the *d*
Ps 78 12 I said that I would not operate a ship in the *d*
78 52 let them take mercy through one *d*
Mk 1 13 and he was in the *d* of my days

DEPARTS (DEPARTS)

- Eze** 4 9 raise a flag over the *d* of
Mt 26 56 all the disciples of him and fled
2Ti 1 15 in the prison of Asia has *d* me

DEPARTING (DEPARTS)

- Gal** 1 6 are an opacity of the one who called

DESERTS (DESERTED DEPARTING)

- Lev** 11 17 who *d* the flock

DESERVE (DESERVES)

- Ps** 193 16 he does not treat us as our sins *d*
Jer 21 14 I will punish you as your deeds *d*
Mt 22 8 those who remained did not *d* to come
Ro 1 32 those who do such things *d* death

DESERVES (DESERVE)

- 2Sa** 12 5 the man who did this *d* to die
Lk 10 7 for he deserves *d* his wages
1Ti 5 18 and The worker *d* his wages

DESIRABLE (DESIRE)

- Pr** 22 1 A good name is more *d*

DESIRE (DESIRABLE DESIRES)

- Ge** 3 16 Your *d* will be for your husband,
Di 5 21 You shall not set your *d*
1Ch 29 18 keep this *d* in the hearts
Ps 40 6 Sacrifice and offering you did not *d*
40 8 I *d* to do your will, O my God
73 25 earth has nothing I *d* besides you
Pr 3 15 nothing you *d* can compare
10 24 what the righteous *d* is like
11 23 The *d* of the righteous ends only
Isa 26 8 are the *d* of our hearts
53 2 appearance that we should *d* him
55 11 but will accomplish what I *d*
Hos 6 6 For I *d* mercy, not sacrifice
Mt 9 13 learn what this means: I *d* mercy
Ro 7 18 For I have the *d* to do what is good,
1Co 12 31 But eagerly *d* the greater gifts
14 1 and eagerly *d* spiritual gifts
Php 1 23 I *d* to depart and be with Christ,
Heb 13 18 do live honorably in every way
Jas 1 15 Then, after *d* has conceived,

DESIRES (DESIRE)

- Ge** 4 7 at your door, *d* to have you
Ps 34 12 and *d* to see many good days
37 4 he will give you the *d* of your heart
103 5 satisfies your *d* with good things
145 19 He fulfills the *d* of those who fear
Pr 11 6 the unfaithful are trapped by evil *d*
19 22 What a man *d* is unfaithful love
Mk 4 19 and the *d* for other things come in
Ro 8 5 set on what that nature *d*
13 14 to gratify the *d* of the sinful nature
Gal 5 16 and you will not gratify the *d*
5 17 the sinful nature of what is contrary
1Ti 3 1 an overseer, he *d* a noble task
6 9 and faithful that plunge into
2Ti 2 22 Flee the evil *d* of youth
Jas 1 20 about the righteousness that God *d*
4 1 from your *d* that battle with you
1Pe 2 11 to abstain from sinning, which war
1Jn 2 17 The world and its passions are an

DESNATE

- Isa** 54 1 are the children of the *d* woman

DESPAIR

- Isa** 61 1 instead of a spirit of *d*
2Co 4 8 perplexed but not in *d*, persecuted

DESPISE (DESPISED DESPISER)

Joh 42 6 Therefore I of myself
Pr 4 7 but fools of wisdom and discipline
11 do not of the Lord's discipline
23 22 do not of your mother
Lk 16 13 devoted to the one and of the other
Tit 2 15 Do not let anyone of you

DESPISED (DESPISE)

Ge 25 24 So Isaac of his birthright
Isa 53 3 He was of and rejected by men.
ICo 1 28 of this world and the of things—

DESPISES (DESPISE)

Pr 14 21 He who of his neighbor sins
15 0 but a foolish man of his mother
15 32 who ignores discipline of himself.
Zec 4 10 Who of the day of small things?

DESTINED (DESTINY)

Lk 2 34 This child is of to cause the falling

DESTINY (DESTINED PREDESTINED)

Ps 73 17 then I understood their final of
Ecc 7 2 for death is the of every man

DESTITUTE

Pr 31 8 for the rights of all who are of
Heb 11 37 of persecuted and mistreated—

DESTROY (DESTROYED DESTROYS DESTRUCTION)

Pr 1 32 complacency of fools will of them.
Mt 10 28 of the One who can of both soul

DESTROYED (DESTROY)

Job 19 26 And after my skin has been of
Isa 54 11 which will not be of
ICo 8 11 for whom Christ died is of
15 26 The last enemy to be of is death
Co 5 1 if the earthly tent we live in is of
Heb 10 49 of those who shrink back and are of
2Pe 3 10 the elements will be of by fire.

DESTROYS (DESTROY)

Pr 6 32 whoever does so of himself
11 9 mouth the godless of his neighbor
18 9 is brother to one who of
28 24 he is partner to him who of
Ecc 9 18 but one sinner of much good
ICo 1 17 If anyone of God's temple,

DESTRUCTION (DESTROY)

Pr 16 18 Pride goes before of
Hos 13 14 Where, O grave, is your of?
Mt 7 13 broad is the of that leads to of
Lk 6 8 from that nature will reap of
2Th 1 9 punished with everlasting of
1Ti 6 9 that plunge men into ruin and of
2Pe 2 1 bringing swift of on themselves
16 other Scriptures, to their own of

DETERMINED (DETERMINES)

Job 14 5 Man's days are of
Isa 14 26 This is the plan of for the whole
Da 11 36 for what has been of must take place
Lk 17 26 and he of the times set for them

DETERMINES* (DETERMINED)

Ps 147 4 He of the number of the stars
Pr 16 9 but the Lord of his steps
them to each one, just as he of

DETESTABLE (DETESTS)

Pr 21 27 The sacrifice of the wicked is of
8 9 even his prayers are of
Your income is of to me
is of in God's sight
of dishonored

DETESTS (DETESTABLE)

to your God of any one who
of the Lord's your God of them both
of Lord's your God of anyone who
2 The Lord of lying lips
of The Lord of the sacrifice
of The Lord of the way

Pr 15 26 The Lorp of the thoughts
16 5 The Lorp of all the proud of heart
17 15 the Lorp of them both
20 21 The Lorp of differing weights

DEVIL (DEVIL'S)

Mt 13 39 the enemy who sows them is the of
25 41 the eternal fire prepared for the of
Lk 4 2 forty days he was tempted by the of
8 12 then the of comes and takes away of
Eph 4 27 and do not give the of a foothold
2Ti 2 26 and escape from the trap of the of.
Jas 4 7 Resist the of, and he will flee
1Pe 5 8 Your enemy the of prowls
1Jn 3 8 who does what is sinful is of the of
Rev 12 9 that ancient serpent called the of

DEVIL'S* (DEVIL)

Eph 6 11 stand against the of schemes
1Ti 3 7 into disgrace and into the of trap
1Jn 3 8 was to destroy the of work

DEVOTE (DEVOTED DEVOTING DEVOTION DEVOUT)

Job 11 13 "Yet if you of your heart to him
Jer 30 21 for who is he who will of himself
Col 4 2 of yourselves to prayer, bring
1Ti 4 13 of yourself to the public reading
Tit 3 8 may be careful to of themselves

DEVOTED (DEVOTE)

Ezr 7 10 For Ezra had of himself to the study
Ac 2 42 They of themselves
Ro 12 10 Be of to one another
ICo 7 34 Her aim is to be of to the Lord

DEVOTING (DEVOTE)

1Ti 5 10 of herself to all kinds of good deeds

DEVOTION (DEVOTE)

1Ch 28 9 and serve him with wholehearted of
Eze 33 31 With their mouths they express of,
ICo 7 35 way in undivided of to the Lord
2Co 11 3 from your sincere and pure of

DEVOUR

2Sa 2 26 "Must the sword of forever?"
Mk 12 40 They of widows' houses
1Pe 5 8 lion looking for someone to of

DEVOUT (DEVOTE)

Lk 2 25 Simeon, who was righteous and of

DIE (DEAD DEATH DIED DIES)

Ge 2 17 when you eat of it you will surely of
Lk 11 51 yes, firstborn son in Egypt will of
Ru 1 17 Where you of I will of, and there I
2Ki 14 6 each is to of for his own sins
Pr 5 23 He will of for lack of discipline,
10 21 but fools of for lack of judgment
15 10 he who hates correction will of
23 33 with the rod, he will not of
Ecc 3 2 a time to be born and a time to of
Isa 66 24 their worm will not of, nor will their
Eze 3 18 that wicked man will of for his sin,
18 4 soul who sins is the one who will of
33 8 "O wicked man, you will surely of
Mt 26 52 "for all who draw the sword will of
Jn 11 26 and believes in me will never of
Ro 5 7 Very rarely will anyone of
14 8 and if we of, we of to the Lord
ICo 15 22 in Adam all of, so in Christ all will
15 31 I of every day—I mean that.
Php 1 21 to live is Christ and to of is gain
Heb 9 27 Just as man is destined to of once,
Rev 14 13 Blessed are the dead who of

DIED (DIE)

Ro 5 6 we were still powerless, Christ of
6 2 By no means! We of to sin,
6 8 if we of with Christ, we believe that
14 15 brother for whom Christ of
ICo 8 11 for whom Christ of is destroyed
15 3 that Christ of for our sins according
2Co 5 14 of far all, and therefore all
Col 3 1 for you of, and your life is now
1Th 5 10 He of for us so that, whether we are

2Ti 2 11 to we of with him
Heb 9 15 now, having been of a tabernacle
1Pe 1 18 but freed of sin, to live for all
Rev 2 8 who of and arose—life again

DIE* (DIE)

Job 14 14 If a man of, will he live again?
Pr 11 3 a wicked man of, but the just shall
In 11 25 of me will live even though I be of
ICo 15 54 We die only once, but like Christ, of

DIFFERENCE (DIFFERENT)

Ro 10 12 For there is no difference between Jew

DIFFERENT (DIFFERENCE)

ICo 12 4 There are of kinds of gifts,
2Co 11 4 of a of gospel from the one you

DIGNITY

Pr 31-25 She is clothed with strength and of.

DIGS

Pr 26 27 If a man of a pit, he will fall into it,

DILIGENCE (DILIGENT)

Heb 6 11 to show this word of to the very end

DILIGENT (DILIGENCE)

Pr 21 5 The plan of the of lead to profits
1Ti 4 15 He of these matters, give yourself of

DIRECT (DIRECTS)

Ps 119 15 of me in the path of your
119 133 of my footsteps according
Jer 10 23 it is not for man to of his steps
2Th 3 5 May the Lord of your hearts

DIRECTS (DIRECT)

Ps 42 8 By day the Lord of his love
Isa 48 17 who of you in the way you should

DIRGE

Mt 11 17 we sang a of

DISAPPEAR

Mt 5 18 will by any means of from the Law
Lk 16 17 earth to of than for the least stroke

DISAPPOINT* (DISAPPOINTED)

Ro 5 5 And hope does not of us.

DISAPPOINTED (DISAPPOINT)

Ps 22 5 in you they trusted and were not of

DISASTER

Ps 57 1 wings until the of has passed
Pr 3 25 Have no fear of sudden of
17 5 even of will not go unpunished
Isa 45 7 I bring prosperity and create of
Eze 7 4 An unheard-of of is coming

DISCERN (DISCERNING DISCERN)

Pr 19 12 Who can of his errors?
119 3 You of my going out and my lying
Php 1 10 you may be able to of what is best

DISCERNING (DISCERN)

Pr 14 6 knowledge comes easily to the of
15 14 The of heart seeks knowledge.
17 24 A of man keeps wisdom in view,
17 28 and of he holds his tongue
19 25 rebuke a of man, and he will gain

DISCERNMENT (DISCERN)

Pr 17 10 A rebuke expresses a man of of
28 11 a poor man who has of eyes

DISCIPLE (DISCIPLES)

Mt 10 42 these little ones because he is my of
Lk 14 27 and follow me cannot be my of

DISCIPLES (DISCIPLE)

Mt 26 19 I have sent you out with of
Jn 8 31 to my testimony, you are really my of
13 35 men will know that you are my of
Ac 11 26 The of were called Christians first

DRESS

11: 2 9 I also want women to *d* modestly.

DRINK (DRINK DRUNKARDS DRUNKENNESS)

Pr 5 15 *D* water from your own cistern,
 1A 12 19 Take life easy, eat, *d* and be merry
 In 7 37 let him come to me and *d*
 1Co 12 13 were all given the one Spirit to *d*
 Rev 21 6 to *d* without cost from the spring

DRIVES

1Jn 4 18 But perfect love *d* out fear,

DROP

Pr 17 14 so *d* the matter before a dispute
 Isa 40 15 Surely the nations are like a *d*

DRINK (DRINK)

Eph 5 18 Do not get *d* on wine, which leads

DRUNKARDS (DRINK)

Pr 23 21 for *d* and gluttons become poor,
 1Co 6 10 nor the greedy nor *d* nor slanderers

DRUNKENNESS (DRINK)

Lk 21 34 weighed down with dissipation, *d*
 Ro 13 13 and *d* not in sexual immorality
 Gal 5 21 factions and envy, *d*, orgies,
 1Pe 4 3 living in debauchery, lust, *d*, orgies,

DRY

Isa 53 2 and like a root out of *d* ground
 Eze 37 4 'D' bones' hear the word

DUST

Ge 2 7 man from the *d* of the ground
 Ps 103 14 he remembers that we are *d*
 Ecc 3 20 all come from *d* and to *d* all return

DUTY

Ecc 12 13 for this is the whole *d* of man
 Ac 23 1 I have fulfilled my *d* to God
 1Co 7 1 husband should fulfill his marital *d*

DWELL (DWELLING)

1Ki 8 27 "But will God really *d* on earth?"
 Ps 23 6 I will *d* in the house of the Lord
 Isa 43 18 do not *d* on the past
 Eph 3 17 so that Christ may *d* in your hearts
 Col 1 19 to have all his fullness *d* in him,
 3 16 the word of Christ *d* in you richly

DWELLING (DWELL)

Eph 2 22 to become a *d* in which God lives

EAGER

Pr 31 13 and works with *e* hands
 1Pe 5 2 greedily for money, but *e* to serve,

EAGLE'S (EAGLES)

Ps 103 5 your youth is renewed like the *e*

EAGLES (EAGLE'S)

Isa 40 31 They will soar on wings like *e*

EAR (EARS)

1Co 2 9 no *e* has heard,
 12 16 if the *e* should say, "Because I am

EARNED

Pr 31 31 Give her the reward she has *e*,

EARS (EAR)

Job 42 5 My *e* had heard of you
 Ps 34 15 and his *e* are attentive to their cry,
 Pr 21 13 If a man shuts his *e* to the cry
 2Ti 4 3 to say what their itching *e* want

EARTH (EARTHLY)

Ge 1 1 God created the heavens and the *e*
 Ps 24 1 *e* is the Lord's, and everything
 108 5 and let your glory be over all the *e*
 Isa 6 3 the whole *e* is full of his glory "
 51 6 the *e* will wear out like a garment
 55 9 the heavens are higher than the *e*,
 66 1 and the *e* is my footstool
 Jer 23 24 "Do not I fill heaven and *e*?"

Hab 2 20 let all the *e* be silent before him "

Mt 6 10 done on *e* as it is in heaven
 16 19 bind on *e* will be bound
 24 35 Heaven and *e* will pass away,
 28 18 and on *e* has been given to me.

Lk 2 14 on *e* peace to men
 1Co 10 26 The *e* is the Lord's, and everything
 Php 2 10 in heaven and on *e* and under the *e*.
 2Pe 3 13 to a new heaven and a new *e*.

EARTHLY (EARTH)

Php 3 19 Their mind is on *e* things.
 Col 3 2 on things above, not on *e* things.

EAST

Ps 103 12 as far as the *e* is from the west,

EASY

Mt 11 30 For my yoke is *e* and my burden is

EAT (EATING)

Ge 2 17 but you must not *e* from the tree
 Isa 55 1 come 'buy and *e*'
 65 25 and the lion will *e* straw like the ox,
 Mt 26 26 "Take and *e*, this is my body "
 Ro 14 2 faith allows him to *e* everything,
 1Co 8 13 if what I *e* causes my brother to fall
 10 31 So whether you *e* or drink
 2Th 3 10 man will not work, he shall not *e*."

EATING (EAT)

Ro 14 17 kingdom of God is not a matter of *e*

EDICT

Heb 11 23 they were not afraid of the king's *e*

EDIFIES

1Co 14 4 but he who prophesies *e* the church

EFFECT

Isa 32 17 *e* of righteousness will be quietness
 Heb 9 18 put into *e* without blood

EFFORT

Lk 13 24 "Make every *e* to enter
 Ro 9 16 depend on man's desire or *e*,
 14 19 make every *e* to do what leads
 Eph 4 3 Make every *e* to keep the unity
 Heb 4 11 make every *e* to enter that rest,
 12 14 Make every *e* to live in peace
 2Pe 1 5 make every *e* to add
 3 14 make every *e* to be found spotless,

ELAH

Son of Baasha, king of Israel (1Ki 16:6-14)

ELDERLY* (ELDERS)

Lev 19 32 show respect for the *e*

ELDERS (ELDERLY)

1Ti 5 17 The *e* who direct the affairs

ELECTION

Ro 9 11 God's purpose in *e* might stand;
 2Pe 1 10 to make your calling and *e* sure.

ELI

High priest in youth of Samuel (1Sa 1-4)
 Blessed Hannah (1Sa 1:12-18); raised Samuel
 (1Sa 2:11-26)

ELIJAH

Prophet; predicted famine in Israel (1Ki 17:1;
 Jas 5 17). Fed by ravens (1Ki 17:2-6) Raised
 Sidonian widow's son (1Ki 17:7-24) Defeated
 prophets of Baal at Carmel (1Ki 18:16-46) Ran
 from Jezebel (1Ki 19:1-9) Prophesied death of
 Azariah (2Ki 1) Succeeded by Elishah (1Ki 19:
 19 21, 2Ki 2:1-18) Taken to heaven in whirlwind
 (2Ki 2 11-12)

Return prophesied (Mal 4:5-6), equated with
 John the Baptist (Mt 17:9-13; Mk 9:9-13, Lk 1
 17) Appeared with Moses in transfiguration of
 Jesus (Mt 17:1-8; Mk 9:1-8).

ELISHA

Prophet; successor of Elijah (1Ki 19:16-21).
 inherited his cloak (2Ki 2:1-18). Miracles of (2Ki

2:6).

ELIZABETH*

Mother of John the Baptist, relative of Mary
 (Lk 1:5-58).

EMBITTER*

Col 3 21 Fathers, do not *e* your children,

EMPTY

Eph 5 6 no one deceive you with *e* words,
 1Pe 1 18 from the *e* way of life handed

ENABLE (ABLE)

Lk 1:74 to *e* us to serve him without fear
 Ac 4:29 *e* your servants to speak your word

ENABLED (ABLE)

Lev 26 13 *e* you to walk with heads held high
 Jn 6 65 unless the Father has *e* him

ENABLES (ABLE)

Php 3 21 by the power that *e* him

ENCAMPS*

Ps 34 7 The angel of the Lord *e*

ENCOURAGE (ENCOURAGEMENT)

Ps 10 17 you *e* them, and you listen
 Isa 1 17 *e* the oppressed
 Ac 15 32 to *e* and strengthen the brothers
 Ro 12 8 if it is encouraging, let him *e*,
 1Th 4 18 Therefore *e* each other
 2Ti 4 2 rebuke and *e* with great patience
 Tit 2 6 *e* the young men to be
 Heb 3 13 But *e* one another daily, as long
 10 25 but let us *e* one another—

ENCOURAGEMENT (ENCOURAGE)

Ac 4 36 Barnabas (which means Son of *E*),
 Ro 15 4 *e* of the Scriptures we might have
 15 5 and *e* gave you a spirit of unity
 1Co 14 3 to men for their strengthening, *e*
 Heb 12 5 word of *e* that addresses you

ENO

Ps 119 33 then I will keep them to the *e*
 Pr 14 12 but in the *e* it leads to death,
 19 20 and in the *e* you will be wise
 23 32 In the *e* it bites like a snake
 Ecc 12 12 making many books there is no *e*,
 Mt 10 22 firm to the *e* will be saved
 Lk 21 9 but the *e* will not come right away
 Ro 10 4 Christ is the *e* of the law
 1Co 15 24 the *e* will come, when he hands

ENDURANCE (ENDURE)

Ro 15 4 through *e* and the encouragement
 15 5 May the God who gives *e*
 2Co 1 6 which produces in you patient *e*
 Col 1 11 might so that you may have great *e*
 1Ti 6 11 faith, love, *e* and gentleness
 Tit 2 2 and sound in faith, in love and in *e*.

ENDURE (ENDURANCE ENDURES)

Ps 72 17 May his name *e* forever.
 Pr 12 19 Truthful lips *e* forever,
 27 24 for riches do not *e* forever,
 Ecc 3 14 everything God does will *e* forever;
 Mal 3 2 who can *e* the day of his coming?
 2Ti 2 3 *E* hardship with us like a good
 2:12 if we *e*, / we will also reign
 Heb 12 7 *E* hardship as discipline, God is
 Rev 3 10 kept my command to *e* patiently,

ENDURES (ENDURE)

Ps 112 9 his righteousness *e* forever,
 136 1 His love *e* forever
 Da 9 15 made for yourself a name that *e*

ENEMIES (ENEMY)

Ps 23 5 in the presence of my *e*
 Mic 7 6 a man's *e* are the members
 Mt 5 44 Love your *e* and pray
 Lk 20 43 hand until I make your *e*

ENEMY (ENEMIES ENMITY)

Pr 24 17 Do not gloat when your *e* falls.
25 21 If your *e* is hungry, give him food
27 6 but an *e* multiplies kisses.
1Co 15 26 The last *e* to be destroyed is death
1Ti 5 14 and to give the *e* no opportunity

ENJOY JOY

De 6 2 and so that you may *e* long life
Eph 6 3 and that you may *e* long life
Heb 11 25 rather than to *e* the pleasures of sin

ENJOYMENT (JOY)

Ecc 4 8 and why am I depriving myself of *e*
1Ti 6 17 us with everything for our *e*

ENLIGHTENED* (LIGHT)

Eph 1 18 that the eyes of your heart may be *e*
Heb 6 4 for those who have once been *e*

ENMITY* (ENEMY)

Ge 3 15 And I will put *e*

ENOCH

Walked with God and taken by him (Ge 5 18-24, Heb 11 5). Prophet (Isa 14).

ENTANGLED (ENTANGLES)

2Pe 2 20 and are again *e* to it and overcome,

ENTANGLES* (ENTANGLE)

Heb 12 1 and the sin that so easily *e*

ENTER (ENTERED ENTERS ENTRANCE)

Pr 10 8 *E* brings peace with thoughtful planning
Mt 13 44 *E* the kingdom of the kingdom
13 45 *E* the kingdom of the kingdom
13 46 *E* the kingdom of the kingdom
Mk 10 14 *E* the kingdom of the kingdom
10 15 *E* the kingdom of the kingdom

ENTERED (ENTER)

Ro 5 12 as sin *e* the world through one man.
Heb 12 1 *E* the kingdom of the kingdom

ENTERS ENTER

Mt 7 18 you see that nothing that *e* a man
Jn 10 2 The man who *e* by the gate is

ENTERTAIN

Heb 12 1 *E* the kingdom of the kingdom
Heb 12 1 *E* the kingdom of the kingdom

ENTHRALLED*

Ps 45 11 The king is *e* by your beauty.

ENTHRONED THRONE

Isa 6 1 who is *e* between the cherubim.
Ps 12 4 The One on heaven laughs
12 5 But you, O Lord, sit *e* forever.
12 6 He will *e* above the world

ENTICE

Pr 1 10 My son, if sinners *e* you.
2Pe 2 14 *E* the people who are unfaithful

ENTIRE

Gal 5 14 The *e* law is summed up

ENTRUSTED (TRUST)

1Ti 5 14 *E* what has been *e* to your care.
1Ti 5 14 *E* what has been *e* to your care.
1Ti 5 14 *E* what has been *e* to your care.
1Ti 5 14 *E* what has been *e* to your care.

ENVY

Pr 3 31 Do not *e* a violent man
4 30 but *e* the bones
Ecc 13 4 It does not *e* it does not boast.

EPHRAIM

1. Second son of Joseph (Ge 41 52, 46 20)
2. A tribe of Israel (Ge 48)
3. Synonymous with Northern Kingdom (Isa 7 1, Hos 1)

EQUAL

Isa 40 25 who is my *e*? says the Holy One

Jn 5 18 making himself *e* with God
1Co 12 25 that its parts should have *e* concern

EQUIP* (EQUIPPED)

Heb 13 21 *e* you with everything good

EQUIPPED (EQUIP)

2Ti 3 17 man of God may be thoroughly *e*

ERROR

Jas 5 20 Whoever turns a sinner from the *e*

ESAU

Firstborn of Isaac, twin of Jacob (Ge 25 21, 26). Also called Edom (Ge 25 30). Sold Jacob his birthright (Ge 25 29, 34). Lost blessing (Ge 27). Reconciled to Jacob (Gen 33).

ESCAPE (ESCAPING)

Ro 2 3 think you will *e* God's judgment?
Heb 2 3 how shall we *e* if we ignore such

ESCAPING (ESCAPE)

1Co 3 15 only as one *e* through the flames

ESTABLISH

Ge 6 18 But I will *e* my covenant with you.
1Ch 28 7 I will *e* his kingdom forever
Ro 10 3 God and sought to *e* their own,

ESTEEMED

Pr 22 1 to be *e* is better than silver or gold.
Isa 53 3 he was despised, and we *e* him not

ESTHER

Jewess who lived in Persia, cousin of Mordecai (Est 2). Chosen queen of Ahasuerus (Est 2 8-18). Foiled Haman's plan to exterminate the Jews (Est 3 4-7, 9).

ETERNAL (ETERNALLY ETERNITY)

Ps 16 11 with *e* pleasures at your right hand.
111 10 To him belongs *e* praise
119 89 Your word, O Lord, is *e*
Isa 26 4 Lord, the Lord is the Rock *e*
Mt 19 16 good thing must I do to get *e* life?
25 41 into the *e* fire prepared for the devil
25 46 they will go away to *e* punishment.
Jn 3 15 believes in him may have *e* life
3 16 him shall not perish but have *e* life
3 36 believes in the Son has *e* life
4 14 spring of water welling up to *e* life
5 24 believes him who sent me has *e* life
6 68 You have the words of *e* life
10 28 I give them *e* life and they shall
17 3 this is *e* life, that they may know
Ri 1 20 have *e* power and divine nature—
6 23 but the gift of God is *e* life
2Co 4 17 for us an *e* glory that far outweighs
4 18 temporary, but what is unseen is *e*
1Ti 1 16 believe in him and receive *e* life
1 17 Now to the King *e* immortal.
Heb 9 12 having obtained *e* redemption
1Jo 5 11 God has given us *e* life,
5 13 you may know that you have *e* life

ETERNALLY (ETERNAL)

Gal 1 8 let him be *e* condemned! As we

ETERNITY (ETERNAL)

Ps 93 2 you are from all *e*
Ecc 3 11 and set *e* in the hearts of men

ETHIOPIAN

Jer 13 23 Can the *E* change his skin

EUNUCHS

Mt 19 12 For some are *e* because they were

EVANGELIST (EVANGELISTS)

2Ti 4 5 hardship, do the work of an *e*.

EVANGELISTS* (EVANGELIST)

Eph 4 11 some to be prophets, some to be *e*,

EYE

2Co 11 3 as *E* was deceived by the serpent's
1Ti 2 13 For Adam was formed first, then *E*

EVEN-TEMPERED*

Pr 17 27 and a man of understanding is *e*

EVER (EVERLASTING FOREVER)

Ex 15 18 LORD will reign for *e* and *e*
Dt 8 19 If you forget the LORD your
Ps 5 11 let them *e* sing for joy
10 16 The LORD is King for *e* and *e*
25 3 will be put to shame
26 3 for your love is *e* before me,
45 6 O God, will last for *e* and *e*
52 8 God's unfailing love for *e* and *e*
89 13 nor will I betray my faithfulness
145 1 I will praise your name for *e* and *e*
Pr 4 18 shining *e* brighter till the full light
5 19 may you *e* be captivated
Isa 66 8 Who has *e* heard of such a thing?
Jer 31 36 the descendants of Israel *e* cease
Da 7 18 it forever—yes, for *e* and *e*
12 3 like the stars for *e* and *e*
Mk 4 12 *e* hearing but never understanding;
Jn 1 18 No one has *e* seen God
Rev 1 18 and behold I am alive for *e* and *e*
22 5 And they will reign for *e* and *e*

EVER-INCREASING* (INCREASE)

Ro 6 19 to impurity and to *e* wickedness,
2Co 3 18 into his likeness with *e* glory

EVERLASTING (EVER)

Dt 33 27 and underneath are the *e* arms
Ne 9 5 your God, who is from *e* to *e*
Ps 90 2 from *e* to *e* you are God
139 24 and lead me in the way *e*
Isa 9 6 *E* Father, Prince of Peace
33 14 Who of us can dwell with *e* burning
35 10 *e* joy will crown their heads
45 17 the LORD with an *e* salvation.
54 8 but with *e* kindness
55 3 I will make an *e* covenant with you,
63 12 to gain for himself *e* renown
Jer 31 3 I have loved you with an *e* love
Da 9 24 to bring in *e* righteousness
12 2 some to *e* life, others to shame
Jn 6 47 the truth: he who believes has *e* life
2Th 1 9 punished with *e* destruction
Jude 6 bound with *e* chains for judgment

EVER-PRESENT*

Ps 46 1 an *e* help in trouble

EVIDENCE (EVIDENT)

Jn 14 11 on the *e* of the miracles themselves

EVIDENT (EVIDENCE)

Php 4 5 Let your gentleness be *e* to all

EVIL

Ge 2 9 of the knowledge of good and *e*
Job 1 1 he tested God and shunned *e*
1 8 a man who fears God and shuns *e*
34 10 Far be it from God to do *e*
Ps 23 4 I will fear none
34 14 Turn from *e* and do good
51 4 and done what is *e* in your sight.
97 10 those who love the LORD hate *e*
101 4 I will have nothing to do with *e*
Pr 8 13 To fear the LORD is to hate *e*
10 23 A fool finds pleasure in *e* conduct.
11 27 *e* comes to him who searches for it
24 19 Do not fret because of *e* men
24 20 for the *e* man has no future hope.
Isa 5 20 Woe to those who call *e* good
13 11 I will punish the world for its *e*
55 7 and the *e* man has thoughts
Hab 1 13 Your eyes are too pure to look on *e*
Mt 5 45 He causes his sun to rise on the *e*
6 13 but deliver us from the *e* one
7 11 If you, then, though you are *e*
12 35 and the *e* man brings *e* things out
Jn 17 15 you protect them from the *e* one
Ro 2 9 for every human being who does *e*
12 9 Hate what is *e* doing
12 17 Do not repay anyone *e* for *e*
16 19 and innocent about what is *e*
1Co 13 6 Love does not delight in *e*

1Ch 14 20 In regard to the infants
 1Ph 6 16 all the ~~things~~ arrows of the ~~evil~~
 1Ph 8 11 ~~evil~~ ~~evil~~ ~~evil~~
 1Ti 8 16 of unclean is a sort of all kinds of ~~evil~~
 2Ti 2 22 For the ~~evil~~ desires of youth
 Jas 1 13 For God cannot be tempted by ~~evil~~
 1Pe 2 16 your freedom as a cover up for ~~evil~~
 3 9 Do not repay ~~evil~~ with ~~evil~~ or insult

EXALT

Heb 1 3 the ~~ex~~ representation of his being.

EXALTED (EXALTED)

Ps 70 1 I will ~~ex~~ you, O Lord
 143 5 let us ~~ex~~ his name together
 148 20 you are my God, and I will ~~ex~~ you
 Isa 24 15 ~~ex~~ the name of the Lord, the God

EXALTED (EXALT)

2Sa 22 37 I be Lord, the Rock, my Savior!
 1Ch 29 11 you are ~~ex~~ as head over all
 Ne 9 9 and may it be ~~ex~~ above all blessing
 Ps 21 13 Be ~~ex~~ O Lord, in your strength,
 46 10 I will be ~~ex~~ among the nations
 67 5 Be ~~ex~~ O God, above the heavens
 97 9 you are ~~ex~~ far above all gods
 99 2 he is ~~ex~~ over all the nations
 108 5 Be ~~ex~~ O God, above the heavens.
 148 13 for his name alone is ~~ex~~
 Isa 6 1 ~~ex~~ and the train of his robe filled
 12 4 and you claim that his name is ~~ex~~
 13 5 The Lord is ~~ex~~ for he dwells
 Lze 21 26 The lowly will be ~~ex~~ and the ~~ex~~ will be
 Mt 23 12 whoever humbles himself will be ~~ex~~
 Php 1 20 always Christ will be ~~ex~~ in my body
 9 Therefore God ~~ex~~ him

EXALTS (EXALT)

Ps 74 7 He brings one down, he ~~ex~~ another
 Pr 14 34 Righteousness ~~ex~~ a nation
 Mt 23 12 For whoever ~~ex~~ himself will be

EXAMINE (EXAMINED)

Ps 26 2 ~~ex~~ my heart and my mind
 Jer 17 10 and ~~ex~~ the mind
 La 3 40 Let us ~~ex~~ our ways and test them.
 1Co 11 28 A man ought to ~~ex~~ himself
 2Co 13 5 ~~ex~~ yourselves to see whether you

EXAMINED (EXAMINE)

Ac 17 11 ~~ex~~ the Scriptures every day to see

EXAMPLE (EXAMPLES)

Jn 13 15 have set you an ~~ex~~ that you should
 1Co 11 1 follow my ~~ex~~ as I follow
 1Ti 4 12 set an ~~ex~~ for the believers in speech,
 Tit 2 7 In everything set them an ~~ex~~
 1Pe 2 21 leaving you an ~~ex~~ that you should

EXAMPLES* (EXAMPLE)

1Co 10 6 Now these things occurred as ~~ex~~
 10 11 as ~~ex~~ and were written down
 1Pe 5 3 to you, but being ~~ex~~ to the flock

EXASPERATE*

Eph 6 4 Fathers, do not ~~ex~~ your children.

EXCEL (EXCELLENT)

1Co 14 12 to ~~ex~~ in gifts that build up the church
 2Co 8 7 But just as you ~~ex~~ in everything—

EXCELLENT (EXCEL)

1Co 12 31 now I will show you the most ~~ex~~ way
 Php 4 8 if anything is ~~ex~~ or praiseworthy—
 1Ti 3 13 have served well gain an ~~ex~~ standing
 Tit 3 8 These things are ~~ex~~ and profitable

EXCHANGED

Ro 1 23 ~~ex~~ the glory of the immortal God
 1 25 They ~~ex~~ the truth of God for a lie.

EXCUSE (EXCUSES)

Jn 15 22 they have no ~~ex~~ for their sin
 Ro 1 20 so that men are without ~~ex~~

EXCUSES* (EXCUSE)

Lk 14 18 "But they all alike began to make ~~ex~~

EXILES

Heb 2 10 and thought about everything ~~ex~~.
 11 6 to him must believe that he ~~ex~~

EXPECT (EXPECTATION)

Mt 24 44 at an hour when you do not ~~ex~~ him

EXPECTATION (EXPECT)

Ro 8 19 waits in eager ~~ex~~ for the ansa
 Heb 10 27 but only a fearful ~~ex~~ of judgment

EXPECT*

1Co 9 13 & the wicked man from among you

EXPENSIVE

1Ti 2 9 or gold or pearls or ~~ex~~ clothes.

EXPLOIT

Pr 22 22 Do not ~~ex~~ the poor because they are
 2Co 12 17 Did I ~~ex~~ you through any

EXPLOSE

1Co 4 5 will ~~ex~~ the motives of men's hearts
 Eph 5 11 of darkness, but rather ~~ex~~ them

EXTENDS

Pr 31 20 and ~~ex~~ her hands to the needy
 Lk 1 50 His mercy ~~ex~~ to those who fear him.

EXTINGUISHED

2Sa 21 17 the lamp of Israel will not be ~~ex~~

EXTOL*

Job 36 24 Remember to ~~ex~~ his work,
 Ps 34 1 I will ~~ex~~ the Lord at all times,
 68 4 ~~ex~~ him who rides on the clouds—
 95 2 and ~~ex~~ him with music and song
 109 30 mouth I will greatly ~~ex~~ the Lord
 111 1 I will ~~ex~~ the Lord with all my heart
 115 18 it is we who ~~ex~~ the Lord,
 117 1 ~~ex~~ him, all you peoples
 145 2 and ~~ex~~ your name for ever and ever
 145 10 your saints will ~~ex~~ you
 147 12 & the Lord, O Jerusalem.

EXTORT*

Lk 3 14 "Don't ~~ex~~ money and don't accuse

EYE (EYES)

Ex 21 24 you are to take life for life, ~~ex~~ for ~~ex~~,
 Ps 94 9 Does he who formed the ~~ex~~ not see?
 Mt 5 29 If your right ~~ex~~ causes you to sin,
 5 38 ~~ex~~ for ~~ex~~ and tooth for tooth
 7 3 of sawdust in your brother's ~~ex~~
 1Co 2 9 "No ~~ex~~ has seen,
 Col 3 22 not only when their ~~ex~~ is on you
 Rev 1 7 and every ~~ex~~ will see him.

EYES (EYE)

Nu 33 55 remain will become barbs in your ~~ex~~
 Jos 23 13 on your backs and thorns in your ~~ex~~,
 2Ch 16 9 For the ~~ex~~ of the Lord range
 Job 31 1 "I made a covenant with my ~~ex~~
 36 7 He does not take his ~~ex~~
 Ps 119 18 Open my ~~ex~~ that I may see
 121 1 I lift up my ~~ex~~ to the hills—
 141 8 But my ~~ex~~ are fixed on you.
 Pr 3 7 Do not be wise in your own ~~ex~~,
 4 25 Let your ~~ex~~ look straight ahead,
 15 3 The ~~ex~~ of the Lord are everywhere
 Isa 6 5 and my ~~ex~~ have seen the King.
 Hab 1 13 Your ~~ex~~ are too pure to look on evil,
 Jn 4 35 open your ~~ex~~ and look at the fields!
 2Co 4 18 So we fix our ~~ex~~ not on what is seen,
 Heb 12 2 Let us fix our ~~ex~~ on Jesus, the author
 Jas 2 5 poor in the ~~ex~~ of the world to be rich
 1Pe 3 12 For the ~~ex~~ of the Lord are
 Rev 7 17 wipe away every tear from their ~~ex~~
 21 4 He will wipe every tear from their ~~ex~~

EZEKIEL

Priest called to be prophet to the exiles (Eze 1-3)

EZRA

Priest and teacher of the Law who led a return of exiles to Israel to reestablish temple and wor-

ship (Eze 8) Corrected misarrangement of priests (Eze 10) Reestablished celebration of Feast of Tabernacles (Eze 36)

FACE (FACE)

Ge 12 10 Face him since I saw you/faces
 14 22 was not aware that his face was radiant
 Nu 6 25 the Lord's face was his face
 1Ch 16 1 seek his face always
 2Ch 7 14 and seek my face and turn
 Ps 4 6 Let the light of your face shine upon us
 27 8 You face of the Lord, I seek
 31 16 Let your face shine on your servant.
 103 4 seek his face always
 119 145 Make my face shine
 Isa 40 5 Therefore have I set my face firm
 Mt 17 2 His face like the sun
 1Co 13 13 matter then we all see face
 2Co 4 6 the glory of the Lord in the face of Christ
 1Pe 3 12 be the face of the Lord
 Rev 1 16 His face was like the sun shining

FACES (FACE)

2Co 3 18 who with unveiled face reflect

FACTIONS

Gal 5 20 selfish ambition, dissensions, /

FADE

1Pe 5 4 of glory that will never fade

FAIL (FAILING FAILINGS FAIL)

1Ch 28 20 He will not / you or forsake you
 2Ch 14 33 they did not fail to follow the Lord.
 Ps 89 28 my covenant with him will never fail.
 Pr 15 22 Plans fail for lack of counsel,
 Isa 51 6 my righteousness will never fail
 La 3 22 for his compassions never fail
 2Co 13 5 unless, of course, you fail the test?

FAILING (FAIL)

Isa 12:23 sin against the Lord by / to pray

FAILINGS (FAIL)

Ro 15 1 ought to bear with the failings of the weak

FAILS (FAIL)

1Co 13 8 Love never fails.

FAINT

Isa 40 31 they will walk and not be faint

FAIR

Pr 1:3 doing what is right and just and /;
 Col 4 1 slaves with what is right and /.

FAITH (FAITHFUL FAITHFULLY FAITHFULNESS FAITHLESS)

2Ch 20 20 Have faith in the Lord your God
 Hab 2 4 but the righteous will live by his faith—
 Mt 9:29 According to your faith will it be done
 17 20 if you have faith as small as a mustard seed
 24 10 many will turn away from the faith
 Mk 11 22 "Have faith in God," Jesus answered
 Lk 7 9 I have not found such great faith
 12 28 will he clothe you? O you of little faith!
 17 5 "Increase your faith!" He replied
 18 8 will he find faith on the earth?"
 Ac 14 9 saw that he had faith to be healed
 14 27 the door of faith to the Gentiles
 Ro 1 12 encouraged by each other's faith
 1 17 is by faith from first to last.
 1 17 "The righteous will live by faith"
 3 3 What if some did not have faith?
 3 22 comes through faith in Jesus Christ
 3 25 a sacrifice of atonement through faith
 4 5 his faith is credited as righteousness
 5 1 we have been justified through faith
 10 17 faith comes from hearing the message.
 14 1 Accept him whose faith is weak
 14:23 that does not come from faith is sin
 1Co 13 2 and if I have faith that can move
 13 13 And now these three remain faith, be men
 16:13 stand firm in the faith, be men
 2Co 5 7 We live by faith, not by sight
 13 5 to see whether you are in the faith.
 Gal 2:16 Jesus that we may be justified by faith

Di 10:12 but to / the Lord your God,
 31:12 and learn to / the Lord your God
 Ps 19:9 The / of the Lord is pure,
 23:4 I will / no evil,
 27:1 whom shall I /?
 91:5 You will not / the terror of night,
 111:10 / of the Lord is the beginning
 Pr 8:13 To / the Lord is to hate evil,
 9:10 / of the Lord is the beginning
 10:27 The / of the Lord adds length
 14:27 The / of the Lord is a fountain
 15:33 / of the Lord teaches a man
 16:6 through / of the Lord a man
 19:23 The / of the Lord leads to life
 29:25 / of man will prove to be a snare,
 Isa 11:3 delight in the / of the Lord
 41:10 So do not / for I am with you,
 Lk 12:5 I will show you whom you should /
 Php 2:12 to work out your salvation with /
 1Jn 4:18 But perfect love drives out /,

FEARS (FEAR)

Job 1:8 a man who / God and shuns evil
 Ps 34:4 he delivered me from all my /
 Pr 31:30 a woman who / the Lord is
 1Jn 4:18 The one who / is not made perfect

FEED

Jn 21:15 Jesus said, " / my lambs "
 21:17 Jesus said, " / my sheep
 Ro 12:20 "If your enemy is hungry, / him,
 Jude 12 shepherds who / only themselves

FEET (FOOT)

Ps 8:6 you put everything under his /
 22:16 have pierced my hands and my /
 40:2 he set my / on a rock
 110:1 a footstool for your /
 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my /
 Ro 10:15 "How beautiful are the /
 1Co 12:21 And the head cannot say to the /
 15:25 has put all his enemies under his /
 Heb 12:13 "Make level paths for your /

FELLOWSHIP

2Co 6:14 what / can light have with darkness
 13:14 and the / of the Holy Spirit be
 Php 3:10 the / of sharing in his sufferings,
 1Jn 1:6 claim to have / with him yet walk
 1:7 we have / with one another

FEMALE

Ge 1:27 male and / he created them
 Gal 3:28 / for you are all one in Christ Jesus

FEVOR

Ro 12:11 but keep your spiritual /, serving

FIELD (FIELDS)

Mt 6:28 See how the lilies of the / grow
 13:38 / is the world, and the good seed
 1Co 3:9 you are God's /, God's building

FIELDS (FIELD)

Lk 2:8 were shepherds living out in the /
 Jn 4:35 open your eyes and look at the /

FIG (FIGS)

Ge 3:7 so they sewed / leaves together

FIGHT (FOUGHT)

Ex 14:14 The Lord will / for you, you need
 Dt 1:30 going before you, will / for you,
 3:22 the Lord your God himself will /
 Ne 4:20 Our God will / for us
 Ps 35:1 / against those who / against me
 Jn 18:36 my servants would /
 1Co 9:26 I do not / like a man beating the air
 2Co 10:4 The weapons we /
 1Ti 1:18 them you may / the good /,
 6:12 Fight the good / of the faith
 2Ti 4:7 fought the good / I have finished

FIGS (FIG)

Lk 6:44 People do not pick /

FILL (FILLED FILLS FULL FULLNESS FULLY)

Ge 1:28 and increase in number, / the earth,
 Ps 16:11 you will / me with joy
 81:10 wide your mouth and I will / it
 Pr 28:19 who chases fantasies will have his /
 Hag 2:7 and I will / this house with glory,
 Jn 6:26 you ate the loaves and had your /,
 Ac 2:28 you will / me with joy
 Ro 15:13 the God of hope / you with all joy

FILLED (FILL)

Ps 72:19 may the whole earth be /
 119:64 The earth is / with your love
 Eze 43:5 the glory of the Lord / the temple
 Hab 2:14 For the earth will be /
 Lk 1:15 and he will be / with the Holy Spirit
 1:41 and Elizabeth was / with the Holy
 Jn 12:3 the house was / with the fragrance
 Ac 2:4 All of them were /
 4:8 Then Peter / with the Holy Spirit,
 9:17 and be / with the Holy Spirit
 13:9 called Paul / with the Holy Spirit,
 Eph 5:18 Instead be / with the Spirit
 Php 1:11 / with the fruit of righteousness

FILLS (FILL)

Nu 14:21 of the Lord / the whole earth,
 Ps 107:9 and / the hungry with good things,
 Eph 1:23 fullness of him who / everything

FILTHY

Isa 64:6 all our righteous acts are like / rags,
 Col 3:8 and / language from your lips
 2Pe 2:7 by the / lives of lawless men

FIND (FINDS FOUND)

Nu 32:23 be sure that your sin will / you out
 Dt 4:29 you will / him if you look for him
 1Sa 23:16 and helped him / strength in God
 Ps 36:7 / refuge in the shadow
 91:4 under his wings you will / refuge,
 Pr 14:22 those who plan what is good / love
 31:10 A wife of noble character who can /
 Jer 6:16 and you will / rest for your souls
 Mt 7:7 seek and you will /, knock
 11:29 and you will / rest for your souls
 16:25 loses his life for me will / it
 Lk 18:8 will he / faith on the earth
 Jn 10:9 come in and go out, and / pasture

FINDS (FIND)

Ps 62:1 My soul / rest in God alone,
 112:1 who / great delight
 119:162 like one who / great spoil
 Pr 18:22 He who / a wife / what is good
 Mt 7:8 he who seeks /, and to him who
 10:39 Whoever / his life will lose it,
 Lk 12:37 whose master / them watching
 15:4 go after the lost sheep until he / it
 FINISH (FINISHED)
 Jn 4:34 him who sent me and to / his work
 5:36 that the Father has given me to /,
 Ac 20:24 if only I may / the race
 2Co 8:11 Now / the work, so that your eager
 Jas 1:4 Perseverance must / us work

FINISHED (FINISH)

Ge 2:2 seventh day God had / the work he
 Jn 19:30 the drink, Jesus said, "It is /"
 2Ti 4:7 I have / the race, I have kept

FIRE

Ex 13:21 in a pillar of / to give them light,
 Lev 6:12 / on the altar must be kept burning,
 Isa 30:27 and his tongue is a consuming /
 Jer 23:29 my word like /, declares
 Mt 3:11 you with the Holy Spirit and with /
 5:22 will be in danger of the / of hell
 25:41 into the eternal / prepared
 Mk 9:43 where the / never goes out
 Ac 2:3 to be tongues of / that separated
 1Co 3:13 It will be revealed with /
 1Th 5:19 Do not put out the Spirit's /,
 Heb 12:29 for our "God is a consuming /"

Jas 3:5 set on / by a small spark
 2Pe 3:10 the elements will be destroyed by /
 Jude 23 snatch others from the /
 Rev 20:14 The lake of / is the second death

FIRM

Ex 14:13 Stand / and you will see
 2Ch 20:17 stand / and see the deliverance
 Ps 33:11 of the Lord stand / forever,
 37:23 he makes his steps /
 40:2 and gave me a / place to stand
 89:2 that your love stands / forever,
 119:89 it stands / in the heavens
 Pr 4:26 and take only ways that are /
 Zec 8:23 nations will take / hold of one Jew
 Mk 13:13 he who stands / to the end will be
 1Co 16:13 on your guard, stand / in the faith,
 2Co 1:24 because it is by faith you stand /
 Eph 6:14 Stand / then with the belt
 Col 4:12 that you may stand / in all the will
 2Th 2:15 stand / and hold to the teachings
 2Ti 2:19 God's solid foundation stands /
 Heb 6:19 an anchor for the soul, / and secure
 1Pe 5:9 Resist him, standing / in the faith,

FIRST

Isa 44:6 I am the / and I am the last,
 48:12 I am the / and I am the last
 Mt 5:24 / go and be reconciled
 6:33 But seek / his kingdom
 7:5 / take the plank out
 20:27 wants to be / must be your slave—
 22:38 This is the / and greatest
 23:26 / clean the inside of the cup
 Mk 13:10 And the gospel must be preached
 Ac 11:26 disciples were called Christians /
 Ro 1:16 / for the Jew then for the Gentile
 1Co 12:28 in the church God has appointed /
 2Co 8:5 they gave themselves / to the Lord
 1Ti 2:13 For Adam was formed /, then Eve
 Jas 3:17 comes from heaven is / of all pure
 1Jn 4:19 We love because he / loved us
 3Jn :9 but Diotrephes, who loves to be /,
 Rev 1:17 I am the / and the Last
 2:4 You have forsaken your / love

FIRSTBORN (BEAR)

Ex 11:5 Every / son in Egypt will die,

FIRSTFRUITS

Ex 23:19 "Bring the best of the / of your soil

FISHERS

Mk 1:17 "and I will make you / of men "

FITTING*

Ps 33:1 It is / for the upright to praise him
 147:1 how pleasant and / to praise him!
 Pr 10:32 of the righteous know what is /,
 19:10 It is not / for a fool to live in luxury
 26:1 honor is not / for a fool
 1Co 14:40 everything should be done in a /
 Col 3:18 to your husbands, as is / in the Lord
 Heb 2:10 sons to glory, it was / that God,

FIX

Dt 11:18 / these words of mine
 Pr 4:25 / your gaze directly before you,
 2Co 4:18 we / our eyes not on what is seen,
 Heb 3:1 heavenly calling, / your thoughts
 12:2 Let us / our eyes on Jesus,

FLAME (FLAMES FLAMING)

2Ti 1:6 you to fan into / the gift of God,

FLAMES (FLAME)

1Co 3:15 only as one escaping through the /
 13:3 and surrender my body to the /,

FLAMING (FLAME)

Eph 6:16 you can extinguish all the / arrows

FLASH

1Co 15:52 in a /, in the twinkling of an eye,

FLATTER (FLATTERING; FLATTERY)

Eph 4:21 not will / any man,
hate / others for their own advantage

FLATTERING (FLATTER)

Is 12:2 their / lips speak with deception
12:3 May the Lord cut off all / lips
Is 26:26 and a / mouth works ruin

FLATTERY (FLATTER)

Ro 16:18 and / they deceive the minds
1Th 2:3 You know we never used /,

FLAWLESS*

2Sa 22:31 the word of the Lord is /
Isa 11:4 You say to God, "My beliefs are /"
Is 12:6 And the words of the Lord are /,
18:30 the word of the Lord is /
Is 40:5 "Every word of God is /,
SS 5:2 my dove, my / one

FLIB

Ps 139:7 Where can I / from your presence?
1Co 6:18 / from sexual immorality
10:14 my dear friends, / from idolatry
1Ti 6:11 But you, man of God, / from all this
2Ti 2:22 / the evil desires of youth,
Isa 4:7 Resist the devil, and he will /

FLETING

Is 80:47 Remember how / is my life
Ps 31:30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is /

FLISH

Cre 2:21 and / of my /,
2:24 and they will become one /
Job 19:26 yet in my / I will see God,
Isa 11:19 of stone and give them a heart of /
36:26 of stone and give you a heart of /
Mic 10:8 and the two will become one /
Isa 1:14 The Word became / and made his
6:51 This bread is my /, which I will give
1Co 6:16 "The two will become one /"
Eph 5:31 and the two will become one /,
6:12 For our struggle is not against /

FLOCK (FLOCKS)

Isa 40:11 He tends his / like a shepherd.
Ec 4:2 not shepherds take care of the /?
Zec 11:17 who deserts the /?
Mt 26:31 the sheep of the / will be scattered
Aa 20:28 all the / of which the Holy Spirit
1Pe 5:2 Be shepherds of God's / that is

FLOCKS (FLOCK)

Lk 2:8 keeping watch over their / at night

FLOG

Ac 22:25 to / a Roman citizen who hasn't

FLOODGATES

Ma 3:10 see if I will not throw open the /

FLOURISHING

Ps 52:8 / in the house of God,

FLOW (FLOWING)

Nu 13:27 and it does / with milk and honey!
Jn 4:13 streams of living water will /

FLOWERS

Isa 40:7 The grass withers and the / fall,

FLOWING (FLOW)

Ex 3:8 a land / with milk and honey—

FOLDING

Pr 6:10 a little / of the hands to rest—

FOLLOW (FOLLOWING FOLLOWS)

Ex 23:2 Do not / the crowd in doing wrong
Lev 18:4 and be careful to / my decrees
Dt 5:1 Learn them and be sure to / them.
Ps 23:6 Surely goodness and love will / me
Mt 16:24 and take up his cross and / me
Jn 10:4 his sheep / him because they know
C 14:1 / the way of love and eagerly
Re 14:4 They / the Lamb wherever he goes

FOLLOWING (FOLLOW)

1Ti 1:18 by / them you may fight the good

FOLLOWS (FOLLOW)

Jn 8:12 Whoever / me will never walk

FOOD (FOODS)

Ps 20:11 you will have / to spare
22:9 for he shares his / with the poor
25:21 If your enemy is hungry, give him /
31:15 she provides / for her family
Da 1:8 to defile himself with the royal /
Jn 6:27 Do not work for / that spoils
Ro 14:14 truly convinced that no / is unclean
1Co 10:8 But / does not bring as near to God
1Ti 6:8 But if we have / and clothing,
Jas 2:15 sister is without clothes and daily /

FOODS (FOOD)

Mk 7:19 Jesus declared all / "clean."

FOOL (FOOLISH FOOLISHNESS FOOLS)

Ps 14:1 The / says in his heart,
Pr 15:5 A / spurns his father's discipline,
17:28 Even a / is thought wise
18:2 A / finds no pleasure
26:5 Answer a / according to his folly,
28:26 He who trusts in himself is a /
Mt 5:22 But anyone who says "You /"

FOOLISH (FOOL)

Pr 10:1 but a / son grieved to his mother
17:25 A / son brings grief to his father
Mt 7:26 practice / like a / man who built
25:2 of them were / and five were wise
1Co 1:27 God chose the / things of the world

FOOLISHNESS (FOOL)

1Co 1:18 of the cross is / to those who are
1:24 For the / of God is wiser
2:14 for they are / to him, and he cannot
3:19 of this world is / in God's sight

FOOLS (FOOL)

Pr 14:9 / mock at making amends for sin,
1Co 4:10 We are / for Christ, but you are

FOOT (FEET FOOTHOLD)

Jos 1:3 every place where you set your /,
Isa 1:6 From the sole of your / to the top
1Co 12:15 If the / should say, "Because I am

FOOTHOLD (FOOT)

Eph 4:27 and do not give the devil a /

FORBEARANCE*

Ro 3:25 because in his / he had left the sins

FORBID

1Co 14:39 and do not / speaking in tongues

FOREFATHERS (FATHER)

Heb 1:1 spoke to our / through the prophets

FOREKNEW* (KNOW)

Ro 8:29 For those God / he
11:2 not reject his people, whom he /,

FOREVER (EVER)

1Ch 16:15 He remembers his covenant /,
16:34 his love endures /
Ps 9:7 The LORD reigns /;
23:6 dwell in the house of the LORD /
33:11 the plans of the LORD stand firm /
86:12 I will glorify your name /
92:8 But you, O LORD, are exalted /
110:4 "You are a priest /,
119:111 Your statutes are my heritage /,
Jn 6:51 eats of this bread, he will live /
14:16 Counselor to be with you /—
1Co 9:25 it to get a crown that will last /
1Th 4:17 And so we will be with the Lord /
Heb 13:8 same yesterday and today and /
1Pe 1:25 but the word of the Lord stands /
1Jn 2:17 who does the will of God lives /

FORGET

1A 9:25 and yet lose or / this very self*

FORGAVE (FORGIVE)

Ps 12:5 and you /
Eph 4:32 just as in Christ God / you
Col 2:13 He / us all our sins, having
3:11 Forgive as the Lord / you

FORGET (FORGETS FORGETTING)

De 6:12 that you do not / the Lord,
Ps 103:2 and / not all his benefits
137:9 my right hand / us skill,
Isa 49:15 Can a mother / the baby
Heb 6:10 he will not / your work

FORGETS (FORGET)

Jn 16:21 her baby is born she / the anguish
Jas 1:24 immediately / what he looks like

FORGETTING (FORGET)

Php 3:13 / what is behind and straining

FORGIVE (FORGIVENESS FORGIVING)

2Ch 7:14 will / their sin and will heal their
Ps 19:12 / my hidden faults
Mt 6:12 / us our debts
6:14 For if you / men when they sin
18:21 many times shall I / my brother
Mk 11:25 in heaven may / you your sins
Lk 11:4 / us our sins,
23:34 Jesus said, "Father / them,
Col 3:13 / as the Lord forgave you
1Jn 1:9 and just and will / us our sins

FORGIVENESS (FORGIVE)

Ps 130:4 But with you there is /,
Ac 10:43 believes in him receives / of sins
Eph 1:7 through his blood, the / of sins,
Col 1:14 in whom we have redemption the /
Heb 9:22 the shedding of blood there is no /

FORGIVING (FORGIVE)

Ne 9:17 But you are a / God, gracious
Eph 4:32 to one another, / each other,

FORMED

Ge 2:7 And the LORD God / man
Ps 137:14 for he knows how we are /,
Isa 45:18 but / it to be inhabited—
Ro 9:20 "Shall what is / say to him who / it,
1Ti 2:13 For Adam was / first, then Eve
Heb 11:3 understand that the universe was /

FORSAKE (FORSAKEN)

Jos 1:5 I will never leave you nor / you
24:16 "Far be it from us to / the LORD
2Ch 15:2 but if you / him, he will / you
Ps 27:10 Though my father and mother / me
Isa 55:7 Let the wicked / his way
Heb 13:5 never will I / you "

FORSAKEN (FORSAKE)

Ps 22:1 my God, why have you / me?
37:25 I have never seen the righteous /
Mt 27:46 my God, why have you / me?"
Rev 2:4 You have / your first love

FORTRESS

Ps 18:2 The LORD is my rock, my /
71:3 for you are my rock and my /,

FOUGHT (FIGHT)

2Ti 4:7 I have / the good fight, I have

FOUND (FIND)

1Ch 28:9 If you seek him, he will be / by you,
Isa 55:6 Seek the LORD while he may be /,
Da 5:27 on the scales and / wanting
Lk 15:6 with me, I have / my lost sheep
15:9 with me, I have / my lost coin
Ac 4:12 Salvation is / in no one else,

FOUNDATION

Isa 28:16 a precious cornerstone for a sure /,
1Co 3:11 For no one can lay any / other

Eph 2:20 built on the *f* of the apostles
2Ti 2:19 God's solid *f* stands firm.

FOXES

Mt 8:20 *F* have holes and birds

FRAGRANCE

2Co 2:16 of death, to the other, the *f* of life

FREE (FREED FREEDOM FREELY)

Ps 146:7 The LORD sets prisoners *f*,
Jn 8:32 and the truth will set you *f* "
Ro 6:18 You have been set *f* from sin
Gal 3:28 slave not *f* male nor female,
1Pe 2:16 *f* men, but do not use your freedom

FREED (FREE)

Rev 1:5 has *f* us from our sins by his blood,

FREEDOM (FREE)

Ro 8:21 into the glorious *f* of the children
2Co 3:17 the Spirit of the Lord is, there is *f*
Gal 5:13 But do not use your *f* to indulge
1Pe 2:16 but do not use your *f* as a cover-up

FREELY (FREE)

Isa 55:7 and to our God, for he will *f* pardon
Mt 10:8 *F*reely you have received, *f* give
Ro 3:24 and are justified *f* by his grace
Eph 1:6 which he has *f* given us

FRIEND (FRIENDS)

Ex 33:11 as a man speaks with his *f*
Pr 17:17 A *f* loves at all times,
18:24 there is a *f* who sticks closer
27:6 Wounds from a *f* can be trusted
27:10 Do not forsake your *f* and the *f*
Jas 4:4 Anyone who chooses to be a *f*

FRIENDS (FRIEND)

Pr 16:28 and a gossip separates close *f*
Zec 13:6 given at the house of my *f*
Jn 15:13 that he lay down his life for his *f*

FRUIT (FRUITFUL)

Ps 1:3 which yields its *f* in season
Pr 11:30 The *f* of the righteous is a tree
Mt 7:16 By their *f* you will recognize them
Jn 15:2 branch in me that bears no *f*
Gal 5:22 But the *f* of the Spirit is love, joy,
Rev 22:2 of *f* yielding its *f* every month

FRUITFUL (FRUIT)

Ge 1:22 "Be *f* and increase in number
Ps 128:3 Your wife will be like a *f* vine
Jn 15:2 prunes so that it will be even more *f*

FULFILL (FULFILLED FULFILLMENT)

Ps 116:14 I will *f* my vows to the LORD
Mt 5:17 come to abolish them but to *f* them
1Co 7:3 husband should *f* his marital duty

FULFILLED (FULFILL)

Pr 13:19 A longing *f* is sweet to the soul,
Mk 14:49 But the Scriptures must be *f*
Ro 13:8 loves his fellowman has *f* the law

FULFILLMENT (FULFILL)

Ro 13:10 Therefore love is the *f* of the law

FULL (FILL)

Ps 127:5 whose quiver is *f* of them
Pr 31:11 Her husband has *f* confidence
Isa 6:3 the whole earth is *f* of his glory "
11:9 for the earth will be *f*
Jn 10:10 may have life, and have it to the *f*
Ac 6:3 known to be *f* of the Spirit

FULLNESS (FILL)

Col 1:19 to have all his *f* dwell in him,
2:9 in Christ all the *f* of the Deity lives

FULLY (FILL)

1Ki 8:61 your hearts must be *f* committed
2Ch 16:9 whose hearts are *f* committed
Ps 119:4 that are to be *f* obeyed
119:138 they are *f* trustworthy
1Co 15:58 Always give yourselves *f*

FUTURE

Ps 37:37 there is a *f* for the man of peace
Pr 23:18 There is surely a *f* hope for you,
Ro 8:38 neither the present nor the *f*,

GABRIEL*

Angel who interpreted Daniel's visions (Da 8:16-26, 9:20-27); announced births of John (Lk 1:11-20), Jesus (Lk 1:26-38)

GAIN (GAINED)

Ps 60:12 With God we will *g* the victory,
Mk 8:36 it for a man to *g* the whole world,
1Co 13:3 but have not love, *g* nothing
Php 1:21 to live to Christ and to die is *g*
3:8 that I may *g* Christ and be found
1Ti 6:6 with contentment is great *g*

GAINED (GAIN)

Ro 5:2 through whom we have *g* access

GALILEE

Isa 9:1 but in the future he will honor *G*

GALL

Mt 27:34 mixed with *g*, but after tasting it,

GAP

Eze 22:30 stand before me in the *g* on behalf

GARDENER

Jn 15:1 true vine, and my Father is the *g*

GARMENT (GARMENTS)

Ps 102:26 they will all wear out like a *g*
Mt 9:16 of unshrunk cloth on an old *g*.
Jn 19:23 This *g* was seamless, woven

GARMENTS (GARMENT)

Ge 3:21 The LORD God made *g* of skin
Isa 61:10 me with *g* of salvation
63:1 with his *g* stained crimson?
Jn 19:24 "They divided my *g* among them

GATE (GATES)

Mt 7:13 For wide is the *g* and broad is
Jn 10:9 I am the *g*, whoever enters

GATES (GATE)

Ps 100:4 Enter his *g* with thanksgiving
Mt 16:18 the *g* of Hades will not overcome it

GATHER (GATHERS)

Zec 14:2 I will *g* all the nations to Jerusalem
Mt 12:30 he who does not *g* with me scatters
23:37 longed to *g* your children together,

GATHERS (GATHER)

Isa 40:11 He *g* the lambs in his arms
Mt 23:37 a hen *g* her chicks under her wings,

GAVE (GIVE)

Eze 2:69 According to their ability they *g*
Job 1:21 LORD *g* and the LORD has taken
Jn 3:16 so loved the world that he *g* his one
2Co 8:5 they *g* themselves first to the Lord
Gal 2:20 who loved me and *g* himself for me
1Ti 2:6 who *g* himself as a ransom

GAZE

Ps 27:4 to *g* upon the beauty of the LORD
Pr 4:25 fix your *g* directly before you

GENEALOGIES

1Ti 1:4 themselves to myths and endless *g*

GENERATIONS

Ps 22:30 future *g* will be told about the Lord
102:12 your renown endures through all *g*
145:13 dominion endures through all *g*
Lk 1:48 now on all *g* I will call me blessed,
Eph 3:5 not made known to men in other *g*

GENEROUS

Ps 112:5 Good will come to him who is *g*
Pr 22:9 A *g* man will himself be blessed.
2Co 9:5 Then it will be ready as a *g* gift.
1Ti 6:18 and to be *g* and willing to share

GENTILE (GENTILES)

Ro 1:16 first for the Jew then for the *G*
10:12 difference between Jew and *G*—

GENTILES (GENTILE)

Isa 42:6 and a light for the *G*
Ro 3:9 and *G* alike are all under sin
11:13 as I am the apostle to the *G*
1Co 1:23 block to Jews and foolishness to *G*

GENTLE (GENTLENESS)

Pr 15:1 A *g* answer turns away wrath
Zec 9:9 *g* and riding on a donkey
Mt 11:29 for I am *g* and humble in heart,
21:5 *g* and riding on a donkey
1Co 4:21 or in love and with a *g* spirit?
1Pe 3:4 the unfading beauty of a *g*

GENTLENESS* (GENTLE)

2Co 10:1 By the meekness and *g* of Christ
Gal 5:22 faithfulness, *g* and self control
Php 4:4 Let your *g* be evident to all
Col 3:12 kindness, humility, *g* and patience
1Ti 6:11 faith, love, endurance and *g*
1Pe 3:15 But do this with *g* and respect

GETHESEMANE

Mt 26:36 disciples to a place called *G*

GIDEON*

Judge also called Jerub-Baal, freed Israel from Midianites (Jdg 6-8, Heb 11:32). Given sign of fleece (Jdg 8:36-40)

GIFT (GIFTS)

Pr 21:14 A *g* given in secret soothes anger,
Mt 5:23 if you are offering your *g*
Ac 2:38 And you will receive the *g*
Ro 6:23 but the *g* of God is eternal life
1Co 7:7 each man has his own *g* from God.
2Co 8:12 the *g* is acceptable according
9:15 be to God for his indescribable *g*
Eph 2:8 it is the *g* of God—not by works
1Ti 4:14 not neglect your *g* which was
2Ti 1:6 you to fan into flame the *g* of God
Jas 1:17 and perfect *g* is from above
1Pe 4:10 should use whatever *g* he has

GIFTS (GIFT)

Ro 11:29 for God's *g* and his call are
12:6 We have different *g*, according
1Co 12:4 There are different kinds of *g*
12:31 But eagerly desire the greater *g*
14:1 and eagerly desire spiritual *g*.
14:12 excel in *g* that build up the church.

GILEAD

Jer 8:22 Is there no balm in *G*?

GIVE (GAVE GIVEN GIVER GIVES GIVING)

Nu 6:26 and *g* you peace "
Isa 1:11 then I will *g* him to the LORD
2Ch 15:7 be strong and do not *g* up.
Pr 21:26 but the righteous *g* without sparing
23:26 My son, *g* me your heart
30:8 but *g* me only my daily bread.
31:31 *G* her the reward she has earned.
Isa 42:8 I will not *g* my glory to another
Eze 36:26 I will *g* you a new heart
Mt 6:11 *G* us today our daily bread
10:8 Freely you have received, freely *g*
22:21 "G to Caesar what is Caesar's,
Mk 8:37 Or what can a man *g* in exchange
Lk 6:38 *G*, and it will be given to you
11:13 Father in heaven *g* the Holy Spirit
Jn 10:28 I *g* them eternal life, and they shall
13:34 "A new commandment I *g* you
20:35 blessed to *g* than to receive "
Ac 12:8 let him *g* generously
13:7 *G* everyone what you owe him.
14:12 each of us will *g* an account
2Co 9:7 Each man should *g* what he has
Rev 14:7 "Fear God and *g* him glory,

GIVEN (GIVE)

Nu 8:16 are to be *g* wholly to me

Ps 135 16 But the earth he has *g* to man.
Isa 40 6 to us a son is *g*
Mt 6 33 and all these things will be *g* to you
Lk 22 19 saying: "This is my body *g* for you
Jn 3 27 man can receive only what is *g* him
Ro 8 3 the righteousness which he has
1 4 those who have been *g* a just man
2 we were all *g* the one Spirit to drink
Eph 4 7 so each one of us *g* has been *g*

GIVER* GIVE

Ps 118 16 A gift opens the way for the *g*
2Co 9 7 for God loves a cheerful *g*

GIVES (GIVE)

Ps 119 140 The unfolding of your words *g* light
Ps 14 30 A horn of peace *g* life to the body.
1 20 goodness, *g* health to the bones
20 27 the whole of the poor will seek
Isa 40 2 the strength to the weary
Mt 10 42 anyone even a cup of cold water
Jn 6 63 The Spirit *g* life, the flesh counts
1Co 15 57 He *g* us the victory
2Co 3 6 the letter kills, but the Spirit *g* life

GIVING (GIVE)

Ne 8 8 *g* the meaning so that the people
Ps 19 8 joy to the heart
Mt 6 4 so that your *g* may be in secret
2Co 8 7 also excel in this grace of *g*

GLAD (GLADNESS)

Ps 31 7 I will be *g* and rejoice in your love.
45 4 where *g* makes a feast
1 14 are *g* on the earth be *g*
2 24 *g* and be *g*
Ps 2 24 May your father and mother be *g*
2 24 and be *g* Daughters of Zion
Mt 5 12 be *g* because great is your reward

GLADNESS (GLAD)

Ps 45 15 They are led in with joy and *g*
51 8 Let me hear joy and *g*
100 2 Serve the LORD with *g*
Jer 31 13 I will turn their mourning into *g*

GLORIFIED (GLORY)

1 1 Son of Man *g* and God is *g* in him
R 1 1 those he justified, he also *g*
2 10 comes to be *g* in his holy people

GLORIFY (GLORY)

Ps 34 3 *g* the LORD with me.
50 1 I will *g* your name forever
1 1 God will *g* the Son in himself
1 1 *g* your Son, that your Son may

GLORIOUS (GLORY)

Ps 45 3 All *g* is the princess
1 1 *g* and majestic are his deeds.
5 5 of the *g* splendor of your majesty.
2 2 the LORD will be beautiful and *g*
5 5 for he has done *g* things
21 21 to make his law great and *g*
15 15 from your lofty throne, holy and *g*
9 28 the Son of Man sits on his *g* throne.
31 31 appeared in *g* splendor, talking
20 20 of the great and *g* day of the LORD
1 1 the Spirit be even more *g*
1 21 so that they will be like his *g* body
4 19 to his *g* riches in Christ Jesus
Tit 2 13 the *g* appearing of our great God
Jude 24 before his *g* presence without fault

GLORY (GLORIFIED GLORIFY

GLORIOUS)

Ex 15 11 awesome in *g*
18 Moses said, "Now show me your *g*
Sa 4 21 "The *g* has departed from Israel" —
24 Declare his *g* among the nations
26 ascribe to the LORD *g*
29 11 and the *g* and the majesty
Ps 8 5 and crowned him with *g* and honor
19 1 The heavens declare the *g* of God,
2 7 that the King of *g* may come in
27 ascribe to the LORD *g*

Ps 72 19 the whole earth be filled with his *g*
46 1 They are busy among the nations
19 1 it is his *g* to overlook an offense
25 2 It is he *g* of good is conceived
Isa 6 3 the whole earth is full of his *g*
48 11 I will not yield my *g* to another
Eze 41 2 and the land was radiant with his *g*
Mt 24 46 of the sky, with power and great *g*
24 31 the Son of Man comes in his *g*
Mt 8 38 in his father's *g* with the holy
13 26 my kingly with great power and *g*
1A 2 9 and the *g* of the LORD shone
2 14 saying: *g* to God in the highest
Jn 1 14 We have seen his *g* the *g* of the One
1 5 presence with the *g* I had with you
17 24 to see my *g* the *g* you have given
Ac 2 2 The God of *g* appeared
Ro 1 23 exchanged the *g* of the immortal
3 23 and fall short of the *g* of God.
8 18 with the *g* that will be revealed
9 4 there the divine *g* the covenant,
1Co 10 31 whatever you do, do it all for the *g*
11 7 But the woman is the *g* of man
15 41 it is raised in *g* it is sown
2Co 3 10 comparison with the surpassing *g*
3 18 faces reflect the LORD's *g*
4 17 even eternal *g* that far outweighs
Col 1 27 Christ in you, the hope of *g*
1 4 also will appear with him in *g*
1Ti 3 16 was taken up in *g*
Heb 1 3 The Son is the radiance of God's *g*
2 7 you crowned him with *g* and honor
1Pe 1 24 and all their *g* is like the flowers
Rev 4 11 to receive *g* and honor and power
21 23 for the *g* of God gives it light.

GLUTTONS

Tn 1 12 always lusts, evil brutes, lazy *g*."

GNASHING

Mt 8 12 where there will be weeping and *g*

GNAT*

Mt 23 24 You strain out a *g* but swallow

GOAL

2Co 5 9 So we make it our *g* to please him,
Gal 3 3 to attain your *g* by human effort?
Php 3 14 on toward the *g* to win the prize

GOAT (GOATS SCAPEGOAT)

Isa 11 6 the leopard will lie down with the *g*

GOATS (GOAT)

Nu 7 17 five male *g* and five male lambs

GOD (GOD'S GODLINESS GODLY GODS)

Ge 1 1 In the beginning *G* created
1 2 and the Spirit of *G* was hovering
1 26 Then *G* said: Let us make man
1 27 So *G* created man in his own image
1 31 *G* saw all that he had made,
2 3 And *G* blessed the seventh day
2 22 Then the LORD *G* made a woman
2 21 The LORD *G* made garments
3 21 So the LORD *G* banished him
5 22 Enoch walked with *G* 300 years
6 2 sons of *G* saw that the daughters
9 16 everlasting covenant between *G*
17 1 I am *G* Almighty, walk before me
21 33 name of the LORD, the Eternal *G*
22 8 *G* himself will provide the lamb
28 12 and the angels of *G* were ascending
32 28 because you have struggled with *G*
32 40 It is because I saw *G* face to face.
35 10 *G* said to him, "Your name is Jacob
41 51 *G* has made me forget all my
50 20 but *G* intended it for good
2 24 *G* heard their groaning
3 6 because he was afraid to look at *G*
6 7 own people, and I will be your *G*.
8 10 is no one like the LORD our *G*
13 18 So *G* led the people
15 2 He is my *G* and I will praise him,
17 9 with the staff of *G* in my hands."
19 3 Then Moses went up to *G*.

Is 20 2 the lamp your *G* who brought
20 9 the LORD's will, am a jealous *G*
20 19 But do not have *G* speak to us
22 28 I do not blaspheme *G*.
31 18 inscribed by the finger of *G*.
34 6 the compassionate and gracious *G*
34 14 name is jealous, is a jealous *G*.
Lev 21 21 not profane the name of your *G*.
19 2 the LORD your *G* is holy
26 12 walk among you and be your *G*.
Nu 22 18 I must speak only what *G* puts
21 19 *G* is not man, that he should lie
Dt 1 17 for judgment belongs to *G*.
3 22 I and your *G*, himself, will fight
3 24 For what *G* is there in heaven
4 24 is a consuming fire, a jealous *G*.
4 31 the LORD your *G* is a merciful *G*.
4 39 hear this day that the LORD is *G*.
5 11 the name of the LORD your *G*.
5 14 a Sabbath to the LORD your *G*.
5 26 of the living *G* speaking out of fire
6 4 LORD our *G*, the LORD is one
6 5 Love the LORD your *G*.
6 13 the LORD your *G*, serve him only
6 16 Do not test the LORD your *G*.
7 9 your *G* is *G*, he is the faithful *G*.
7 12 the LORD your *G* will keep his
7 21 is a great and awesome *G*.
8 5 the LORD your *G* disciplines you
10 12 but to fear the LORD your *G*.
10 14 the LORD your *G* belong
10 17 For the LORD your *G* is *G* of gods
11 13 to love the LORD your *G*.
13 3 The LORD your *G* is testing you
13 4 the LORD your *G* you must
15 6 the LORD your *G* will bless you
19 9 to love the LORD your *G*.
25 16 the LORD your *G* detests anyone
29 29 belong to the LORD your *G*.
30 2 return to the LORD your *G*.
30 16 today to love the LORD your *G*.
30 20 you may love the LORD your *G*.
31 6 for the LORD your *G* goes
32 3 Oh, praise the greatness of our *G*!
32 4 A faithful *G* who does no wrong.
33 27 The eternal *G* is your refuge
Jos 1 9 for the LORD your *G* will be
14 8 the LORD my *G* wholeheartedly
22 5 to love the LORD your *G*.
22 34 Between us that the LORD is *G*.
23 11 careful to love the LORD your *G*.
23 14 the LORD your *G* gave you this
16 28 O *G*, please strengthen me just
Ru 1 16 be my people and your *G*, my *G*.
1Sa 2 2 there is no Rock like our *G*.
2 3 for the LORD is a *G* who knows,
2 25 another man, *G* may mediate
10 26 men whose hearts *G* had touched
12 12 the LORD your *G* was your king
17 26 defy the armies of the living *G*!"
17 46 world will know that there is a *G*.
25a 30 6 strength in the LORD, his *G*.
14 14 But *G* does not take away life
22 3 my *G* is my rock, in whom I take
22 31 As for *G*, his way is perfect.
1Ki 4 29 *G* gave Solomon wisdom
8 23 there is no *G* like you in heaven
8 27 "But will *G* really dwell on earth?"
8 61 committed to the LORD our *G*.
18 21 If the LORD is *G*, follow him
18 37 are *G*, and that you are turning
20 28 a *G* of the hills and not a *G*.
2Kt 19 15 *G* of Israel, enthroned
1Ch 16 15 Cry out: Save us O *G*, our Savior
28 2 for the footstool of our *G*.
28 9 acknowledge the *G* of your father,
29 10 *G* of our father Israel
29 17 my *G*, that you test the heart
2Ch 2 4 for the Name of the LORD, my *G*.
5 14 of the LORD filled the temple of *G*.
6 18 But will *G* really dwell on earth?
18 11 I can tell him only what my *G* says
20 6 are you not the *G* who is in heaven?
25 8 for *G* has the power to help
30 9 for the LORD your *G* is gracious
33 12 the favor of the LORD, his *G*.

8:22 "The good hand of our G is
 9:6 "O my G I am too ashamed
 9:13 our G you have punished us thus
 Ne 3:5 the great and awesome G
 8:8 from the Book of the Law of G
 9:17 But you are a forgiving G,
 9:32 the great, mighty and awesome G,
 Job 1:1 he feared G and shunned evil
 2:10 Shall we accept good from G
 4:1 "a mortal be more righteous than G"
 4:1 is the man whom G corrects,
 11:7 Can you fathom the mysteries of G
 19:26 yet in my flesh I will see G
 22:13 Yet you say, "What does G know?"
 25:4 can a man be righteous before G?
 31:14 For G does speak—now one way,
 34:12 is unthinkable that G would do
 36:26 is G—beyond our understanding!
 37:22 G comes in awesome majesty
 Ps 18:2 my G is my rock, in whom I take
 18:28 my G turns my darkness into light
 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of G,
 22:1 G my G, why have you forsaken
 29:3 the G of glory thunders,
 31:14 I say, "You are my G
 40:3 a hymn of praise to our G
 40:8 I desire to do your will, O my G
 42:2 thirsts for G, for the living G
 42:11 Put your hope in G,
 45:6 O G will last for ever and ever,
 46:1 G is our refuge and strength,
 46:10 "Be still, and know that I am G,
 47:7 For G is the King of all the earth,
 50:3 Our G comes and will not be silent
 51:1 Have mercy on me, O G
 51:10 Create in me a pure heart, O G
 51:17 O G you will not despise
 62:7 my honor depend on G
 65:5 O G our Savior
 66:1 Shout with joy to G all the earth!
 66:16 listen, all you who fear G
 68:6 G sets the lonely in families,
 71:17 my youth, O G, you have taught
 71:19 reaches to the skies, O G
 71:22 harp for your faithfulness, O my G,
 73:26 but G is the strength of my heart
 77:13 What is so great as our God?
 78:19 Can G spread a table in the desert?
 81:1 Sing for joy to G our strength,
 84:2 out for the living G
 84:10 a doorkeeper in the house of my G
 86:12 O Lord my G, with all my heart,
 89:7 of the holy ones G is greatly feared
 90:2 to everlasting you are G
 91:2 my G in whom I trust
 95:7 for he is our G
 100:3 know that the LORD is G,
 108:1 My heart is steadfast, O G
 113:5 Who is like the LORD our G
 119:23 Search me, O G and know my
 Pr 3:4 in the sight of G and man
 25:2 of G to conceal a matter
 30:5 "Every word of G is flawless
 Ecc 3:11 cannot fathom what G has done
 11:5 cannot understand the work of G
 12:13 Fear G and keep his
 Isa 9:6 Wonderful Counselor, Mighty G
 17:16 you alone are G over all
 40:3 a highway for our G
 40:8 the word of our G stands forever
 40:28 The LORD is the everlasting G
 41:10 not be dismayed for I am your G
 44:6 apart from me there is no G
 52:7 "Your G reigns
 54:17 "for he will freely pardon
 57:1 "for the wicked
 59:1 "for the
 60:1 "for the
 60:2 "for the
 60:3 "for the
 60:4 "for the
 60:5 "for the
 60:6 "for the
 60:7 "for the
 60:8 "for the
 60:9 "for the
 60:10 "for the
 60:11 "for the
 60:12 "for the
 60:13 "for the
 60:14 "for the
 60:15 "for the
 60:16 "for the
 60:17 "for the
 60:18 "for the
 60:19 "for the
 60:20 "for the
 60:21 "for the
 60:22 "for the
 60:23 "for the
 60:24 "for the
 60:25 "for the
 60:26 "for the
 60:27 "for the
 60:28 "for the
 60:29 "for the
 60:30 "for the
 60:31 "for the
 60:32 "for the
 60:33 "for the
 60:34 "for the
 60:35 "for the
 60:36 "for the
 60:37 "for the
 60:38 "for the
 60:39 "for the
 60:40 "for the
 60:41 "for the
 60:42 "for the
 60:43 "for the
 60:44 "for the
 60:45 "for the
 60:46 "for the
 60:47 "for the
 60:48 "for the
 60:49 "for the
 60:50 "for the
 60:51 "for the
 60:52 "for the
 60:53 "for the
 60:54 "for the
 60:55 "for the
 60:56 "for the
 60:57 "for the
 60:58 "for the
 60:59 "for the
 60:60 "for the
 60:61 "for the
 60:62 "for the
 60:63 "for the
 60:64 "for the
 60:65 "for the
 60:66 "for the
 60:67 "for the
 60:68 "for the
 60:69 "for the
 60:70 "for the
 60:71 "for the
 60:72 "for the
 60:73 "for the
 60:74 "for the
 60:75 "for the
 60:76 "for the
 60:77 "for the
 60:78 "for the
 60:79 "for the
 60:80 "for the
 60:81 "for the
 60:82 "for the
 60:83 "for the
 60:84 "for the
 60:85 "for the
 60:86 "for the
 60:87 "for the
 60:88 "for the
 60:89 "for the
 60:90 "for the
 60:91 "for the
 60:92 "for the
 60:93 "for the
 60:94 "for the
 60:95 "for the
 60:96 "for the
 60:97 "for the
 60:98 "for the
 60:99 "for the
 60:100 "for the

Joel 2:13 Return to the LORD your G
 Am 4:12 prepare to meet your G O Israel
 Mic 6:8 and to walk humbly with your G
 Na 1:2 LORD is a jealous and avenging G,
 Zec 14:4 Then the LORD my G will come
 Mal 3:1 Will a man rob G? Yet you rob me
 Mt 1:23 which means, "G with us"
 5:8 for they will see G
 6:24 You cannot serve both G
 19:6 Therefore what G has joined
 19:26 but with G all things are possible
 22:21 and to G what is God's
 22:37 "Love the Lord your G
 27:46 which means, "My G, my G,
 Mk 12:29 the Lord our G, the Lord is one
 16:19 and he sat at the right hand of G
 Lk 1:37 For nothing is impossible with G,"
 1:47 my spirit rejoices in G my Savior,
 10:9 "The kingdom of G is near you"
 10:27 "Love the Lord your G
 18:19 "No one is good—except G alone
 Jn 1:1 I was with G, and the Word was G
 1:18 seen G, but G the One and Only,
 3:16 "For G so loved the world that he
 4:24 G is spirit, and his worshipers must
 14:1 Trust in G, trust also in me
 20:28 "My Lord and my G"
 Ac 2:24 But G raised him from the dead
 4:4 You have not lied to men but to G
 5:29 We must obey G rather than men
 7:55 to heaven and saw the glory of G,
 17:23 TO AN UNKNOWN G
 20:27 to you the whole will of G
 20:32 "Now I commit you to G
 Ro 1:17 a righteousness from G is revealed,
 2:11 For G does not show favoritism
 3:4 Let G be true and every man a liar
 3:23 and fall short of the glory of G
 4:24 to whom G will credit
 5:8 G demonstrates his own love for us
 6:23 but the gift of G is eternal life
 8:28 in all things G works for the good
 11:22 the kindness and sternness of G
 14:12 give an account of himself to G
 1Co 1:20 Has not G made foolish
 2:9 what G has prepared
 3:6 watered it, but G made it grow
 6:20 Therefore honor G with your body
 7:24 each man as responsible to G
 8:8 food does not bring us near to G,
 10:13 G is faithful, he will not let you be
 10:31 do it all for the glory of G
 14:33 For G is not a G of disorder
 15:28 so that G may be all in all
 2Co 1:9 rely on ourselves but on G
 2:14 be to G who always leads us
 3:5 but our competence comes from G
 4:7 this all-surpassing power is from G
 5:19 that G was reconciling the world
 5:21 G made him who had no sin
 6:16 we are the temple of the living G
 9:7 for G loves a cheerful giver
 9:8 G is able to make all grace abound
 Gal 2:6 G does not judge by external
 6:7 not be deceived G cannot be
 Eph 2:10 which G prepared in advance for us
 4:6 one baptism, one G and Father
 5:1 Be imitators of G, therefore
 Php 2:6 Who, being in very nature G
 4:19 And my G will meet all your needs
 1Th 2:4 trying to please men but G,
 4:7 For G did not call us to be impure,
 4:9 taught by G to love each other
 5:9 For G did not appoint us
 1Ti 2:5 one mediator between G and men,
 4:4 For everything G created is good,
 5:4 for this is pleasing to G
 Tit 2:13 glorious appearing of our great G
 Heb 1:1 In the past G spoke
 4:12 For the word of G is living
 6:10 G is not unjust, he will not forget
 10:31 to fall into the hands of the living G
 11:6 faith it is impossible to please G
 12:10 but G disciplines us for our good,
 12:29 for our G is a consuming fire
 13:15 offer to G a sacrifice of praise—

Jas 1:11 For G cannot be tempted by evil
 2:19 You believe that there is one G
 2:23 Abraham believed G,
 4:4 the world becomes an enemy of G
 4:8 Come near to G and he will come
 1Pe 4:11 it with the strength G provides
 2Pe 1:21 but men spoke from G
 1Jn 1:5 G is light, in him there is no
 3:20 For G is greater than our hearts,
 4:7 for love comes from G
 4:9 This is how G showed his love
 4:11 Dear friends, since G so loved us,
 4:12 No one has ever seen G
 4:16 G is love
 Rev 4:8 holy is the Lord G Almighty
 7:17 G will wipe away every tear
 19:6 For our Lord G Almighty reigns

GOD-BREATHED* (BREATHED)

2Ti 3:16 All Scripture is G and is useful

GOD'S (GOD)

2Ch 20:15 For the battle is not yours, but G
 Job 37:14 stop and consider G, wonders
 Ps 52:8 I trust in G unfailing love
 69:30 I will praise G name in song
 Mk 3:35 Whoever does G will be my brother
 Jn 7:17 If anyone chooses to do G will
 10:36 I am G Son—Do not believe me
 Ro 2:3 think you will escape G judgment?
 2:4 not realizing that G kindness leads
 3:3 lack of faith nullify G faithfulness
 7:22 in my inner being I delight in G law
 9:16 or effort—but on G mercy
 11:29 for G gifts and his call are
 12:2 and approve what G will is—
 12:13 Share with G people who are
 13:6 for the authorities are G servants,
 1Co 7:19 keeping G commands is what
 2Co 6:2 now is the time of G favor
 Eph 1:7 riches of G grace that he lavished
 1Th 4:3 It is G will that you should be
 5:18 for this is G will for you
 1Ti 6:1 so that G name and our teaching
 2Ti 2:19 G solid foundation stands firm
 Tit 1:7 overseer is entrusted with G work
 Heb 1:3 The Son is the radiance of G glory
 9:24 now to appear for us in G presence
 11:3 was formed at G command,
 1Pe 2:15 For it is G will that
 3:4 which is of great worth in G sight
 1Jn 2:5 G love is truly made complete

GODLINESS (GOD)

1Ti 2:2 and quiet lives in all G and holiness
 4:8 but G has value for all things,
 6:6 G with contentment is great gain
 6:11 and pursue righteousness, G, faith,

GODLY (GOD)

Ps 4:3 that the LORD has set apart the G
 2Co 7:10 G sorrow brings repentance that
 11:2 jealous for you with a G jealousy
 2Ti 3:12 everyone who wants to live a G life
 2Pe 3:11 You ought to live holy and G lives

GODS (GOD)

Ex 20:3 "You shall have no other G
 Ac 19:26 He says that man-made G are no G

GOLD

Job 23:10 tested me, I will come forth as G
 Ps 19:10 They are more precious than G
 119:127 more than G more than pure G
 Pr 22:1 esteemed is better than silver or G

GOLGOTHA

Jn 19:17 (which in Aramaic is called G)

GOLIATH

Philistine giant killed by David (1Sa 17, 21:9)

GOOD

Ge 1:4 God saw that the light was G
 1:31 he had made—and it was very G

HAGAR

Servant of Sarah, wife of Abraham, mother of Ishmael (Ge 16 1-6, 25-26). Taken away by Sarah while pregnant (Jde 16 5-16), after birth of Isaac (Ge 21 9-21, Gal 4 21-31)

HAGGAI*

Post-exilic prophet who encouraged rebuilding of the temple (1st 5 1, 6-14, Hag 1-2)

HAIR (HAIRS)

Lk 21 18 Not one hair of your head will perish
1Co 11 6 For a woman to have her hair cut

HAIRS (HAIR)

Mt 10 30 even the very hair of your head are all

HAILELUAH*

Rev 19 1 3, 4, 6

HALLOWED (HOLY)

Mt 6 9 h be your name

HAND (HANDS)

Ps 16 8 Because he is at my right h,
37 24 the Lord upholds him with his h
19 10 even there your h will guide me,
100 9 10 Whatever your h finds to do,
Mt 6 3 I know what your right h is doing,
Jn 10 28 one can snatch them out of my h
1Co 12 15 I am not a h, I do not belong

HANDS (HAND)

Ps 22 16 they have pierced my h
24 4 He who has clean h and a pure
41 5 Into your h I commit my spirit,
11 15 My times are in your h,
Pr 10 4 Lazy h make a man poor,
31 20 and extends her h to the needy
Isa 55 12 will clap their h
65 2 All day long I have held out my h
Lk 23 46 into your h I commit my spirit
1Th 4 11 and to work with your h,
1Ti 2 8 to lift up holy h in prayer,
5 22 hasty in the laying on of h,

HANNAH*

Wife of Elkanah, mother of Samuel (1Sa 1)
Prayer at dedication of Samuel (1Sa 2 1-10)
Blessed (1Sa 2 18-21)

HAPPY

Ps 68 3 may they be h and joyful
Pr 15 13 A h heart makes the face cheerful,
Eccl 3 12 better for men than to be h
Jas 5 13 Is anyone h? Let him sing songs

HARD (HARDEN HARDSHIP)

Ge 18 14 Is anything too h for the Lord?
Mt 19 23 it is h for a rich man
1Co 4 12 We work h with our own hands
1Th 5 12 to respect those who work h

HARDEN (HARD)

Ro 9 18 he hardens whom he wants to h
Heb 3 8 do not h your hearts

HARDHEARTED* (HEART)

Dt 15 7 do not be h or tightfisted

HARDSHIP (HARD)

Ro 8 35 Shall trouble or h or persecution
2Ti 2 3 Endure h with us like a good
4 5 endure h, do the work
Heb 12 7 Endure h as discipline, God is

HARM

Ps 121 6 the sun will not h you by day,
Pr 3 29 not plot h against your neighbor,
31 12 She brings him good, not h,
Ro 13 10 Love does no h to its neighbor
1Jn 5 18 and the evil one cannot h him

HARMONY

Ro 12 16 Live in h with one another
2Co 6 15 What h is there between Christ
1Pe 3 8 live in h with one another,

HARVEST

Mt 9 37 h is plentiful but the workers are
Jn 4 35 at the harvest! They are ripe for h
Gal 6 9 at the proper time we will reap a h
Heb 12 11 h produces a h of righteousness

HASTE (HASTY)

Pr 21 5 as surely as h leads to poverty
29 20 Do you see a man who speaks in h?

HASTY* (HASTE)

Pr 19 2 not to be h and miss the way
Jas 4 2 do not be h in your heart
1Ti 5 22 Do not be h in the laying

HATE (HATED HATES HATRED)

Lev 19 17 "Do not h your brother
Ps 5 5 you h all who do wrong,
45 7 righteousness and h wickedness,
97 10 those who love the Lord h evil,
139 21 Do I not h those who h you,
Pr 6 11 To fear the Lord is to h evil
Am 5 15 H evil, love good
Mal 2 16 "I h divorce," says the Lord God
Mt 5 43 your neighbor and h your enemy
10 22 All men will h you because of me,
Lk 6 27 do good to those who h you
Ro 12 9 H what is evil, cling to what is good

HATED (HATE)

Ro 9 13 "Jacob I loved, but Esau I h."
Eph 5 29 no one ever h his own body,
Heb 1 9 righteousness and h wickedness,

HATES (HATE)

Pr 6 16 There are six things the Lord h,
13 24 He who spares the rod h his son
Jn 1 20 I everyone who does evil h the light,
1Jn 2 9 h his brother is still in the darkness

HATRED (HATE)

Pr 10 12 H starts up dissension,
Jas 4 4 with the world is h toward God?

HAUGHTY

Pr 16 18 a h spirit before a fall

HAY

1Co 3 12 costly stones, wood, h or straw,

HEAD (HEADS HOTHEADED)

Ge 3 15 he will crush your h,
Ps 23 5 You anoint my h with oil,
Pr 25 22 will heap burning coals on his h,
Isa 59 17 and the helmet of salvation on his h
Mt 8 20 of Man has no place to lay his h
Ro 12 20 will heap burning coals on his h
1Co 11 3 and the h of Christ is God
12 21 And the h cannot say to the feet,
Eph 5 23 For the husband is the h of the wife
2Ti 4 5 keep your h in all situations,
Rev 19 12 and on his h are many crowns

HEADS (HEAD)

Lev 26 13 you to walk with h held high
Isa 35 10 everlasting joy will crown their h

HEAL (HEALED HEALING HEALS)

2Ch 7 14 their sin and will h their land
Ps 41 4 h me, for I have sinned against you
Mt 10 8 H the sick, raise the dead,
Lk 4 23 to me "Physician, h yourself"
5 17 present for him to h the sick

HEALED (HEAL)

Isa 53 5 and by his wounds we are h
Mt 9 22 he said, "your faith has h you"
14 36 and all who touched him were h
Ac 4 10 this man stands before you h
14 9 saw that he had faith to be h
Jas 5 16 for each other so that you may be h
1Pe 2 24 by his wounds you have been h

HEALING (HEAL)

Eze 47 12 for food and their leaves for h,
Mal 4 2 rise with h in its wings
1Co 12 9 to another gifts of h

1Pe 12 40 all have gifts of h? Do all speak
Rev 22 2 are for the h of the nations

HEALS (HEAL)

1Pe 15 26 for I am the Lord, who h you
Ps 103 1 and h all your diseases
147 3 He h the brokenhearted

HEALTH (HEALTHY)

Pr 3 8 This will bring h in y and truly
15 30 and good news gives h to the times

HEALTHY (HEALTHY)

Mk 2 17 It is not the h who need a doctor

HEAR (HEARD HEARING HEARS)

Dn 6 4 H (O) Israel! The Lord is our God
11 1 I must h and learn
2Ch 7 14 then will I h from heaven
Ps 94 9 he who implanted the ear not h?
Isa 29 18 that day the deaf will h the words
65 24 while they are still speaking I will h
Mt 11 15 He who has ears, let him h
Jn 8 47 reason you do not h it is that you do
2Ti 4 3 what their itching ears want to h

HEARD (HEAR)

Job 42 8 My ears had h of you
Isa 66 8 Who has ever h of such a thing?
Mt 5 21 "You have h that it was said
5 27 "You have h that it was said
5 33 you have h that it was said
5 38 "You have h that it was said
5 43 "You have h that it was said,
1Co 2 9 no ear has h
1Th 2 13 word of God which you h from us
2Ti 1 13 What you h from me, keep
Jas 1 25 not forgetting what he has h

HEARING (HEAR)

Ro 10 17 faith comes from h the message,

HEARS (HEAR)

Jn 5 24 whoever h my word and believes
1Jn 5 14 according to his will, he h us
Rev 3 20 If anyone h my voice and opens

HEART (BROKENHEARTED
HARDHEARTED HEARTS
WHOLEHEARTEDLY)

Ex 25 2 each man whose h prompts him
Lev 19 17 Do not hate your brother in your h,
Dt 4 29 if you look for him with all your h
6 5 Lord your God with all your h
10 12 Lord your God with all your h
15 10 and do so without a grudging h
30 6 you may love him with all your h
30 10 Lord your God with all your h
Jos 22 5 and to serve him with all your h
1Sa 13 14 sought out a man after his own h
16 7 but the Lord looks at the h
2Ki 23 3 with all his h and all his soul
1Ch 28 9 for the Lord searches every h
2Ch 7 16 and my h will always be there
Job 22 22 and lay up his words in your h
37 1 "At this my h pounds
Ps 14 1 The fool says in his h,
19 14 and the meditation of my h
37 4 will give you the desires of your h
45 1 My h is stirred by a noble theme
51 10 Create in me a pure h, O God,
51 17 a broken and contrite h,
66 18 If I had cherished sin in my h,
86 11 give me an undivided h,
119 11 I have hidden your word in my h
119 32 for you have set my h free
139 23 Search me, O God, and know my h
Pr 3 5 Trust in the Lord with all your h
4 21 keep them within your h,
4 23 Above all else, guard your h,
7 3 write them on the tablet of your h
13 12 Hope deferred makes the h sick,
14 13 Even in laughter the h may ache,
15 30 A cheerful look brings joy to the h,
17 22 A cheerful h is good medicine,
24 17 stumbles, do not let your h rejoice,
27 19 so a man's h reflects the man

Ec 8 9 I will know the proper time
 Ec 9 4 You have seen that I am older
 Isa 41 10 I will strengthen them I will raise them
 Jer 31 3 The Lord shall be able to do things
 Jer 31 7 I will be to them as a father
 Ec 9 2 I will give you a name
 Mt 24 31 Blessed are the people in it
 Mt 24 32 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 33 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 34 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 35 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 36 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 37 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 38 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 39 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 40 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 41 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 42 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 43 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 44 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 45 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 46 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 47 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 48 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 49 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 50 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 51 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 52 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 53 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 54 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 55 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 56 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 57 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 58 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 59 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 60 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 61 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 62 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 63 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 64 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 65 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 66 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 67 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 68 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 69 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 70 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 71 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 72 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 73 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 74 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 75 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 76 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 77 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 78 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 79 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 80 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 81 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 82 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 83 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 84 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 85 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 86 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 87 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 88 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 89 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 90 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 91 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 92 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 93 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 94 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 95 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 96 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 97 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 98 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 99 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 100 I will be to them as a father

HEARTS HEART

Ec 8 9 I will know the proper time
 Ec 9 4 You have seen that I am older
 Isa 41 10 I will strengthen them I will raise them
 Jer 31 3 The Lord shall be able to do things
 Jer 31 7 I will be to them as a father
 Ec 9 2 I will give you a name
 Mt 24 31 Blessed are the people in it
 Mt 24 32 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 33 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 34 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 35 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 36 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 37 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 38 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 39 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 40 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 41 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 42 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 43 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 44 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 45 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 46 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 47 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 48 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 49 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 50 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 51 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 52 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 53 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 54 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 55 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 56 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 57 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 58 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 59 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 60 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 61 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 62 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 63 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 64 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 65 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 66 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 67 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 68 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 69 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 70 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 71 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 72 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 73 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 74 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 75 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 76 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 77 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 78 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 79 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 80 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 81 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 82 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 83 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 84 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 85 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 86 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 87 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 88 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 89 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 90 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 91 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 92 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 93 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 94 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 95 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 96 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 97 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 98 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 99 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 100 I will be to them as a father

HEAT

Ec 8 9 I will know the proper time

HEAVEN HEAVENLY HEAVENS

Ec 8 9 I will know the proper time
 Ec 9 4 You have seen that I am older
 Isa 41 10 I will strengthen them I will raise them
 Jer 31 3 The Lord shall be able to do things
 Jer 31 7 I will be to them as a father
 Ec 9 2 I will give you a name
 Mt 24 31 Blessed are the people in it
 Mt 24 32 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 33 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 34 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 35 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 36 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 37 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 38 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 39 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 40 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 41 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 42 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 43 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 44 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 45 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 46 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 47 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 48 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 49 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 50 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 51 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 52 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 53 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 54 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 55 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 56 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 57 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 58 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 59 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 60 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 61 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 62 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 63 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 64 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 65 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 66 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 67 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 68 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 69 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 70 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 71 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 72 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 73 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 74 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 75 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 76 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 77 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 78 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 79 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 80 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 81 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 82 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 83 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 84 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 85 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 86 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 87 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 88 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 89 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 90 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 91 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 92 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 93 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 94 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 95 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 96 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 97 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 98 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 99 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 100 I will be to them as a father

HEAVENLY HEAVEN

Ec 8 9 I will know the proper time
 Ec 9 4 You have seen that I am older
 Isa 41 10 I will strengthen them I will raise them
 Jer 31 3 The Lord shall be able to do things
 Jer 31 7 I will be to them as a father
 Ec 9 2 I will give you a name
 Mt 24 31 Blessed are the people in it
 Mt 24 32 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 33 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 34 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 35 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 36 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 37 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 38 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 39 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 40 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 41 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 42 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 43 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 44 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 45 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 46 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 47 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 48 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 49 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 50 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 51 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 52 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 53 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 54 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 55 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 56 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 57 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 58 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 59 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 60 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 61 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 62 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 63 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 64 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 65 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 66 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 67 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 68 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 69 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 70 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 71 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 72 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 73 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 74 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 75 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 76 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 77 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 78 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 79 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 80 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 81 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 82 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 83 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 84 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 85 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 86 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 87 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 88 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 89 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 90 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 91 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 92 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 93 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 94 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 95 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 96 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 97 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 98 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 99 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 100 I will be to them as a father

HEAVENS HEAVEN

Ec 8 9 I will know the proper time
 Ec 9 4 You have seen that I am older
 Isa 41 10 I will strengthen them I will raise them
 Jer 31 3 The Lord shall be able to do things
 Jer 31 7 I will be to them as a father
 Ec 9 2 I will give you a name
 Mt 24 31 Blessed are the people in it
 Mt 24 32 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 33 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 34 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 35 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 36 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 37 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 38 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 39 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 40 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 41 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 42 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 43 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 44 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 45 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 46 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 47 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 48 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 49 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 50 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 51 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 52 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 53 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 54 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 55 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 56 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 57 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 58 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 59 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 60 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 61 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 62 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 63 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 64 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 65 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 66 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 67 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 68 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 69 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 70 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 71 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 72 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 73 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 74 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 75 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 76 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 77 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 78 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 79 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 80 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 81 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 82 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 83 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 84 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 85 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 86 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 87 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 88 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 89 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 90 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 91 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 92 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 93 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 94 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 95 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 96 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 97 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 98 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 99 I will be to them as a father
 Mt 24 100 I will be to them as a father

Ps 19 1 The Lord declares the glory of God
 102 25 the Lord is the work of your hands
 106 4 is your love higher than the Lord
 119 89 it stands firm as the Lord
 129 5 I will go up to the Lord you are there
 Isa 51 6 Lift up your eyes to the Lord
 55 9 As the Lord is higher than the earth
 65 17 new Lord and a new earth
 Joel 2 30 I will show wonders in the Lord
 Eph 4 10 who ascended higher than all the Lord
 2Pe 3 10 The Lord will disappear with a roar

HEBREW

Ge 14 13 and reported this to Abram the Hebrew

HEEDS

Pr 13 1 I will show you the father's instruction
 13 15 whoever is corrected is honored
 15 5 whoever is corrected shows
 15 32 whoever is corrected gains

HELL

Ge 3 15 and you will strike his heel

HEIRS (INHERIT)

Rm 8 17 then we are heirs of God
 Gal 3 24 and it according to the promise
 Eph 3 6 gospel the Gentiles are heirs together
 1Pe 3 7 as heirs with you of the gracious gift

HELL

Mt 5 22 will be in danger of the fire of hell
 Lk 16 23 In hell where he was in torment
 2Pe 2 4 but sent them to hell putting them

HELMET

Isa 49 17 and the Lord of salvation on his head
 Eph 6 17 Take the Lord of salvation
 1Th 5 8 and the hope of salvation as a Lord

HELP HELPED HELPER HELPING HELPS

Ps 18 6 I turned to my God for help
 70 2 my God I called to you for help
 46 1 an ever-present help in trouble
 79 9 Help O God our Savior
 121 1 where does my help come from?
 Isa 41 10 I will strengthen you and help you
 Job 2 2 depths of the grave I called for help
 Mk 9 24 Come over to Macedonia and help us
 1Co 12 28 those able to help others those

HELPED (HELP)

Isa 7 12 Thus far has the Lord helped us

HELPER (HELP)

Ge 2 18 I will make a helper for him
 Ps 10 14 you are the Lord of the fatherless
 Heb 13 6 Lord is my Lord, I will not be afraid

HELPING (HELP)

Ac 9 36 always doing good and helping the poor
 1Th 5 10 help those in trouble and devoting

HELPS (HELP)

Ro 8 26 the Spirit helps us in our weakness

HEN

Mt 23 37 as a hen gathers her chicks

HERITAGE (INHERIT)

Ps 127 3 Sons are a heritage from the Lord

HEROD

1 King of Judea who tried to kill Jesus (Mt 2: Lk 1:5)
 2 Son of 1 Tetrarch of Galilee who arrested and beheaded John the Baptist (Mt 14:1-12, Mk 6:14-29, Lk 3:1, 19:20-9:7-9) tried Jesus (Lk 23:6-15)
 3 Grandson of 1 King of Judea who killed James (Ac 12:2) arrested Peter (Ac 12:3-19) Death (Ac 12:19-23)

HERODIAS

Wife of Herod the Tetrarch who persuaded her daughter to ask for John the Baptist's head (Mk

14:1-12, Mt 6:14-29)

HEZEKIAH

King of Judah Restored the temple and worship (2Ch 29:31) Sought the Lord for help against Assyria (2K 18:19, 2Ch 32:1-23, Isa 36:37) Illness healed (2K 20:1-11, 2Ch 32:24-26, Isa 38) Judged for showing Babylonians his treasures (2K 20:12-21, 2Ch 32:31, Isa 39)

HID (HIDE)

Ge 3 8 and they hid from the Lord God
 Ex 2 2 she hid him for three months
 Jos 6 17 because she hid the spies we sent
 Heb 11 23 By faith Moses parents hid him

HIDDEN (HIDE)

Ps 19 12 Forgive my faults
 119 11 I have hid your word in my heart
 Pr 2 4 and search for it as for hidden treasure
 Isa 59 2 your sins have hid his face from you
 Mt 13 44 A city on a hill cannot be hidden
 13 44 of heaven is like hidden treasure
 Col 1 26 the mystery that has been kept hidden
 2 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures
 3 3 and your life is now hidden with Christ

HIDE (HID HIDDEN)

Ps 17 8 hide me in the shadow of your wings
 143 9 for I hide myself in you

HILL (HILLS)

Mt 5 14 A city on a hill cannot be hidden

HILLS (HILL)

Ps 60 10 and the cattle on a thousand hills
 121 1 I lift up my eyes to the hills

HINDER (HINDERS)

1Sa 14 6 Nothing can hinder the Lord
 Mt 19 14 come to me and do not hinder them
 1Co 9 12 anything rather than hinder the gospel
 1Pe 3 7 so that nothing will hinder your prayers

HENDERS (HINDER)

Heb 12 1 let us throw off everything that hinders

HINT

Eph 5 3 even a hint of sexual immorality

HOLD

Ex 20 7 Lord will not forgive anyone guilty
 Lev 19 13 Do not hold back the wages
 Jos 22 5 to hold fast to him and to serve him
 Ps 73 23 you hold me by my right hand
 Pr 4 4 Lay hold of my words
 Isa 54 2 do not hold back
 Mk 11 25 if you hold anything against anyone
 Php 2 16 as you hold out the word of life
 3 12 but I press on to take hold of that
 Col 1 17 and in him all things hold together
 1Th 5 21 Hold on to the good
 1Ti 6 12 Take hold of the eternal life
 Heb 10 23 Let us hold unwaveringly

HOLINESS (HOLY)

Ex 15 11 majestic in holiness
 Ps 29 2 in the splendor of his holiness
 96 9 in the splendor of his holiness
 Ro 6 19 to righteousness leading to holiness
 2Co 7 1 perfecting holiness out of reverence
 Eph 4 24 God in true righteousness and holiness
 Heb 12 10 that we may share in his holiness
 12 14 without holiness no one will see the Lord

HOLY (HALLOWED HOLINESS)

Ex 19 6 kingdom of priests and a holy nation
 20 8 the Sabbath day by keeping it holy
 Lev 11 44 and be holy because I am holy
 20 26 Consecrate yourselves and be holy
 20 26 You are to be holy to me because I, the Lord, am holy
 21 8 Consider them holy because I, the Lord, am holy
 22 32 Do not profane my holy name
 Ps 16 10 will you let your Holy One see decay
 24 3 Who may stand in his holy place
 77 13 Your ways O God are holy
 99 3 he is holy

Ps 99 5 he is *h*
 90 9 for the Lord our God is *h*
 111 9 *h* and awesome is his name
 Isa 5 16 the *h* God will show himself *h*
 6 3 *H. h.* *h* is the Lord Almighty,
 40 25 who is my equal?" says the *H* One
 57 15 who lives forever, whose name is *h*
 Eze 28 25 I will show myself *h* among them
 Da 9 24 prophecy and to anoint the most *h*
 Hab 2 20 But the Lord is in his *h* temple
 Ac 2 27 will you let your *H* One see decay
 Ro 7 12 and the commandment is *h*
 12 1 as living sacrifices, *h* and pleasing
 Eph 5 3 improper for God's *h* people
 2Th 1 10 to be glorified in his *h* people
 2Ti 1 9 saved us and called us to a *h* life—
 3 15 you have known the *h* Scriptures,
 Tit 1 8 upright, *h* and disciplined
 1Pe 1 15 But just as he who called you is *h*
 1 16 is written "Be *h* because I am *h*"
 2 9 a royal priesthood, a *h* nation,
 2Pe 3 11 You ought to live *h* and godly lives
 Rev 4 8 *H. h. h* is the Lord God

HOME (HOMES)

De 6 7 Talk about them when you sit at *h*
 Ps 84 3 Even the sparrow has found a *h*
 Pr 3 33 but he blesses the *h* of the righteous
 Mk 10 29 "no one who has left *h* or brothers
 Jn 14 23 to him and make our *h* with him
 Tit 2 5 to be busy at *h*, to be kind,

HOMES (HOME)

Ne 4 14 daughters, your wives and your *h*
 ITi 5 14 to manage their *h* and to give

HOMOSEXUAL*

ICo 6 9 male prostitutes nor *h* offenders

HONEST

Lev 19 36 Use *h* scales and *h* weights,
 Dt 25 15 and *h* weights and measures
 Job 31 6 let God weigh me in *h* scales
 Pr 12 17 truthful witness gives *h* testimony,

HONEY

Ex 3 8 a land flowing with milk and *h*—
 Ps 19 10 than *h* from the conch
 119 103 sweeter than *h* to my mouth!

HONOR (HONORABLE HONORABLY HONORED HONORS)

Ex 20 12 "H your father and your mother,
 Nu 25 13 he was zealous for the *h* of his God
 Dt 5 16 "H your father and your mother,
 Isa 2 30 Those who *h* me I will *h*,
 Ps 8 5 and crowned him with glory and *h*
 Pr 3 9 H the Lord with your wealth,
 15 33 and humility comes before *h*
 20 3 it is to a man *h* to avoid strife,
 Mt 15 4 H your father and mother
 Ro 12 10 H one another above yourselves
 ICo 6 20 Therefore *h* God with your body
 Eph 6 2 "H your father and mother"—
 ITi 5 17 well are worthy of double *h*
 Heb 2 7 you crowned him with glory and *h*
 Rev 4 9 *h* and thanks to him who sits

HONORABLE (HONOR)

ITh 4 4 body in a way that is holy and *h*

HONORABLY (HONOR)

Heb 13 18 and desire to live *h* in every way

HONORED (HONOR)

Ps 12 8 when what is vile is *h* among men
 Pr 13 18 but whoever heeds correction is *h*
 ICo 12 26 if one part is *h*, every part rejoices
 Heb 13 4 Marriage should be *h* by all.

HONORS (HONOR)

Ps 15 4 but *h* those who fear the Lord,
 Pr 14 31 to the needy *h* God

HOOKS

Isa 2 4 and their spears unto pruning *h*
 Joel 3 10 and your pruning *h* into spears

HOPE (HOPES)

Job 13 15 Though he slay me, yet will I *h*
 Ps 42 5 Put your *h* in God,
 62 5 my *h* comes from him
 119 74 for I have put my *h* in your word
 130 7 O Israel, put your *h* in the Lord,
 147 11 who put their *h* in his unfailing love
 Pr 13 12 *H* deferred makes the heart sick,
 Isa 40 31 but those who *h* in the Lord
 Ro 5 4 character, and character, *h*
 8 24 But *h* that is seen is no *h* at all
 12 12 Be joyful in *h*, patient in affliction,
 15 4 of the Scriptures we might have *h*
 ICo 13 13 now these three remain faith, *h*
 15 19 for this life we have *h* in Christ,
 Col 1 27 Christ in you, the *h* of glory
 ITi 5 8 and the *h* of salvation as a helmet
 ITi 6 17 but to put their *h* in God,
 Tit 2 13 while we wait for the blessed *h*—
 Heb 6 19 We have this *h* as an anchor
 11 1 faith is being sure of what we *h* for
 1Jn 3 3 Everyone who has this *h*

HOPES (HOPE)

ICo 13 7 always *h*, always perseveres

HORSE

Ps 147 10 not in the strength of the *h*,
 Pr 26 3 A whip for the *h*, a halter
 Zec 1 8 before me was a man riding a red *h*
 Rev 6 2 and there before me was a white *h*!
 6 4 Come!" Then another *h* came out,
 6 5 and there before me was a black *h*!
 6 8 and there before me was a pale *h*!
 19 11 and there before me was a white *h*,

HOSANNA

Mt 21 9 "H in the highest!"

HOSHEA

Last king of Israel (2Ki 15 30; 17:1-6)

HOSPITABLE* (HOSPITALITY)

ITi 3 2 self-controlled, respectable, *h*,
 Tit 1 8 Rather he must be *h* one who loves

HOSPITALITY (HOSPITABLE)

Ro 12 13 Practice *h*
 ITi 5 10 as bringing up children, showing *h*,
 1Pe 4 9 Offer *h* to one another

HOSTILE

Ro 8 7 the sinful mind is *h* to God

HOT

ITi 4 2 have been seared as with a *h* iron
 Rev 3 15 that you are neither cold nor *h*

HOT-TEMPERED

Pr 15 18 A *h* man stirs up dissension,
 19 19 A *h* man must pay the penalty,
 22 24 Do not make friends with a *h* man,
 29 22 and a *h* one commits many sins

HOTHEADED (HEAD)

Pr 14 16 but a fool is *h* and reckless

HOUR

Ecc 9 12 knows when his *h* will come
 Mt 6 27 you by worrying can add a single *h*
 Lk 12 40 the Son of Man will come at an *h*
 Jn 12 23 The *h* has come for the Son of Man
 12 27 for this very reason I came to this *h*

HOUSE (HOUSEHOLD STOREHOUSE)

Ex 20 17 shall not covet your neighbor's *h*
 Ps 23 6 I will dwell in the *h* of the Lord
 84 10 a doorkeeper in the *h* of my God
 122 1 "Let us go to the *h* of the Lord,"
 127 1 Unless the Lord builds the *h*,
 Pr 7 27 Her *h* is a highway to the grave,
 21 9 than share a *h* with a quarrelsome
 Isa 56 7 a *h* of prayer for all nations,
 Zec 13 6 given at the *h* of my friends
 Mt 7 24 is like a wise man who built his *h*
 12 29 can anyone enter a strong man's *h*
 21 13 My *h* will be called a *h* of prayer,

Mk 1 25 If *h* is divided against itself
 Lk 11 17 a *h* divided against itself will fall
 Jn 2 16 How dare you turn my Father's *h*
 12 3 the *h* was *h* led with the fragrance
 14 2 In my Father's *h* are many rooms
 Heb 3 3 the builder of a *h* has greater honor

HOUSEHOLD (HOUSE)

Jos 24 15 my *h*, we will serve the Lord
 Mic 7 6 are the members of his own *h*
 Mt 10 36 will be the members of his own *h*
 12 25 or *h* divided against itself will not
 ITi 3 12 manage his children and his *h* well,
 3 15 to conduct themselves in God's *h*,

HUMAN (HUMANITY)

Gal 3 3 to attain your goal by *h* effort?

HUMANITY* (HUMAN)

Heb 2 14 he too shared in their *h* so that

HUMBLE (HUMBLED HUMBLER HUMILIATE HUMILITY)

2Ch 7 14 will *h* themselves and pray
 Ps 25 9 He guides the *h* in what is right
 Pr 3 34 but gives grace to the *h*
 Isa 66 2 he who is *h* and contrite in spirit,
 Mt 11 29 for I am gentle and *h* in heart
 Eph 4 2 Be completely *h* and gentle
 Jas 4 10 *H* yourselves before the Lord,
 1Pe 5 6 *H* yourselves

HUMBLED (HUMBLE)

Mt 23 12 whoever exalts himself will be *h*,
 Php 2 8 he *h* himself

HUMBLES (HUMBLE)

Mt 18 4 whoever *h* himself like this child is
 23 12 whoever *h* himself will be exalted

HUMILIATE* (HUMBLE)

Pr 25 7 than for him to *h* you
 ICo 11 22 and *h* those who have nothing?

HUMILITY (HUMBLE)

Pr 11 2 but with *h* comes wisdom
 15 33 and *h* comes before honor
 Php 2 3 but in *h* consider others better
 Tit 3 2 and to show true *h* toward all men
 1Pe 5 5 clothe yourselves with *h*

HUNGRY

Ps 107 9 and fills the *h* with good things
 146 7 and gives food to the *h*
 Pr 25 21 If your enemy is *h*, give him food
 Eze 18 7 but gives his food to the *h*
 Mt 25 35 For I was *h* and you gave me
 Lk 1 53 He has filled the *h* with good things
 Jn 6 35 comes to me will never go *h*,
 Ro 12 20 "If your enemy is *h*, feed him,

HURT (HURTS)

Ecc 8 9 it over others to his own *h*
 Mk 16 18 deadly poison, it will not *h* them
 Rev 2 11 He who overcomes will not be *h*

HURTS* (HURT)

Ps 15 4 even when it *h*,
 Pr 26 28 A lying tongue hates those it *h*

HUSBAND (HUSBAND'S HUSBANDS)

ICo 7 3 The *h* should fulfill his marital duty
 7 10 wife must not separate from her *h*,
 7 11 And a *h* must not divorce his wife
 7 13 And if a woman has a *h* who is not
 7 39 A woman is bound to her *h* as long
 2Co 11 2 I promised you to one *h*, to Christ,
 Eph 5 23 For the *h* is the head of the wife
 5 33 and the wife must respect her *h*
 ITi 3 2 *h* of but one wife, temperate,

HUSBAND'S (HUSBAND)

Pr 12 4 of noble character is her *h* crown,
 ICo 7 4 the *h* body does not belong

HUSBANDS (HUSBAND)

Eph 5 22 submit to your *h* as to the Lord
 5 25 *H*, love your wives, just

Tn 2 4 the younger women to love their h
1Pe 2 3 same way be submissive to your h
1 1 H on the same way be considerate

HYMN

1Co 14 26 everyone has a h. or a word

HYPOCRISY (HYPOCRITE
HYPOCRITES)

Mt 23 28 but on the inside you are full of h
1Pe 2 1 & envy, and slander of every kind

HYPOCRITE (HYPOCRISY)

Mt 7 5 You h. first take the plank out

HYPOCRITES (HYPOCRISY)

Ps 26 4 nor do I consort with h
Mt 6 5 when you pray, do not be like the h

IDLENESS

Ps 51 7 with h. and I will be clean.

IDLE (IDLENESS)

1Th 5 14 those who are / encourage
2Th 3 6 away from every brother who is /
1Ti 5 13 they get into the habit of being /

IDLENESS* (IDLE)

Pr 31 27 and does not eat the bread of /

IDOL (IDOLATRY IDOLS)

Isa 44 17 From the rest he makes a god, his s.
1Co 8 4 We know that an / is nothing at all

IDOLATRY (IDOL)

Col 3 5 evil desires and greed, which is /

IDOLS (IDOL)

1Co 8 1 Now about food sacrificed to /

IGNORANT (IGNORE)

1Co 5 34 for there are some who are / of God
Heb 5 2 to deal gently with those who are /
1Pe 2 1 good you should silence the / talk
2Pe 1 7 which / and unstable people distort

IGNORE (IGNORANT IGNORES)

1Co 12 1 I do not / it but be sure
1Pe 2 1 he does not / the tears of the afflicted
Heb 2 4 I was such a great salvation?

IGNORES (IGNORE)

Pr 10 17 whoever / correction leads others
15 32 He who / discipline despises

ILLUMINATED*

Rev 18 1 and the earth was / by his splendor

IMAGE

Ge 1 26 Let us make man in our i.
1 27 So God created man in his own i.
1Co 11 7 since he is the i. and glory of God.
Col 1 15 He is the / of the invisible God
3 10 in knowledge in the / of its Creator

IMAGINE

Eph 3 20 more than all we ask or /

IMITATE (IMITATORS)

1Co 4 16 Therefore I urge you to / me
Heb 6 12 but to / those who through faith
13 7 of their way of life and / their faith
1 11 do not / what is evil but what is

IMITATORS* (IMITATE)

Eph 5 1 Be / of God, therefore
Th 1 6 You became / of us and of the Lord
2 14 became / of God's churches

IMMANUEL

Isa 7 14 birth to a son, and will call him /
Mt 1 23 and they will call him / —

IMMORAL* (IMMORALITY)

Pr 6 24 keeping you from the / woman.
1Co 5 9 to associate with sexually / people
5 10 the people of this world who are /
5 11 but is sexually / or greedy.

1Co 6 9 Neither the sexually / nor idolaters
Eph 5 5 No / impure or greedy person—
Heb 12 16 See that no one is sexually /
13 4 the adulterer and the sexually /
Rev 21 8 the murderers, the sexually /
22 15 the sexually /, the murderers

IMMORALITY (IMMORAL)

1Co 6 13 The body is not meant for sexual /
6 18 Flee from sexual /
10 8 We should not concern sexual /
Gal 5 19 sexual / impurity and debauchery.
Eph 5 3 must not be even a hint of sexual /
1Ti 4 3 that you should avoid sexual /
Jude 4 grace of our God into a license for /

IMMORTAL* (IMMORTALITY)

Ro 1 23 glory of the / God for images made
1Ti 1 17 Now to the living eternal
6 16 who alone is / and who lives

IMMORTALITY (IMMORTAL)

Ro 2 7 honor and / he will give eternal life
1Co 15 53 and the mortal with—
2Ti 1 10 and / to fight through the gospel

IMPERISHABLE

1Pe 1 23 not of perishable seed, but of /

IMPORTANCE* (IMPORTANT)

1Co 15 3 passed on to you as of first /

IMPORTANT (IMPORTANCE)

Mt 6 25 Is not life more / than food,
23 23 have neglected the more / matters
Mk 12 29 The most / one, answered Jesus
12 33 as yourself is more / than all burnt
Php 1 18 The / thing is that in every way,

IMPOSSIBLE

Mt 17 20 Nothing will be / for you
Lk 1 37 For nothing is / with God
18 27 What is / with men is possible
Heb 6 18 things in which / is / for God to lie.
11 6 without faith it is / to please God

IMPROPER*

Eph 5 3 these are / for God's holy people

IMPURE (IMPURITY)

Ac 10 15 not call anything / that God has
Eph 5 5 No immoral, / or greedy person—
1Th 4 7 For God did not call us to be /.
Rev 21 27 Nothing / will ever enter it.

IMPURITY (IMPURE)

Ro 1 24 hearts to sexual / for the degrading
Eph 5 3 or of any kind of /, or of greed.

INCENSE

Ex 40 5 Place the gold altar of / in front
Ps 141 2 my prayer be set before you like /.
Mt 2 11 him with gifts of gold and of /

INCOME

Ecc 5 10 wealth is never satisfied with his /
1Co 16 2 sum of money in keeping with his /.

INCOMPARABLE*

Eph 2 7 ages he might show the / riches

INCREASE (EVER-INCREASING
INCREASED INCREASES INCREASING)

Ge 1 22 "Be fruitful and / in number
Ps 62 10 though your riches /
Isa 9 7 Of the / of his government
Lk 17 5 said to the Lord, "I our faith"
1Th 3 12 May the Lord make your love /

INCREASED (INCREASE)

Ac 6 7 of disciples in Jerusalem / rapidly.
Ro 5 20 But where sin /, grace / all the more

INCREASES (INCREASE)

Pr 24 5 and a man of knowledge / strength

INCREASING (INCREASE)

Ac 6 1 when the number of disciples was /.

2Th 1 3 one of you has for each other is /
2Pe 1 8 these qualities in / measure

INDEPENDENT*

1Co 11 11 howe-ver, woman is not / of man
11 14 of man nor is man / of woman

INDESCRIBABLE*

2Co 9 15 Thanks be to God for his / gift

INDISPENSABLE*

1Co 12 22 seem to be weaker are /

INEFFECTIVE*

2Pe 1 8 they will keep you from being /

INEXPRESSIBLE*

2Co 12 4 He heard / things things that man
1Pe 1 8 are filled with an / and glorious joy.

INFANTS

Mt 21 16 From the lips of children and /
1Co 14 20 In regard to evil be /

INFIRMITIES

Isa 53 4 Surely he took up our /

INHERIT (CO-HEIRS HEIRS HERITAGE
INHERITANCE)

Ps 37 11 But the meek will / the land
37 29 the righteous will / the land
Mt 5 5 for they will / the earth
Mk 10 17 what must I do to / eternal life?
1Co 15 50 blood cannot / the kingdom of God

INHERITANCE (INHERIT)

Dt 4 20 to be the people of his /
Pr 13 22 A good man leaves an /.
Eph 1 14 who is a deposit / guaranteeing our /
5 5 has any / in the kingdom of Christ
Heb 9 15 receive the promised eternal /—
1Pe 1 4 and into an / that can never perish.

INQUITIES (INIQUITY)

Ps 78 38 he forgave their /
103 10 or repay us according to our /.
Isa 49 2 But your / have separated
Mic 7 19 and hurl all our / into the depths

INIQUITY (INIQUITIES)

Ps 51 2 Wash away all my /
Isa 53 6 the / of us all

INJUSTICE

2Ch 19 7 the Lord our God there is no /

INNOCENT

Pr 17 26 It is not good to punish an / man
Mt 10 16 shrewd as snakes and as / doves
27 4 / for I have betrayed / blood
1Co 4 4 but that does not make me /

INSCRIPTION

Mt 22 20 And whose /? "Caesar's

INSOLENT

Ro 1 30 God-haters, /, arrogant

INSTITUTED

Ro 13 2 rebelling against what God has /
1Pe 2 13 to every authority / among men

INSTRUCT (INSTRUCTION)

Ps 32 8 I will / you and teach you
Pr 9 9 / a wise man and he will be wiser
Ro 15 14 and competent to / one another
2Ti 2 25 who oppose him he must gently /

INSTRUCTION (INSTRUCT)

Pr 1 8 Listen, my son, to your father's /
4 1 Listen, my sons, to a father's /
4 13 Hold on to / do not let it go
8 10 Choose my / instead of silver
8 33 Listen to my / and be wise
13 1 A wise son heeds his father's /.
13 13 He who scorns / will pay for it
16 20 Whoever gives heed to / prospers,
16 21 and pleasant words promote /

Pr 19 20 Listen to advice and accept it.
23 12 Apply your heart to it.
ICo 14 6 or prophecy or word of it?
14 26 or a word of it, a revelation,
Eph 6 4 up in the training and it of the Lord
1Th 4 8 he who rejects this it does not reject
2Th 3 14 If anyone does not obey our it
1Ti 1 18 I give you this it in keeping
6 3 to the sound of our Lord Jesus
2Ti 4 2 with great patience and careful it

INSULT

Pr 9 7 corrects a mocker invites it,
12 16 but a prudent man overlooks an it
Mi 5 11 Blessed are you when people it you,
Lk 6 22 when they exclude you and it you
1Pe 3 9 evil with evil or it with it

INTEGRITY

1Ki 9 4 if you walk before me in it of heart
Job 2 3 And he still maintains his it
27 5 till I die, I will not deny my it
Pr 10 9 The man of it walks securely,
11 3 The it of the upright guides them,
29 10 Bloodthirsty men hate a man of it
Ti 2 7 your teaching show it, seriousness

INTELLIGENCE

Isa 29 14 the it of the intelligent will vanish
ICo 1 19 it of the intelligent it will frustrate

INTELLIGIBLE

ICo 14 19 I would rather speak five it words

INTERCEDE (INTERCEDES INTERCESSION)

Heb 7 25 he always lives to it for them

INTERCEDES (INTERCEDE)

Ro 8 26 but the Spirit himself it for us

INTERCESSION* (INTERCEDE)

Isa 53 12 and made it for the transgressors
1Ti 2 1 it and thanksgiving be made

INTERESTS

ICo 7 34 his wife—and his it are divided
Php 2 4 only to your own it, but also to the it
2 21 everyone looks out for his own it

INTERMARRY (MARRY)

Di 7 3 Do not it with them

INVENTED*

2Pe 1 16 We did not follow cleverly it stories

INVESTIGATED

Lk 1 3 I myself have carefully it everything

INVISIBLE

Ro 1 20 of the world God's it qualities—
Col 1 15 He is the image of the it God,
1Ti 1 17 immortal, it, the only God

INVITE (INVITED INVITES)

Lk 14 13 you give a banquet, it the poor,

INVITED (INVITE)

Mt 22 14 For many are it but few are chosen
25 35 I was a stranger and you it me in.

INVITES (INVITE)

ICo 10 27 If some unbeliever it you to a meal

INVOLVED

2Ti 2 4 a soldier gets it in civilian affairs—

IRON

1Ti 4 2 have been reared as with a hot it
Rev 2 27 He will rule them with an it scepter,

IRREFRAGABLE*

Ro 11 29 for God's gifts and his call are it

ISAAC

Son of Abraham by Sarah (Ge 17 19; 21 1-7; 1Ch 1 28). Offered up by Abraham (Ge 22; Heb 11 17-19). Rebekah taken as wife (Ge 24). Fa-

thered Esau and Jacob (Ge 25-19-26; 1Ch 1 34). Tricked into blessing Jacob (Ge 27). Father of Israel (Ex 3:6; Dt 29 13; Ro 9 10).

ISAIAH

Prophet to Judah (Isa 1:1). Called by the Lord (Isa 6).

ISHMAEL

Son of Abraham by Hagar (Ge 16; 1Ch 1 28). Blessed, but not son of covenant (Ge 17 18-21; Gal 4 21 31). Sent away by Sarah (Ge 21 8 21).

ISRAEL (ISRAELITES)

1 Name given to Jacob (see JACOB).
2 Corporate name of Jacob's descendants, often specifically Northern Kingdom.
Di 6 4 Hear, O! The Lord our God,
Isa 4 21 "The glory has departed from I!"—
Isa 27 6 I will bud and blossom
Jer 31 10 "He who scattered I will gather
Eze 39 23 of I went into exile for their sin,
Mk 12 29 "Hear, O! the Lord our God,
Lk 22 30 judging the twelve tribes of I
Ro 9 6 all who are descended from I are I,
11 26 And so all I will be saved,
Eph 3 6 Gentiles are heirs together with I,

ISRAELITES (ISRAEL)

Ex 14 22 and the I went through the sea
16 35 The I ate manna forty years,
Hos 1 10 "Yet the I will be like the sand
Ro 9 27 the number of the I be like the sand

ITCHING*

2Ti 4 3 to say what their ears want to hear

JACOB

Second son of Isaac, twin of Esau (Ge 26 21 26; 1Ch 1 34). Bought Esau's birthright (Ge 26 29 34). Tricked Isaac into blessing him (Ge 27 1 37). Abrahamic covenant perpetuated through (Ge 28 13 15; Mal 1 2). Vision at Bethel (Ge 28 10-22). Wives and children (Ge 29 1 30 24, 35 16-26; 1Ch 2-9). Wrestled with God; name changed to Israel (Ge 32 22-32). Sent sons to Egypt during famine (Ge 42-43). Settled in Egypt (Ge 46). Blessed Ephraim and Manasseh (Ge 48). Blessed sons (Ge 49 1-28; Heb 11 21). Death (Ge 49 29-33). Burial (Ge 50 1-14).

JAMES

1 Apostle, brother of John (Mt 4:21-22; 10:2; Mk 3 17; Lk 9 10). At transfiguration (Mt 17 1-13; Mk 9 1-13; Lk 9 28-36). Killed by Herod (Ac 12 2).
2 Apostle, son of Alphaeus (Mt 10 3; Mk 3 18; Lk 6 15).
3 Brother of Jesus (Mt 13:51; Mk 6 3; Lk 24:10; Gal 1 19) and Judas (Jude 1). With believers before Pentecost (Ac 1 13). Leader of church at Jerusalem (Ac 12 17; 15: 21 18; Gal 2 9, 12). Author of epistle (Jas 1 1).

JAPHETH

Son of Noah (Ge 5:32; 1Ch 1 4-5). Blessed (Ge 9 18-28).

JARS

2Co 4 7 we have this treasure in it of clay

JEALOUS (JEALOUSY)

Ex 20 5 the Lord your God, and it God,
34 14 whose name is Jealous, is a God
Di 4 24 God is a consuming fire it God
Joel 2 18 the Lord will be it for his and
Zec 1 14 I am very it for Jerusalem and Zion,
2Co 11 2 I am it for you with a godly jealousy

JEALOUSY (JEALOUS)

ICo 3 3 For since there is it and quarreling
2Co 14 2 I am jealous for you with a godly it
Gal 5 20 hatred, discord, it, fits of rage,

JEHOIAHAZ

1 Son of Jehu; king of Israel (2Ki 13 1-9).
2 Son of Josiah; king of Judah (2Ki 23 31 34).

2Ch 16 1-4).

JEHOASH

Son of Jehoshaz; king of Israel (2Ki 13 14 2Ch 25).

JEHOIACHIN

Son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah exiled by Nebuchadnezzar (2Ki 24 8 17; 2Ch 36 8 15; Jer 22 24 30 24 1; Raised from prisoner status (2Ki 25 27-30; Jer 52 31-14).

JEHOIAKIM

Son of Jehoshaz; king of Judah (2Ki 23:34-24 6; 2Ch 36:4-8; Jer 22:18-23; 36).

JEHOIRAM

Son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah (2Ki 8 16-24).

JEHOISHAPHAT

Son of Asa, king of Judah (1Ki 22:41-50; 2Ki 3 2Ch 17 20).

JENI

King of Israel (1Ki 19:16-19; 2Ki 9-10).

JERIBTHAH

Judge from Gilead who delivered Israel from Ammon (Jdg 10 6 12 7). Made rash vow concerning his daughter (Jdg 11 30-40).

JEREMIAH

Prophet to Judah (Jer 1 1-3). Called by the Lord (Jer 1). Put in stocks (Jer 20:1-3). Threatened for prophesying (Jer 11 18 23 26). Opposed by Hananiah (Jer 28). Scroll burned (Jer 36). Imprisoned (Jer 37). Thrown into cistern (Jer 38). Forced to Egypt with those fleeing Babylonians (Jer 43).

JEROBOAM

1 Official of Solomon rebelled to become first king of Israel (1Ki 11:26-40; 12:1-20; 2Ch 10). Idolatry (1Ki 12:25-33); judgment for (1Ki 13-14; 2Ch 13).
2 Son of Jehoshaz, king of Israel (1Ki 14:23-29).

JERUSALEM

2Ki 24 27 and I will reject it the city I chose,
2Ch 6 6 now I have chosen it for my Name
Ne 2 17 Come, let us rebuild the wall of it
Ps 122 6 Pray for the peace of it
125 2 As the mountains surround it
137 5 If I forget you, O it
Isa 40 9 You who bring good tidings to it
65 18 for I will create it to be a delight
Joel 2 17 it will be holy,
Zep 3 16 On that day they will say to it
Zec 2 4 it will be a city without walls
8 8 I will bring them back to live in it,
14 8 living water will flow out from it
Mt 23 37 O it you who kill the prophets
Lk 13 34 die outside it O it
21 34 it will be trampled
Jn 4 20 where we must worship is in it
Ac 1 6 and you will be my witnesses in it,
Gal 4 26 corresponds to the present city of it
Rev 21 2 I saw the Holy City, the new it.

JESUS

LIFE Genealogy (Mt 1 1-17; Lk 3:21-37). Birth announced (Mt 1 18 24 Lk 1 26 45). Birth (Mt 2 1 12; Lk 2 1 40). Escape to Egypt (Mt 2 13 24). As a boy in the temple (Lk 2 41 52). Baptism (Mt 3 13-17; Mk 1 9-11; Lk 3:21-22; Jn 1 32-34). Temptation (Mt 4:1-11; Mk 1 12-13; Lk 4 1-13). Ministry in Galilee (Mt 4 12-18:35; Mk 1 14-50; Lk 4 14-13:9; Jn 1 35-2:11, 4, 6). Transfiguration (Mt 17:1-8; Mk 9:2-8; Lk 9 28-36), on the way to Jerusalem (Mt 19:20; Mk 10; Lk 13:10-19 27); in Jerusalem (Mt 21-25; Mk 11 13 Lk 19 28 21 38 Jn 2 12 3 36 5 7-12). Last supper (Mt 26:17-35; Mk 14 12-31; Lk 22 1-38; Jn 13-17). Arrest and trial (Mt 26 36 27 31 Mk 14:43-15 20; Lk 22 14-23 25; Jn 18 1-19

JOY (ENJOY, ENJOYMENT, JOYFUL, OVERJOYED, REJOICE, REJOICING)

- 10 16 19 and your joy will be complete
1Ch 16 27 strength and joy in his dwelling place
No 9 10 for the joy of the Lord is in your
1st 9 22 then women were turned into
Job 38 7 and all the angels shouted for joy
Ps 4 4 have filled my heart with joy
21 6 with the joy of your presence
90 11 back with and I will delight you with joy
43 4 to God my joy and my delight
51 12 to me the joy of your salvation
66 1 Shout with joy to God all the earth
98 12 the trees of the forest will sing for joy
107 22 and tell of his works with songs of joy
119 111 they are the joy of my heart
Ps 10 1 A wise son brings joy to his father
10 20 the prospect of the righteous is joy
12 20 but for those who promote peace
Isa 55 10 everlasting joy will crown their heads
51 11 Gladness and joy will overtake them
55 12 You will go out in joy
Lk 1 44 the baby in my womb leaped for joy
2 10 news of great joy that will be
Jn 15 11 and that your joy may be complete
16 20 but your grief will turn to joy
2Co 8 2 their overflowing joy and their
Php 2 2 then make us complete
4 1 and long for my joy and crown
1Th 2 19 For what is our hope, our joy
1Tim 7 Your love has given me great joy
Heb 12 2 for the joy set before him endured
Jas 1 2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers
1Pe 1 8 with an inexpressible and glorious joy
2Jn 4 It has given me great joy to find some
3Jn 4 I have no greater joy

JOYFUL (JOY)

- Ps 100 2 come before him with joy songs
Hab 3 18 I will be joyful in God my Savior
1Th 5 16 Rejoice always, pray continually

JUDAH

- 1 Son of Jacob by Leah (Ge 29 35, 35 23, 1Ch 2 1)
2 Tribe of blessed as ruling tribe (Ge 49 8-12, Dt 33 7)
2 Name used for people and land of Southern Kingdom
Jer 13 19 All joy will be carried into exile
Zec 10 4 From Judah will come the cornerstone
Heb 7 14 that our Lord descended from Judah

JUDAISM (JEW)

- Gal 1 13 of my previous way of life in Judaism

JUDAS

- 1 Apostle (Lk 6 16, Jn 14 22, Ac 1 13) Probably also called Thaddaeus (Mt 10 3, Mk 3 18)
2 Brother of James and Jesus (Mt 13 55, Mk 6 3), also called Jude (Jude 1)
3 Apostle, also called Iacobi, who betrayed Jesus (Mt 10 4, 26 14-16, Mk 3 19, 14 10-50, Lk 6 16, 22 3-53, Jn 6 71, 12 4, 13 2-30, 18 2-11)
Suicide of (Mt 27 3-5, Ac 1 16-25)

JUDGE (JUDGED, JUDGES, JUDGING, JUDGMENT)

- Ge 18 25 Will not the Lord judge all the earth do
1Ch 16 33 for he comes to judge the earth
Ps 9 8 He will judge the world in righteousness
Joel 3 12 sit to judge all the nations on every side
Mt 7 1 Do not judge, or you too will be judged
Jn 12 47 For I did not come to judge the world
Ac 17 31 a day when he will judge the world
Ro 2 16 day when God will judge men's secrets
1Co 4 3 Indeed, I do not even judge myself
6 2 that the saints will judge the world
Gal 2 6 not by external appearance
2Ti 4 1 who will judge the living and the dead
4 8 which the Lord, the righteous Judge
Jas 4 12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge
4 12 who are you to judge your neighbor
Rev 20 4 who had been given authority to judge

JUDGED (JUDGE)

- Ac 1 1 The Lord judges of you first will be
1Co 11 31 But if we judge ourselves we would not
Jas 1 1 who will judge will be / come actually
Rev 20 12 The dead were judged

JUDGING (JUDGE)

- Lk 3 16 Then the Lord came up
Ps 98 11 There is a trial with the saints
Heb 4 12 the thoughts and attitudes
Rev 19 11 With justice he / and makes war

JUDICIAL (JUDGE)

- Ac 19 20 the twelve tribes of Israel
1Co 7 24 Keep by mere appearance

JUDGMENT (JUDGE)

- Ps 117 of my man for / belongs to God
Ps 1 5 the wicked will not stand in the
119 60 Teach me knowledge and good
Pr 6 12 man who commits adultery lacks joy
12 11 but he who changes fantasies lacks joy
Ecc 12 14 God will bring every deed into judgment
Isa 66 16 the Lord will execute judgment
Mt 5 21 who murders will be subject to judgment
10 14 on the day of judgment for that town
12 16 to have no give account on the day of judgment
Jn 9 22 but has entrusted all / to the Son
7 24 appearances, and make a right judgment
16 8 to see and rightly understand
Ro 14 10 stand before God's judgment
14 13 Therefore let us stop passing judgment
1Co 11 29 body of the Lord and drink of
2Co 5 10 appear before the judgment of Christ
Heb 9 27 to die once, and after that to face judgment
1Pe 4 17 For it is time for / to begin judgment
Jude 6 bound with everlasting chains for judgment

JUST (JUSTICE, JUSTIFICATION, JUSTIFIED, JUSTIFY, JUSTLY)

- Dt 32 4 and all his ways are just
Ps 37 28 For the Lord loves the just
111 7 of his hands are faithful and just
Pr 1 3 doing what is right and just and fair
2 8 for he guards the course of the just
Da 4 37 does is right and all his ways are just
Ro 9 26 as to be / and the one who justifies
Heb 2 2 received its punishment
1Jn 1 9 and / and will forgive us our sins
Rev 16 7 true and just are your judgments

JUSTICE (JUST)

- Ex 23 2 do not pervert justice by siding
23 6 "Do not deny justice to your poor people
Job 37 23 in his / and great righteousness
Ps 9 8 he will govern the peoples with justice
9 16 The Lord is known by his justice
11 7 he loves justice
45 6 a scepter of justice will be the scepter of
101 1 I will sing of your love and justice
106 3 Blessed are they who maintain justice
Pr 21 15 When justice is done, it brings joy
28 5 Evil men do not understand justice
29 4 By justice a king gives a country stability
29 26 from the Lord that man gets justice
Isa 9 7 it with / and righteousness
28 17 I will make justice the measuring line
30 18 For the Lord is a God of justice
42 1 and he will bring justice to the nations
42 4 till he establishes justice on earth
56 1 "Maintain justice
51 8 "For I, the Lord, love justice
Jer 30 11 I will discipline you but only with justice
Eze 34 16 I will shepherd the flock with justice
Am 5 15 maintain justice in the courts
5 24 But let / roll on like a river
Zec 7 9 "Administer true justice, show mercy
Lk 11 42 you neglect justice and the love of God
Ro 3 25 He did this to demonstrate his justice

JUSTIFICATION (JUST)

- Ro 4 25 and was raised to life for our justification
5 18 of righteousness was / that brings

JUDICIAL (JUDGE)

- Ac 1 1 The Lord judges of you first will be
1Co 11 31 But if we judge ourselves we would not
Jas 1 1 who will judge will be / come actually
Rev 20 12 The dead were judged

JUDICIAL (JUDGE)

- Ac 19 20 the twelve tribes of Israel

JUDGING (JUDGE)

- Ac 19 20 the twelve tribes of Israel

KEEP (KEEPER, KEEPING, KEEPS, KEPT)

- 1Co 11 40 May the Lord keep and watch
1Co 20 6 and a my commandments
Ps 6 24 and you
Ps 118 20 You / and my lamp burning
19 13 O your servant who / from faithful
119 9 O how I love your law / his way pure
121 1 The Lord will keep you
141 3 I watch over the door of my lips
Pr 4 24 I corrupt talk for / my lips
Isa 26 4 You will / in perfect peace
Mt 10 10 for the worker is worth his /
Lk 12 15 and a my sheep /
Gal 5 25 let us / to step with the Spirit
1Ph 4 1 Make every effort to / the unity
1Ti 4 12 A yourself /
2Ti 4 4 A your head / all situations
Heb 13 5 A your lives / from the love
Jas 1 26 and yet does not / his neighbor
2 8 If you really / the royal law found
Jude 24 able to / you from falling

KEEPER (KEEP)

- Cre 4 9 (my brother /) The Land

KEEPING (KEEP)

- Ex 20 8 the Sabbath day by / it holy
Ps 19 11 in a them there is great reward
Mt 3 8 Produce fruit in / with repentance
Lk 2 8 A watch over them / at night
1Co 7 19 A God's commands is what counts
2Pe 3 9 Lord is not slow in / his promise

KEEPS (KEEP)

- Pr 17 28 a fool is thought wise if he / silent
Am 5 13 Therefore the prudent man / quiet
1Co 13 5 is not easily angered / it / no record
Jas 2 10 For whoever / the whole law

KEPT (KEEP)

- Ps 130 3 If you, O Lord, / a record of sins,
2Ti 4 7 finished the race, I have / the faith
1Pe 1 4 spoil or fade—/ in heaven for you,

KEYS

- Mt 16 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom

KILL (KILLS)

- Mt 17 23 They will / him, and on the third

KILLS (KILL)

- Lev 24 21 but whoever / a man must be put
2Co 3 6 for the letter /, but the Spirit gives

KIND (KINDNESS, KINDS)

- Ge 1 24 animals, each according to its kind
2Ch 10 7 "If you will be / to these people
Pr 11 17 A / man benefits himself,
12 25 but a / word cheers him up
14 21 blessed is he who is / to the needy
14 31 whoever is / to the needy honors
19 17 He who is / to the poor lends
Da 4 27 by being / to the oppressed
Lk 6 35 because he / to the ungrateful
1Co 13 4 Love is patient / love is /
15 35 With what / of body will they
Eph 4 32 Be / and compassionate
1Th 5 15 but always try to be / to each other

LAND

- Ge 1 10 God called the dry ground */*.
 11 "Let the */* produce vegetation
 12 7 To your offspring */* will give this */*."
 Ea 3 8 */* flowing with milk and honey—
 Nu 35 33 Do not pollute the */* where you are
 Dt 34 1 Lord showed him the whole */*—
 Jos 13 2 "This is the */* that remains
 14 4 Levites received no share of the */*
 2Ch 7 14 their sin and will heal their */*
 7 20 then */* will uproot Israel from my */*,
 Eze 36.24 and bring you back into your own */*

LANGUAGE

- Ge 11 1 Now the whole world had one */*
 Ps 19 3 There is no speech or */*
 Jn 8.44 When he lies, he speaks his native */*
 Ac 2 6 heard them speaking in his own */*
 Col 3 8 slander, and filthy */* from your lips
 Rev 5 9 from every tribe and */* and people

LAST (LASTING LASTS LATTER)

- 2Sa 23 1 These are the */* words of David
 Isa 44 6 */* am the first and */* am the */*
 Mt 19 30 But many who are first will be */*
 Mk 10 31 are first will be */* and the */* first "
 Jn 15 16 and bear fruit—fruit that will */*
 Ro 1.17 is by faith from first to */*
 2Ti 3 1 will be terrible times in the */* days
 2Pe 3 3 in the */* days scoffers will come,
 Rev 1 17 */* am the First and the */*.
 22 13 the First and the */*. the Beginning

LASTING (LAST)

- Ex 12 14 to the LORD—a */* ordinance
 Lev 24 8 of the Israelites as a */* covenant
 Nu 29 13 have a covenant of a */* priesthood,
 Heb 10 34 had better and */* possessions

LASTS (LAST)

- Ps 30 5 For his anger */* only a moment,
 2Co 3 11 greater is the glory of that which */*

LATTER (LAST)

- Job 42 12 The LORD blessed the */* part

LAUGH (LAUGHS)

- Ecc 3 4 a time to weep and a time to */*

LAUGHS (LAUGH)

- Ps 2 4 The One enthroned in heaven */*
 37 13 but the Lord */* at the wicked,

LAVISHED

- Eph 1 8 of God's grace that he */* on us
 1Jn 3 1 great is the love the Father has */*

LAW (LAWS)

- Dt 31 11 you shall read this */* before them
 31 26 "Take this Book of the */*.
 Jos 1 8 of the */* depart from your mouth
 Ne 8 8 from the Book of the */* of God
 Ps 1 2 and on his */* he meditates day
 19 7 The */* of the LORD is perfect
 119 18 wonderful things in your */*
 119 72 */* from your mouth is more precious
 119 97 Oh, how */* love your */*!
 119 165 peace have they who love your */*.
 Isa 8 20 To the */* and to the testimony!
 Jer 31 33 "I will put my */* in their minds
 Mi 5 17 that */* have come to abolish the */*
 7 12 sums up the */* and the Prophets
 22 40 All the */* and the Prophets hang
 Lk 16 17 stroke of a pen to drop out of the */*.
 Jn 1 17 For the */* was given through Moses,
 Ro 2 12 All who sin apart from the */* will
 2 15 of the */* are written on their hearts,
 5 13 for before the */* was given,
 5 20 */* was added so that the trespass
 6 14 because you are not under */*,
 7 6 released from the */* so that we serve
 7 12 */* is holy, and the commandment is
 8 3 For what the */* was powerless to do
 10 4 Christ is the end of the */*
 13 10 love is the fulfillment of the */*
 Gal 3 13 curse of the */* by becoming a curse
 3 24 So the */* was put in charge to lead us

- Gal 5 3 obligated to obey the whole */*.
 5 4 justified by */* have been alienated

- 5 14 The entire */* is summed up

- Heb 7 19 (for the */* made nothing perfect),

- 10 1 The */* is only a shadow

- Jas 1 25 intently into the perfect */* that gives

- 2 10 For whoever keeps the whole */*

LAWLESSNESS*

- 2Th 2 3 and the man of */* is revealed,

- 2 7 power of */* is already at work

- 1Jn 3 4 sin breaks the law, in fact, sin is */*

LAWS (LAW)

- Lev 25 18 and be careful to obey my */*.

- Ps 119 30 */* have set my heart on your */*

- 119 120 */* stand in awe of your */*

- Heb 8 10 */* will put my */* in their minds

- 10 16 */* will put my */* in their hearts,

LAY (LAID LAYING)

- Job 22 22 and */* up his words in your heart

- Isa 28 16 "See, */* a stone in Zion,

- Mt 8 20 of Man has no place to */* his head "

- Jn 10 15 and */* down my life for the sheep

- 15 13 that he */* down his life

- 1Co 3 11 no one can */* any foundation other

- 1Jn 3 16 And we ought to */* down our lives

- Rev 4 10 They */* their crowns

LAYING (LAY)

- 1Ti 5 22 Do not be hasty in the */* on of hands

- Heb 6 1 not */* again the foundation

LAZARUS

- 1 Poor man in Jesus' parable (Lk 16 19-31)
 2 Brother of Mary and Martha whom Jesus
 raised from the dead (Jn 11.1-12 19)

LAZY

- Pr 10 4 */* hands make a man poor.
 Heb 6 12 We do not want you to become */*,

LEAD (LEADERS LEADERSHIP LEADS LEAD)

- Ex 15 13 "In your unfailing love you will */*

- Ps 27 11 */* me in a straight path

- 61 2 */* me to the rock that is higher

- 139 24 and */* me in the way everlasting

- 143 10 */* me on level ground

- Ecc 5 6 Do not let your mouth */* you

- Isa 11 6 and a little child will */* them.

- Da 12 3 those who */* many to righteousness,

- Mt 6 13 And */* us not into temptation.

- 1Jn 3 7 do not let anyone */* you astray

LEADERS (LEAD)

- Heb 13 7 Remember your */*, who spoke

- 13 17 Obey your */* and submit

LEADERSHIP (LEAD)

- Ro 12 8 if it is */*, let him govern diligently,

LEADS (LEAD)

- Ps 23 2 he */* me beside quiet waters,

- Pr 19 23 The fear of the LORD */* to life.

- Isa 40 11 he gently */* those that have young

- Mt 7 13 and broad is the road that */*

- 15 14 If a blind man */* a blind man,

- Jn 10 3 sheep by name and */* them out

- Ro 14 19 effort to do what */* to peace

- 2Co 2 14 always */* us in triumphal procession

LEAH

- Wife of Jacob (Ge 29 16-30), bore six sons and
 one daughter (Ge 29 31-30:21; 34:1, 35 23)

LEAN

- Pr 3 5 */* not on your own understanding,

LEARN (LEARNED LEARNING)

- Isa 1 17 */* to do right!

- Mt 11 29 yoke upon you and */* from me,

LEARNED (LEARN)

- Php 4 11 for */* have */* to be content whatever

- 2Ti 3 14 continue in what you have */*

LEARNING (LEARN)

- Pr 1 5 let the wise listen and add to their */*
 2Ti 3 7 always */* but never able

LED (LEAD)

- Ps 68 18 you */* captives in your train
 Isa 53 7 he was */* like a lamb to the slaughter
 Am 2 10 and */* you forty years in the desert
 Ro 8 14 those who are */* by the Spirit
 Eph 4 8 he */* captives in his train

LEFT

- Jos 1 7 turn from it to the right or to the */*
 Pr 4 27 Do not swerve to the right or the */*
 Mt 6 3 do not let your */* hand know what
 25 33 on his right and the goats on his */*

LEGION

- Mt 8 9 "My name is */*," he replied,

LEND (LENDS)

- Dt 15 8 freely */* him whatever he needs
 Ps 37 26 are always generous and */* freely.
 Lk 6 34 if you */* to those from whom you

LENDS (LEND)

- Pr 19 17 to the poor */* to the LORD,

LENGTH (LONG)

- Ps 90 10 The */* of our days is seventy years—
 Pr 10 27 The fear of the LORD adds */* to life

LEPROSY

- 2Ki 7 3 men with */* at the entrance

LETTER (LETTERS)

- Mt 5 18 not the smallest */* not the least
 2Co 3 2 You yourselves are our */*, written
 3 6 for the */* kills, but the Spirit gives
 2Th 3 14 not obey our instruction in this */*,

LETTERS (LETTER)

- 2Co 3 7 which was engraved in */* on stone.
 10 10 'His */* are weighty and forceful,
 2Pe 3 16 His */* contain some things that are

LEVEL

- Ps 143 10 lead me on */* ground
 Pr 4 26 Make */* paths for your feet
 Isa 26 7 The path of the righteous is */*.
 Heb 12 13 'Make */* paths for your feet,'

LEVI (LEVITES)

- 1 Son of Jacob by Leah (Ge 29 34; 46 11, 1Ch
 2 1) Tribe of blessed (Ge 49 5-7; Dt 33 8-11),
 chosen as priests (Nu 3-4), numbered (Nu 3 39;
 26 62) allotted cities, but not land (Nu 18 35; Dt
 10 9; Jos 13 14, 21), land (Eze 48 8-22), 12,000
 from (Rev 7 7)
 2 See MATTHEW

LEVITES (LEVI)

- Nu 1 53 The */* are to be responsible
 8 6 "Take the */* from among the other
 18 21 */* give to the */* all the tithes in Israel

LEWDNESS

- Mt 7 22 malice, deceit, */*, envy, slander.

LIAR (LIE)

- Pr 19 22 better to be poor than a */*
 Jn 8 44 for he is a */* and the father of lies
 Ro 3 4 Let God be true, and every man a */*

LIBERATED*

- Ro 8 21 that the creation itself will be */*

LIE (LIAR LIED LIES LYING)

- Lev 19 11 "Do not */*
 Nu 23 19 God is not a man, that he should */*.
 Dt 6 7 when you */* down and when you get
 Ps 23 2 me */* down in green pastures.
 Isa 11 6 leopard will */* down with the goat
 Eze 34 14 they will */* down in good grazing
 Ro 1 25 exchanged the truth of God for a */*.
 Col 3 9 Do not */* to each other.
 Heb 6 18 which it is impossible for God to */*,

LOOKING (LOOK)

2Co 10 7 You are / only on the surface
 Rev 9 6 I saw a lamb, / as if it had been

LOOKS (LOOK)

1Sa 16 7 Man / at the outward appearance.
 Lk 9 62 and / back is fit for service
 Php 2 21 For everyone / at

LORD (LORD'S) LORDING

Ne 4 14 Remember the / who is great
 Job 28 28 The fear of the / that is wisdom
 Ps 34 1 the / is the one who sustains me
 62 12 and that you O / are loving
 86 5 You are forgiving and good O /
 110 1 The Lord says to my /
 147 5 Great is our / and mighty in power
 Isa 6 1 I saw the / seated on a throne
 Da 9 4 O / the great and awesome God
 Mt 3 3 Prepare the way for the /
 4 7 Do not put the / your God
 1 No eyes on who say to me /
 22 3 I love him /

41 For he says "The / said to my /

11 the / has done this

12 the / our God, the / is one

13 glory of the / shone around them

6 46 "Why do you call me / L

10 27 "Love the / your God

Ac 2 21 on the name of the / will be saved

16 31 replied Believe in the / Jesus.

Ro 10 9 with your mouth Jesus is L

10 13 on the name of the / will be saved

12 11 your spiritual fervor, serving the /

14 8 we live to the / and if we die

1Co 1 31 Let him who boasts boast in the /

3 5 the / has assigned to each his task

7 34 to be devoted to the / in both body

10 9 We should not test the /

11 23 For I received from the / what I

12 3 "Jesus is L" except by the Holy

15 57 victory through our / Jesus Christ

16 22 If anyone does not love the /

2Co 3 17 Now the / is the Spirit

8 5 they gave themselves first to the /

10 17 Let him who boasts boast in the /

Gal 6 14 in the cross of our / Jesus Christ.

Eph 4 5 one L one faith one baptism

5 10 and find out what pleases the /

5 19 make music in your heart to the /

Php 2 11 confess that Jesus Christ is L

3 1 my brothers, rejoice in the /

4 4 Rejoice in the / always

Col 2 6 as you received Christ Jesus as L

3 17 do it all in the name of the / Jesus.

3 23 as working for the / not for men.

4 17 work you have received in the /

1Th 3 12 May the / make your love increase

8 2 day of the / will come like a thief

5 23 at the coming of our / Jesus Christ

2Th 2 1 the coming of our / Jesus Christ

2Ti 2 19 "The / knows those who are his."

Heb 12 14 holiness no one will see the /

13 6 L is my helper, I will not be afraid

Jas 4 10 Humble yourselves before the /

1Pe 1 25 the word of the / stands forever

2 3 you have tasted that the / is good

3 15 in your hearts set apart Christ as L

2Pe 1 16 and coming of our / Jesus Christ.

3 1 the sovereign / who bought

3 9 The / is not slow in keeping his

Jude 14 the / is coming with thousands

Rev 4 8 holy, holy is the / God Almighty

4 11 "You are worthy, our / and God,

17 14 he is L of lords and King of kings—

22 20 Come, / Jesus

2Ti 2 24 And the / serves men not himself
 Jas 4 13 you ought to say, "If it is the / will,

LORDING (LORD)

1Pe 5 3 I do not / over those entrusted to you

LORD (LORD'S)

Ge 2 4 When the / God made the earth

2 7 the / God formed the man

2 21 The / God made garments of skin

2 16 The / he / shut in in

15 6 Abram believed the /

18 14 Is anything too hard for the / ?

11 40 May the / keep watch

1 1 the angel of the / appeared to him

9 1 the / hatched Pharaoh's heart

14 10 I humbled the / saved Israel

20 2 I am the / your God, who

33 11 The / would speak Moses face

40 14 I / the / filled them with

Lev 19 2 Be holy because I the / your God

Nu 9 4 I said to Moses Take the Levites

14 21 I / the / fills the whole earth

Di 2 7 I am the / your God has

2 9 the / your God, am a jealous God,

6 4 The / our God, the / is one

6 5 Love the / your God

6 16 Do not test the / your God

10 14 To the / your God belong

10 17 For the / your God is God of gods

11 1 Love the / your God and keep his

28 1 If you fully obey the / your God

30 16 today to love the / your God

30 20 For the / is your life, and he will

31 6 for the / your God goes with you,

22 5 to love the / your God, to walk

Joi 24 15 my household, we will serve the /

1Sa 1 28 So now I give him to the /

2 2 "There is no one holy like the /.

7 12 "Thus far has the / helped us

12 22 his great name the / will not reject

15 22 "Does the / delight

2Sa 22 2 "The / is my rock, my fortress

1Ki 2 3 and observe what the / your God

8 11 the glory of the / filled his temple

8 61 fully committed to the / our God,

18 21 If the / is God, follow him

2Ki 13 23 But the / was gracious to them

1Ch 16 8 Give thanks to the / call

16 23 Sing to the / all the earth.

28 9 for the / searches every heart

29 11 O / is the greatness and the power

2Ch 5 14 the glory of the / filled the temple

16 9 of the / range throughout the earth

19 6 judging for man but for the /.

30 9 for the / your God is gracious

Ne 1 5 Then I said "O / God of heaven.

Job 1 21 I gave and the / has taken away.

38 1 the / answered Job out

42 9 and the / accepted Job's prayer

Ps 1 2 But his delight is in the law of the /

9 9 The / is a refuge for the oppressed.

12 6 And the words of the / are flawless

16 8 I have set the / always before me

18 30 the word of the / is flawless

19 7 The law of the / is perfect.

19 14 O / my Rock and my Redeemer

23 1 The / is my shepherd, I shall not be

23 6 I will dwell in the house of the /.

27 1 The / is my light and my salvation

27 4 to gaze upon the beauty of the /

29 1 Ascribe to the / O mighty ones

32 2 whose sin the / does not count

33 12 is the nation whose God is the /.

33 18 But the eyes of the / are

34 3 Glorify the / with me.

34 7 The angel of the / encamps

34 8 Taste and see that the / is good.

34 18 The / is close to the brokenhearted

37 4 Delight yourself in the /

40 1 I waited patiently for the /.

47 2 How awesome is the / Most High.

48 1 Great is the / and most worthy

55 22 Cast your cares on the /

Ps 11 8 to the hand of the / is a trap
 11 4 I will build my house on the /
 11 5 I will build my house on the /
 11 6 I will build my house on the /
 11 7 I will build my house on the /
 11 8 I will build my house on the /
 11 9 I will build my house on the /
 11 10 I will build my house on the /
 11 11 I will build my house on the /
 11 12 I will build my house on the /
 11 13 I will build my house on the /
 11 14 I will build my house on the /
 11 15 I will build my house on the /
 11 16 I will build my house on the /
 11 17 I will build my house on the /
 11 18 I will build my house on the /
 11 19 I will build my house on the /
 11 20 I will build my house on the /
 11 21 I will build my house on the /
 11 22 I will build my house on the /
 11 23 I will build my house on the /
 11 24 I will build my house on the /
 11 25 I will build my house on the /
 11 26 I will build my house on the /
 11 27 I will build my house on the /
 11 28 I will build my house on the /
 11 29 I will build my house on the /
 11 30 I will build my house on the /
 11 31 I will build my house on the /
 11 32 I will build my house on the /
 11 33 I will build my house on the /
 11 34 I will build my house on the /
 11 35 I will build my house on the /
 11 36 I will build my house on the /
 11 37 I will build my house on the /
 11 38 I will build my house on the /
 11 39 I will build my house on the /
 11 40 I will build my house on the /
 11 41 I will build my house on the /
 11 42 I will build my house on the /
 11 43 I will build my house on the /
 11 44 I will build my house on the /
 11 45 I will build my house on the /
 11 46 I will build my house on the /
 11 47 I will build my house on the /
 11 48 I will build my house on the /
 11 49 I will build my house on the /
 11 50 I will build my house on the /
 11 51 I will build my house on the /
 11 52 I will build my house on the /
 11 53 I will build my house on the /
 11 54 I will build my house on the /
 11 55 I will build my house on the /
 11 56 I will build my house on the /
 11 57 I will build my house on the /
 11 58 I will build my house on the /
 11 59 I will build my house on the /
 11 60 I will build my house on the /
 11 61 I will build my house on the /
 11 62 I will build my house on the /
 11 63 I will build my house on the /
 11 64 I will build my house on the /
 11 65 I will build my house on the /
 11 66 I will build my house on the /
 11 67 I will build my house on the /
 11 68 I will build my house on the /
 11 69 I will build my house on the /
 11 70 I will build my house on the /
 11 71 I will build my house on the /
 11 72 I will build my house on the /
 11 73 I will build my house on the /
 11 74 I will build my house on the /
 11 75 I will build my house on the /
 11 76 I will build my house on the /
 11 77 I will build my house on the /
 11 78 I will build my house on the /
 11 79 I will build my house on the /
 11 80 I will build my house on the /
 11 81 I will build my house on the /
 11 82 I will build my house on the /
 11 83 I will build my house on the /
 11 84 I will build my house on the /
 11 85 I will build my house on the /
 11 86 I will build my house on the /
 11 87 I will build my house on the /
 11 88 I will build my house on the /
 11 89 I will build my house on the /
 11 90 I will build my house on the /
 11 91 I will build my house on the /
 11 92 I will build my house on the /
 11 93 I will build my house on the /
 11 94 I will build my house on the /
 11 95 I will build my house on the /
 11 96 I will build my house on the /
 11 97 I will build my house on the /
 11 98 I will build my house on the /
 11 99 I will build my house on the /
 11 100 I will build my house on the /

11 7 The fear of the / is the beginning
 3 5 I am in the / with you, O Lord
 3 9 I am in the / with you, O Lord
 3 12 the / is in the / with you, O Lord
 3 19 I am in the / with you, O Lord
 5 21 are in the / with you, O Lord
 6 16 There are no things that I hate
 10 21 The fear of the / is the beginning
 11 1 The / abhors dishonest scales
 12 22 The / detests lying lips
 14 26 He who fears the / has a secure
 14 3 The eyes of the / are everywhere
 16 2 but motive are weighed by the /
 16 4 The / works out everything
 16 9 but the / determines his steps
 16 33 but its every decision is from the /
 18 10 the name of the / is a strong tower
 18 22 and receives favor from the /
 19 14 but a prudent wife is from the /
 19 17 in the / the / is the /
 21 3 in the / than sacrifice
 21 30 that can succeed against the /
 21 31 but victory is with the /
 22 2 The / is the Maker of them all
 24 18 or the / will see and disapprove
 31 30 a woman who fears the /
 1Sa 6 4 holy, holy is the / Almighty
 11 2 The Spirit of the / is in me
 11 9 full of the knowledge of the /
 12 2 The /, the /, is my strength
 24 1 the / is going to lay waste the earth
 25 8 The Sovereign / will wipe away
 29 15 to hide their plans from the /
 33 6 the fear of the / is the key
 35 10 the ransom of the / will return
 40 5 the glory of the / will be revealed.
 40 7 the breath of the / blows on them
 40 10 the Sovereign / comes with power.
 40 28 The / is the everlasting God.
 40 31 but those who hope in the /
 42 8 "I am the / that is my name"
 43 11 I, even I, am the /
 44 24 I am the /
 45 5 I am the / and there is no other
 45 21 Was it not I, the /?
 51 11 The ransom of the / will return
 53 6 and the / has laid on him
 53 10 and the will of the / will prosper
 55 6 Seek the / while he may be found.
 58 8 of the / will be your rear guard
 58 11 The / will guide you always.
 59 1 the arm of the / is not too short
 61 3 a planting of the /

LORD'S (LORD'S)

Ac 21 14 and said, "The / will be done"

1Co 10 26 "The earth is the / and everything

11 26 you proclaim the / death

2Co 3 18 faces all reflect the / glory.

†This entry represents the translation of the Hebrew name for God Yehovah always indicated in the NIV by LORD. For Lord, see the concordance entries LORD* and LORD'S†

Isa 64 10 I delight greatly in the *L*!
 Jer 1 9 Then the *L* reached out his hand
 9 24 I am the *L* whose mercies and kindness
 16 10 O! my strength and my fortress
 17 7 Is the man who trusts in the *L*!
 La 3 40 and let us return to the *L*!
 Eze 1 26 of the likeness of the glory of the *L*!
 Hos 1 2 how men, but by the *L* their God!
 3 5 They will come trembling to the *L*!
 6 1 "Come, let us return to the *L*!
 Soul 2 1 for the day of the *L* is coming
 2 11 The day of the *L* is great
 3 14 For the day of the *L* is near
 Am 5 18 long for the day of the *L*!
 Jnh 1 3 But Jonah ran away from the *L*!
 Mic 4 2 up to the mountain of the *L*!
 6 8 And what does the *L* require of you
 Na 1 2 The *L* takes vengeance on his foes
 1 3 The *L* is slow to anger
 Hab 2 14 knowledge of the glory of the *L*!
 2 20 But the *L* is in his holy temple.
 Zep 3 17 The *L*, your God is with you,
 Zec 1 17 and the *L* will again comfort Zion
 9 16 The *L* their God will save them
 14 5 Then the *L* my God will come,
 14 9 The *L* will be king
 Mal 4 5 and dreadful day of the *L* comes

LORD'S! (LORD'S!)

Ex 34 34 he entered the *L* presence
 Nu 14 41 you disobeying the *L* command?
 Dt 6 18 is right and good in the *L* sight,
 32 9 For the *L* portion is his people,
 Jos 21 45 Not one of all the *L* good promises
 Ps 24 1 The earth is the *L*, and everything
 32 10 but the *L* unfailing love
 89 1 of the *L* great love forever,
 103 17 *L* love is with those who fear him,
 Pr 3 11 do not despise the *L* discipline
 Isa 24 14 west they acclaim the *L* majesty
 62 3 of splendor in the *L* hand,
 Jer 48 10 lax in doing the *L* work!
 La 3 22 of the *L* great love we are not
 Mic 4 1 of the *L* temple will be established

LOSE (LOSES LOSS LOST)

1Sa 17 32 "Let no one / heart on account
 Mt 10 39 Whoever finds his life will / it,
 Lk 9 25 and yet / or forfeit his very self?
 Jn 4 6 39 that I shall / none of all that he has
 Heb 12 3 will not grow weary and / heart
 12 5 do not / heart when he rebukes you

LOSES (LOSE)

Mt 5 13 But if the salt / its saltiness,
 Lk 15 4 you has a hundred sheep and / one
 15 8 has ten silver coins and / one

LOSS (LOSE)

Ro 11 12 and their / means riches
 1Co 3 15 he will suffer /, he himself will be
 Php 3 8 I consider everything / compared

LOST (LOSE)

Ps 73 2 I had nearly / my foothold
 Jer 50 6 "My people have been / sheep,
 Eze 34 4 the strays or searched for the /
 34 16 for the / and bring back the strays
 Mt 18 14 any of these little ones should be /
 Lk 15 4 go after the / sheep until he finds it?
 15 6 with me, I have found my / sheep
 15 9 with me, I have found my / coin
 15 24 is alive again, he was / and is found
 19 10 to seek and to save what was /
 Php 3 8 for whose sake I have / all things

LOT (LOTS)

Nephew of Abraham (Ge 11 27, 12 5) Chose
 to live in Sodom (Ge 13) Rescued from four
 kings (Ge 14) Rescued from Sodom (Ge 19 1 29
 2Pr 2 7) Fathered Moab and Ammon by his
 daughters (Ge 19 30 38)
 Est 3 7 the / in the presence of Haman
 9 24 the / for their ruin and destruction
 Pr 16 33 The / is cast into the lap
 18 18 Casting the / settles disputes

1Sa 17 22 his work, because that is his /
 Ac 1 26 Then they drew lots and the / fell

LOTH (LOT)

Ps 22 38 and cast / for my clothing
 Mt 27 35 divided up his clothes by casting /

LOVE (LOVED LOVES LOVELY
LOVER LOVERS LOVER LOVING)

Ge 22 2 your only son Isaac whom you /
 Ex 15 13 In your unfailing / you will lead
 20 6 showing / to a thousand generations
 20 6 of those who / me
 34 6 abounding in / and faithfulness
 Lev 19 18 but / your neighbor as yourself
 19 34 / him as yourself
 Nu 14 18 abounding in / and forgiving sin
 Dt 5 10 showing / to a thousand generations
 5 10 of those who / me
 6 5 / the / into your God
 7 13 He will / you and bless you
 10 12 to walk in all his ways, to / him,
 11 13 to / the / into your God
 13 6 wife you / in your closest friend
 30 6 so that you may / him
 Jos 22 5 to / the / into your God, to walk
 1Ki 1 3 Solomon showed his /
 8 23 you who keep your covenant of /
 2Ch 5 13 his / endures forever
 Ne 1 5 covenant of / with those who / him
 Ps 18 1 / you, O LORD my strength
 23 6 Surely goodness and / will follow
 25 6 O LORD, your great mercy and /,
 31 16 save me in your unfailing /
 32 10 but the LORD's unfailing /
 33 5 the earth is full of his unfailing /
 33 18 whose hope is in his unfailing /,
 36 5 Your / O LORD, reaches
 36 7 How priceless is your unfailing /!
 45 7 You / righteousness and hate
 51 1 according to your unfailing /,
 57 10 For great is your / reaching
 63 3 Because your / is better than life,
 66 20 or withheld his / from me!
 70 4 may those who / your salvation
 77 8 Has his unfailing / vanished forever
 85 7 Show us your unfailing / O LORD
 85 10 / and faithfulness meet together,
 86 13 For great is your / toward me,
 89 1 of the LORD's great / forever,
 89 33 but I will not take my / from him,
 92 2 to proclaim your / in the morning
 94 18 your / O LORD supported me

100 5 is good and his / endures forever,
 101 1 I will sing of your / and justice,
 103 4 crowns you with / and compassion
 103 8 slow to anger, abounding in /
 103 11 so great is his / for those who fear
 107 8 to the LORD for his unfailing /
 108 4 For great is your /, higher
 116 1 / the LORD, for he heard my
 118 1 his / endures forever
 119 47 because I / them
 119 64 The earth is filled with your /,
 119 76 May your unfailing / be my
 119 97 Oh, how I / your law!
 119 119 therefore I / your statutes
 119 124 your servant according to your /
 119 132 to those who / your name
 119 159 O LORD, according to your /
 119 163 but I / your law
 119 165 peace have they who / your law,
 122 6 "May those who / you be secure,
 130 7 for with the LORD is unfailing /
 136 1 26 His / endures forever
 143 8 of your unfailing /
 145 8 slow to anger and rich in /
 145 20 over all who / him
 147 11 who put their hope in his unfailing /

Pr 3 3 Let / and faithfulness never leave
 4 6 / her and she will watch over you
 5 19 you ever be captivated by her /
 8 17 / those who / me,
 9 8 rebuke a wise man and he will / you
 10 12 but / covers over all wrongs
 14 22 those who plan what is good find /

Pr 17 17 of vegetables where there is /
 17 9 cover any / (these promises)
 19 22 What a comeliness / unflinching /
 20 6 / him to have unfailing /
 20 13 / him / sleep on you will grow
 20 28 through / (these are / roads)
 21 24 who pursue righteousness and /
 27 5 rebuke than to / him /

Isa 9 6 Then / shall be
 9 9 life with you / wife whom you /
 58 2 4 and / him over me to /
 6 6 for / as / as death
 6 7 Many waters / around /
 6 7 all the weakness / has house for /
 10 9 I / for the / me /
 16 5 In / throne will be established,
 18 17 In your / you keep me
 54 10 yet my unfailing / for you will not
 55 4 my faithful / promised to David
 61 8 / in / the / into / justice
 63 9 In / and mercy he is deemed

Jer 5 11 and my people / it this way
 31 3 you with an everlasting /
 32 18 You show / to thousands
 33 11 his / endures forever
 La 3 22 of the / into / great / we are not
 3 32 so great is his unfailing /
 Eze 33 12 more than one who sings / songs
 Da 9 4 covenant of / with a / who / him
 Hos 2 19 in / and compassion
 3 1 / show you / to your wife again,
 11 4 with ties of /
 12 6 maintain / and justice

Joel 2 13 slow to anger and abounding in /,
 Am 5 15 / hate evil / good
 Mic 3 2 you who hate good and / evil
 6 8 To act justly and to / mercy
 Zep 3 17 he will quiet you with his /
 Zec 8 19 Therefore / truth and peace
 Mt 3 17 This is my Son whom I /
 5 44 / your enemies and pray
 6 24 he will hate the one and / the other,
 17 5 This is my Son whom I /
 19 19 and / your neighbor as yourself
 22 37 " / the Lord your God

Lk 6 32 Even sinners / those who / them
 7 42 which of them will / him more
 20 13 whom I / perhaps they will respect
 Jn 13 34 I give you / one another
 13 35 disciples, if you / one another
 14 15 "If you / me you will obey what I
 15 13 Greater / has no one than this
 15 17 This is my command / each other
 21 15 do you truly / me more than these

Ro 5 5 because God has poured out his /
 5 8 God demonstrates his own / for us
 8 28 for the good of those who / him,
 8 35 us from the / of Christ
 8 39 us from the / of God that is
 12 9 / must be sincere
 12 10 to one another in brotherly /
 13 8 continuing debt to / one another,
 13 9 " / your neighbor as yourself
 13 10 Therefore / is the fulfillment
 13 10 / does no harm to its neighbor
 1Co 2 9 prepared for those who / him
 8 1 Knowledge pulls up, but / builds up
 13 1 have not / I am only a resounding
 13 2 but have not / I am nothing
 13 3 but have not / I gain nothing
 13 4 Love is patient / is kind
 13 4 / is patient love is kind
 13 6 / does not delight in evil
 13 8 / never fails
 13 13 But the greatest of these is /
 13 13 three remain faith hope and /
 14 1 way of / and eagerly desire spiritual
 16 14 Do everything in /

2Co 5 14 For Christ's / compels us
 8 8 sincerity of your / by comparing it
 8 24 show these men the proof of your /
 Gal 5 6 is faith expressing itself through /
 5 13 rather serve one another in /
 5 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is / joy
 Eph 1 4 in he predestined us
 2 4 But because of his great / for us,

- 1Ph** 1 12 being raised and established in /
1 10 and high and deep in the / of Christ
1 19 and to know this / that surpasses
1 2 bearing with one another in /
1 14 Instead, speaking the truth in /,
1 2 loved children and live a life of /
1 25 / your wives just as Christ loved
1 28 husbands ought to / their wives
1 11 each one of you who must / his wife
Php 1 9 that your / may abound more
1 2 having the same / being one
1Co 1 4 / that spring from the hope that is
1 2 in heart and united in /
1 14 And over all these virtues put on /,
1 19 / your wives and do not be harsh
1Th 1 3 your labor prompted by /
1 9 taught by Christ to / each other
1 8 on faith and / as a breastplate
1 3 direct your hearts into Christ's /
1 5 The goal of this command is /
1 15 / and holiness with propriety
1 12 to life in / in faith and in purity
1 10 For the / of money is a root
1 11 faith, /, endurance and gentleness
1 7 of power, of / and of self-discipline
1 22 and pursue righteousness, faith, /
1 10 faith, patience, /, endurance
2Ti 1 7 of power, of / and of self-discipline
1 22 and pursue righteousness, faith, /
1 10 faith, patience, /, endurance
Tit 2 4 women to / their husbands
Phm 9 yet I appeal to you on the basis of /
Heb 6 10 and the / you have shown him
10 24 may spur one another on toward /
13 5 free from the / of money
Jas 1 12 promised to those who / him
1 5 he promised those who / him?
1 8 /, your neighbor as yourself,
1Pe 1 2 the truth so that you have sincere /
1 22 / one another deeply
1 12 / the brotherhood of believers,
1 9 be sympathetic, /, as brothers,
1 10 Whoever would / life
1 8 Above all, / each other deeply,
1 8 / covers over a multitude of sins
1 14 Greet one another with a kiss of /
2Pe 1 7 and with brotherly kindness, /
1 17 "This is my Son, whom I /,
1Jn 2 5 God's / is truly made complete
1 15 Do not / the world or anything
1 1 How great is the / the Father has
1 10 anyone who does not / his brother
1 11 We should / one another
1 14 Anyone who does not / remains
1 16 This is how we know what / is
1 18 let us not / with words or tongue
1 23 to / one another as he commanded
1 7 Dear friends, let us / one another,
1 7 for / comes from God
1 8 Whoever does not / does not know
1 9 This is how God showed his /
1 10 This is / not that we loved God,
1 11 we also ought to / one another
1 12 and his / is made complete in us
1 16 God is /
1 16 Whoever lives in / lives in God,
1 17 / is made complete among us
1 18 But perfect / drives out fear
1 19 We / because he first loved us
1 20 If anyone says, "I / God,"
1 21 loves God must also / his brother
1 22 we know that we / the children
1 3 This is / for God to obey his
2Jn 5 I ask that we / one another
6 his command is that you walk in /
6 this is / that we walk in obedience
Jude 12 men are blemishes at your / feasts,
21 Keep yourselves in God's /
Rev 2 4 You have forsaken your first /
3 19 Those whom I / rebuke
12 11 they did not / their lives so much

LOVED (LOVE)

- Ge** 24 67 she became his wife, and he / her
29 30 and he / Rachel more than Leah
37 3 Now Israel / Joseph more than any
Dt 7 8 But it was because the Lord / you
1Sa 1 5 a double portion because he / her
20 17 because he / him as he / himself

- Ps** 44 1 light of your face, for you / them
Jos 2 2 because you / me
1J 3 1 I have / you with all a yearning
Heb 2 23 to the one I called "My dear /"
1 1 though she is / by another
9 10 he was as wife as the thing they /
11 1 "When Israel was a child / him,
1 2 But you ask, "How have you / us?"
Mk 12 6 left to send a son whom he /
Jn 3 16 so / the world that he gave his one
1 12 because / lackness of love of light
1 13 Jesus / Martha and her sister
12 43 for the / people from their own
1 1 Having / us, we were
1 13 the / people whom Jesus /
1 14 As I have / you, you must love
14 21 He who loves me will /
14 9 the Father has / me, so have I / you
15 12 Love each other as I have / you
19 26 the disciple whom he / standing
Ro 8 37 conquerors through him who / us
9 13 "Jacob I / but Esau I hated
9 25 her "my / one" who is not my / one,"
11 28 they are / on account
Gal 2 20 who / me and gave himself for me
1Ph 5 2 as Christ / us and gave himself up
5 25 just as Christ / the church
2Th 2 16 who / us and by his grace gave us
2Ti 4 10 for Demas, because he / this world,
1Jeh 1 9 You have / righteousness
1Jn 4 10 This is love: not that we / God,
4 11 Dear friends, since God so / us,
4 19 We love because he first / us

LOVELY (LOVE)

- Ps** 84 1 How / is your dwelling place,
SS 2 14 and your face is /
5 16 he is altogether /
Php 4 8 whatever is / whatever is

LOVER (LOVE)

- SS** 2 16 Beloved My / is mine and I am his,
7 10 I belong to my /,
1Ti 3 3 not quarrelsome, not a / of money

LOVERS (LOVE)

- 2Ti** 3 2 People will be / of themselves,
3 3 without self-control brutal not /
3 4 / of pleasure rather than / of God—

LOVES (LOVE)

- Ps** 11 7 he / justice
33 5 The Lord / righteousness
34 12 Whoever of you / life
91 14 Because he / me," says the Lord.
127 2 for he grants sleep to those he /
Pr 3 12 the Lord disciplines those he /,
12 1 Whoever / discipline / knowledge,
13 24 he who / him is careful
17 17 A friend / at all times
17 19 He who / a quarrel / sin,
22 11 He who / a pure heart and whose
Ecc 5 10 whoever / wealth is never satisfied
Mt 10 37 anyone who / his son or daughter
Lk 7 47 has been forgiven little / little
Jn 3 35 Father / the Son and has placed
10 17 reason my Father / me is that I lay
12 25 The man who / his life will lose it,
14 21 obeys them, he is the one who / me
14 23 Jesus replied, "If anyone / me,
Ro 13 8 for he who / his fellowman has
2Co 9 7 for God / a cheerful giver
Eph 5 28 He who / his wife / himself
5 33 must love his wife as he / himself,
Heb 12 6 the Lord disciplines those he /,
1Jn 2 10 Whoever / his brother lives
2 15 If anyone / the world, the love
4 7 Everyone who / has been born
4 21 Whoever / God must also love his
5 1 who / the father / his child
3Jn 9 but Diotrephes, who / to be first,
Rev 1 5 To him who / us and has freed us

LOVING (LOVE)

- Ps** 25 10 All the ways of the Lord are /
62 12 and that you, O Lord, are /

- 1Ph** 1 12 being raised and established in /
1Co 1 4 / that spring from the hope that is
1Th 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Jn** 1 4 the / that we have
1Pe 1 2 the truth so that you have sincere /
1Jn 1 2 the truth so that you have sincere /
1Jn 1 2 the truth so that you have sincere /

LOVE

- 1Co** 13 4 love / with patience /
1Th 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /
1Th 1 3 your labor prompted by /
1Th 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /
1Th 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /

LOVE

- 1Th** 1 3 your labor prompted by /

MEET (MEETING)

- Ps 85:10 Love and faithfulness *m* together,
Am 4:12 prepare to *m* your God, O Israel
1Th 4:17 them in the clouds to *m* the Lord

MEETING (MEET)

- Heb 10:25 Let us not give up *m* together,

MELCHIZEDEK

- Ge 14:18 *M* king of Salem brought out bread
Ps 110: 4 in the order of *M*
Heb 7:11 in the order of *M*, not in the order

MELT

- 2Pe 3:12 and the elements will *m* in the heat

MEMBERS

- Mic 7: 6 a man's enemies are the *m*
Ro 7:23 law as work in the *m* of my body,
12: 4 of us has one body with many *m*,
1Co 6:15 not know that your bodies are *m*
12:24 But God has combined the *m*
Eph 4:25 for we are all *m* of one body
Col 3:15 as *m* of one body you were called

MEN (MAN)

- Mt 4:19 will make you fishers of *m*
5:16 your light shine before *m*
12:36 *m* will have to give account
Jn 12:32 will draw all *m* to myself
Ac 5:29 obey God rather than *m*
Ro 1:27 indecent acts with other *m*,
5:12 death came to all *m*,
1Co 9:22 all things to all *m*
2Co 5:11 we try to persuade *m*
1Ti 2: 4 wants all *m* to be saved
2Ti 2: 2 entrust to reliable *m*
2Pe 1:21 but *m* spoke from God

MENAHEM

King of Israel (2Ki 15:17-22)

MERCIFUL (MERCY)

- Dr 4:31 the LORD your God is a *m* God,
Ne 9:31 for you are a gracious and *m* God
Mt 5: 7 Blessed are the *m*
Lk 6:36 Be *m*, just as your Father is *m*
Heb 2:17 in order that he might become a *m*
Jude 22 Be *m* to those who doubt, snatch

MERCY (MERCIFUL)

- Ex 33:19 *m* on whom I will have *m*,
Ps 25: 6 O LORD, your great *m* and love,
Isa 63: 9 and *m* he redeemed them,
Hos 6: 6 For I desire *m*, not sacrifice,
Mic 6: 8 To act justly and to love *m*
Hab 3: 2 in wrath remember *m*
Mt 12: 7 'I desire *m*, not sacrifice,' you
23:23 justice, *m* and faithfulness
Ro 9:15 'I will have *m* on whom I have *m*,
Eph 2: 4 who is rich in *m*, made us alive
Jas 2:13 *M* triumphs over judgment'
1Pe 1: 3 In his great *m* he has given us new

MESSAGE

- Isa 53: 1 Who has believed our *m*
Jn 12:38 'Lord, who has believed our *m*
Ro 10:17 faith comes from hearing the *m*,
1Co 1:18 for the *m* of the cross is
2Co 5:19 to us the *m* of reconciliation

MESSIAH*

- Jn 1:41 'We have found the *M*' (that is,
4:25 'I know that *M*' (called Christ) 'is

METHUSELAH

- Ge 5:27 Altogether, *M* lived 969 years,

MICHAEL

- Archangel (Jude 9), warrior in angelic realm,
protector of Israel (Da 10:13, 21, 12:1, Rev 12:7)

MIDWIVES

- Ex 1:17 The *m*, however, feared God

MIGHT (ALMIGHTY MIGHTY)

- Jdg 16:30 Then he pushed with all his *m*

- 2Sa 6:14 before the LORD with all his *m*,
Ps 21:13 we will sing and praise your *m*
Zec 4: 6 'Not by *m* nor by power,
1Ti 6:16 To him be honor and *m* forever

MIGHTY (MIGHT)

- Ex 6: 1 of my *m* hand he will drive them
Dt 7: 8 he brought you out with a *m* hand
2Sa 1:19 How the *m* have fallen'
23: 8 the names of David's *m* men.
Ps 24: 8 The LORD strong and *m*
50: 1 The *M* One—God, the LORD
89: 8 You are *m* O LORD,
136:12 with a *m* hand and outstretched
147: 5 Great is our Lord and *m* in power,
Isa 9: 6 Wonderful Counselor, *M* God,
Zep 3:17 he is *m* to save
Eph 6:10 in the Lord and in his *m* power

MILE*

- Mt 5:41 If someone forces you to go one *m*,

MILK

- Ex 3: 8 a land flowing with *m* and honey—
Isa 55: 1 Come, buy wine and *m*
1Co 3: 2 I gave you *m*, not solid food,
Heb 5:12 You need *m*, not solid food!
1Pe 2: 2 babies, crave pure spiritual *m*,

MILLSTONE (STONE)

- Lk 17: 2 sea with a *m* tied around his neck

MIND (DOUBLE-MINDED MINDFUL MINDS)

- 1Sa 15:29 Israel does not lie or change his *m*;
1Ch 28: 9 devotion and with a willing *m*,
Ps 26: 2 examine my heart and my *m*,
Isa 26: 3 him whose *m* is steadfast,
Mt 22:37 all your soul and with all your *m*;
Ac 4:32 believers were one in heart and *m*.
Ro 7:25 I myself in my *m* am a slave
8: 7 the sinful *m* is hostile to God
12: 2 by the renewing of your *m*
1Co 2: 9 no *m* has conceived
14:14 spirit prays, but my *m* is unfruitful
13:11 be of one *m*, live in peace.
Php 3:19 Their *m* is on earthly things.
1Th 4:11 to *m* your own business
Heb 7:21 and will not change his *m*.

MINDFUL* (MIND)

- Ps 8: 4 what is man that you are *m* of him,
Lk 1:48 God my Savior, for he has been *m*
Heb 2: 6 What is man that you are *m* of him,

MINDS (MIND)

- Ps 7: 9 who searches *m* and hearts,
Jer 31:33 'I will put my law in their *m*
Eph 4:23 new in the attitude of your *m*,
Col 3: 2 Set your *m* on things above,
Heb 8:10 I will put my laws in their *m*
Rev 2:23 I am he who searches hearts and *m*,

MINISTERING (MINISTRY)

- Heb 1:14 Are not all angels *m* spirits sent

MINISTRY (MINISTERING)

- Ac 6: 4 to prayer and the *m* of the word
2Co 5:18 gave us the *m* of reconciliation
2Ti 4: 5 discharge all the duties of your *m*

MIRACLES (MIRACULOUS)

- 1Ch 16:12 his *m*, and the judgments he
Ps 77:14 You are the God who performs *m*
Mt 11:20 most of his *m* had been performed,
11:21 If the *m* that were performed
24:24 and perform great signs and *m*
Mk 6: 2 does *m*? Isn't this the carpenter?
Jn 10:32 'I have shown you many great *m*
14:11 the evidence of the *m* themselves
Ac 2:22 accredited by God to you by *m*,
19:11 God did extraordinary *m*
1Co 12:28 third teachers, then workers of *m*,
Heb 2: 4 it by signs, wonders and various *m*,
Jn 3: 2 could perform the *m* signs you are

- Jn 9:16 How can a sinner do such *m* signs
20:30 Jesus did many other *m* signs
1Co 1:22 Jews demand *m* signs and Greeks

MIRE

- Ps 40: 2 out of the mud and *m*
Isa 57:20 whose waves cast up *m* and mud

MIRIAM

- Sister of Moses and Aaron (Nu 26:59) Led
dancing at Red Sea (Ex 15:20-21) Struck with
leprosy for criticizing Moses (Nu 12) Death (Nu
20:1)

MIRROR

- Jas 1:23 a man who looks at his face in a *m*

MISERY

- Ex 3: 7 I have indeed seen the *m*
Jdg 10:16 he could bear Israel's *m* no longer
Hos 5:15 in their *m* they will earnestly seek
Ro 3:16 run and *m* mark their ways,
Jas 5: 1 of the *m* that is coming upon you.

MISLED

- 1Co 15:33 Do not be *m*. 'Bad company

MISS

- Pr 19: 2 not to be hasty and *m* the way.

MIST

- Hos 6: 4 Your love is like the morning *m*,
Jas 4:14 You are a *m* that appears for a little

MISUSE*

- Ex 20: 7 'You shall not *m* the name
Dt 5:11 'You shall not *m* the name
Ps 139: 20 your adversaries *m* your name

MOCK (MOCKED MOCKER MOCKERS MOCKING)

- Ps 22: 7 All who see me *m* me,
Pr 14: 9 Fools *m* at making amends for sin,
Mk 10:34 who will *m* him and spit on him,

MOCKED (MOCK)

- Mt 27:29 knelt in front of him and *m* him
27:41 of the law and the elders *m* him
Gal 6: 7 not be deceived, God cannot be *m*.

MOCKER (MOCK)

- Pr 9: 7 corrects a *m* invites insult;
9:12 if you are a *m*, you alone will suffer
20: 1 Wine is a *m* and beer a brawler,
22:10 Drive out the *m*, and out goes sin

MOCKERS (MOCK)

- Ps 1: 1 or sit in the seat of *m*

MOCKING (MOCK)

- Isa 50: 6 face from *m* and spitting

MODEL*

- Eze 28:12 'You were the *m* of perfection,
1Th 1: 7 And so you became a *m*
2Th 3: 9 to make ourselves a *m* for you

MOMENT

- Job 20: 5 the joy of the godless lasts but a *m*
Ps 30: 5 For his anger lasts only a *m*,
Isa 66: 8 or a nation be brought forth in a *m*?
Gal 2: 5 We did not give in to them for a *m*,

MONEY

- Ecc 5:10 Whoever loves *m* never has *m*
Isa 55: 1 and you who have no *m*
Mt 6:24 You cannot serve both God and *M*
Lk 9: 3 no bread, no *m*, no extra tunic
1Co 16: 2 set aside a sum of *m* in keeping
1Ti 3: 3 not quarrelsome, not a lover of *m*
6:10 For the love of *m* is a root
2Ti 3: 2 lovers of *m*, boastful, proud,
Heb 13: 5 free from the love of *m*
1Pe 5: 2 not greedy for *m*, but eager to serve

MOON

- Ps 121: 6 not the *m* by night
Joel 2:31 And the *m* to blood

1Co 13:41 *m* another and the stars another.

MORNING.

Ge 1:5 and there was *m* the first day
Dt 28:6² In the *m* you will say, "If only it
Ps 5:3 In the *m*, O LORD,
2Pe 1:19 and the *m* star rises in your hearts
Rev 22:16 of David, and the bright *of* Star."

MORTAL

1Co 15:53 and the *m* with immortality

MOSES

Levite brother of Aaron (Ex 6:20; 1Ch 6:3)
Put in basket into Nile, discovered and raised by
Pharaoh's daughter (Ex 2:1-10) Flest to Midian
after killing Egyptian (Ex 2:11-15) Married in
Zipporah, fathered Gershom (Ex 2:16-22)
Called by the LORD to deliver Israel (Ex 3:4)
Pharaoh's resistance (Ex 5) Ten plagues (Ex 7-
11) Passover and Exodus (Ex 12-13) Led Israel
through Red Sea (Ex 14) Song of deliverance
(Ex 15:1-21) Brought water from rock (Ex 17:
1-7) Raised hands to defeat Amalekites (Ex 17:
8-16) Delegated judges (Ex 18, Dt 1:9-18)
Received Law at Sinai (Ex 19:23, 25-31, Jn 1:
17) Announced Law to Israel (Ex 19:7-8, 24,
15) Broke tablets because of golden calf (Ex 32,
Dt 9) Saw glory of the LORD (Ex 33-34) Super-
vised building of tabernacle (Ex 36-40) Set apart
Aaron and priests (Lev 8:9) Numbered tribes
(Nu 1-4:26) Opposed by Aaron and Miriam (Nu
12) Sent spies into Canaan (Nu 13) Announced
forty years of wandering for failure to enter land
(Nu 14) Opposed by Korah (Nu 16) Forbidden
to enter land for striking rock (Nu 20:1-13, Dt 1:
37) Lifted bronze snake for healing (Nu 21:4-9
Jn 3:14) Final address to Israel (Dt 1-33). Suc-
ceeded by Joshua (Nu 27:12-23, Dt 34) Death
(Dt 34:5-12)
Law of Moses" (1Ki 2:3, Ezr 3:2, Mk 12:26,
Lk 24:44) "Book of Moses" (2Ch 25:12, Ne 13:
1) "Song of Moses" (Ex 15:1-21, Rev 15:3)
Prayer of Moses" (Ps 90)

MOTH

Mt 6:19 where *m* and rust destroy.

MOTHER (MOTHER'S)

Ce 2:24 and *m* and he united to his wife,
3:20 because she would become the *m*
Ex 20:12 "Honor your father and your *m*,
Lev 20:9 "If anyone curses his father or *m*,
Dt 5:16 "Honor your father and your *m*,
21:18 who does not obey his father and *m*
27:16 who dishonors his father or his *m*"
Psa 2:19 Each year his *m* made him a little
Ps 113:9 as a happy *m* of children
Pr 23:25 May your father and *m* be glad,
29:15 child left to himself disgraces his *m*
31:1 an oracle his *m* taught him
Isa 49:15 "Can a *m* forget the baby
66:13 As a *m* comforts her child,
Mt 10:37 or *m* more than me is not worthy
15:4 Honor your father and *m*"
19:5 and *m* and be united to his wife,
Mk 7:10 "Honor your father and your *m*,
10:19 honor your father and *m*"
Jn 19:27 to the disciple, "Here is your *m*"

MOTHER'S (MOTHER)

Job 1:21 "Naked I came from my *m* womb,
Pr 1:8 and do not forsake your *m* teaching

MOTIVES*

Pr 16:2 but *m* are weighed by the LORD
1Co 4:5 will expose the *m* of men's hearts
Php 1:18 whether from false *m* or true,
1Th 2:3 spring from error or impure *m*,
Jas 4:3 because you ask with wrong *m*

MOUNTAIN (MOUNTAINS)

Mic 4:2 let us go up to the *m* of the LORD,
Mt 17:20 say to this *m*. "Move from here

MOUNTAINS (MOUNTAIN)

Isa 42:2 How beautiful on the *m*
45:12 the *m* and hills
Ec 1:3 I have a faith that can move *m*.

MOIEN (MOIRNING)

Ec 3:4 a time to *m* and a time to dance,
Isa 61:2 to comfort all who *m*
Mt 5:4 Blessed are those who *m*,
Ro 12:15 *m* with those who *m*

MOURNING (MOURN)

Jer 31:13 I will turn their *m* into gladness,
Rev 21:4 There will be no more death or *m*

MOUTH

Joel 1:8 of the Law depart from your *m*;
Ps 19:14 May the words of my *m*
40:3 He put a new song in my *m*,
119:103 sweeter than honey to my *m*;
Pr 16:23 A wise man's heart guides his *m*
27:2 praise you, and not your own *m*
Isa 51:16 I have put my words in your *m*
Mt 12:14 overflow of the heart the *m* speaks
15:11 into a man's *m* does not make him
Ro 10:9 That if you confess with your *m*

MUD

Ps 40:2 out of the *m* and mire,
Isa 57:20 whose waves cast up mire and *m*,
2Pe 2:22 back to her wallowing in the *m*"

MULTITUDE (MULTITUDES)

Isa 31:1 who trust in the *m* of their champions
1Pe 4:8 love covers over a *m* of sins,
Rev 7:9 me was a great *m* that no one could

MULTITUDES (MULTITUDE)

Joel 3:14 *M*, *m* in the valley of decision!

MURDER (MURDERER MURDERERS)

Ex 20:13 "You shall not *m*
Mt 15:19 *m*, adultery, sexual immorality,
Ro 13:9 "Do not *m*," "Do not steal,"
Jas 2:11 adultery," also said, "Do not *m*."

MURDERER (MURDER)

Nu 35:16 he is a *m*, the *m* shall be put
Jn 8:44 He was a *m* from the beginning.
1Jn 3:15 who hates his brother is a *m*,

MURDERERS (MURDER)

1Ti 1:9 for *m*, for adulterers and perverts,
Rev 21:8 the *m*, the sexually immoral.

MUSIC

Jdg 5:3 I will make *m* to the LORD,
Ps 27:6 and make *m* to the LORD
95:2 and extol him with *m* and song
98:4 burst into jubilant song with *m*,
108:1 make *m* with all my soul
Eph 5:19 make *m* in your heart to the LORD,

MUSTARD

Mt 13:31 kingdom of heaven is like a *m* seed,
17:20 you have faith as small as a *m* seed.

MUZZLE

Dt 25:4 Do not *m* an ox while it is treading
Ps 39:1 I will put a *m* on my mouth
1Co 9:9 "Do not *m* an ox while it is

MYRRH

Mt 2:11 of gold and of incense and of *m*
Mk 15:23 offered him wine mixed with *m*.

MYSTERY

Ro 16:25 to the revelation of the *m* hidden
1Co 15:51 I tell you a *m*. We will not all sleep,
Eph 5:32 This is a profound *m*—
Col 1:26 the *m* that has been kept hidden
1Ti 3:16 the *m* of godliness is great

MYTHS

1Ti 4:7 Have nothing to do with godless *m*

NADAB

Son of Jeroboam I, king of Israel (1Ki 15

25:12)

NAI* (NAI INI)

In 20:24 Ulpia[?] was the *n* much a

NAI INI* (NAI)

Ac 2:23 born to death by a him in the *n* time
Col 2:14 he took it away *n* it to the cross

NAKED

Gen 2:25 The man and his wife were both *n*
Job 1:21 *N* I came from my mother's womb
Isa 58:7 when you see the *n* to clothe him
2Co 5:1 *n* clothed we will not be found *n*

NAME

Ps 5:15 This is my *n* forever, the *n*
20:7 You shall not misuse the *n*
Dt 5:11 You shall not misuse the *n*
28:58 this your *n* and awe some *n*
1Ki 5:5 will build the temple for my *N*
2Ch 7:14 my people who are called by my *n*
Ps 34:3 let us call his *n* together
103:1 my inmost being, praise his holy *n*
147:4 and call them each by *n*
Ps 22:1 A good *n* is more desirable
30:4 What is his *n* and the *n* of his son?
Isa 40:26 and calls them each by *n*
47:15 who lives forever, whose *n* is holy
Jer 14:7 Do something for the sake of your *n*
Da 12:1 everyone whose *n* is found written
Joel 2:32 on the *n* of the LORD will be saved
Zec 14:9 one LORD and his *n* the only *N*
Mt 1:21 and you are to give him the *n* Jesus.
6:9 hallowed be your *n*
18:20 or three come together in my *n*
Jn 10:3 He calls his own sheep by *n*
16:24 asked for anything in my *n*
Ac 4:12 for there is no other *n*
Ro 10:13 "Everyone who calls on the *n*
Php 2:9 him the *n* that is above every *n*
Col 3:17 do it all in the *n* of the Lord Jesus,
Heb 1:4 as the *n* he has inherited is superior
Rev 20:15 If anyone's *n* was not found written

NAOMI

Mother-in-law of Ruth (Ru 1) Advised Ruth
to seek marriage with Boaz (Ru 2:4)

NARROW

Mt 7:13 Enter through the *n* gate

NATHANAEL

Apostle (Jn 1:45-49, 21:2) Probably also
called Bartholomew (Mt 10:3)

NATION (NATIONS)

Ge 12:2 "I will make you into a great *n*
Ps 33:12 Blessed as the *n* whose God is
Pr 14:34 Righteousness exalts a *n*
Isa 65:1 To a *n* that did not call on my name
1Pe 2:9 a royal priesthood, a holy *n*
Rev 7:9 from every *n*, tribe, people

NATIONS (NATION)

Ge 17:4 You will be the father of many *n*
18:18 and all *n* on earth will be blessed
Ex 19:5 of all *n* you will be my treasured
Ne 1:8 I will scatter you among the *n*
Ps 96:3 Declare his glory among the *n*
Isa 40:15 Surely the *n* are like a drop
Eze 36:23 *n* will know that I am the LORD.
Hag 2:7 and the desired of all *n* will come.
Zec 8:23 *n* will take firm hold of one Jew
14:2 I will gather all the *n* to Jerusalem
Mt 28:19 and make disciples of all *n*
Rev 21:24 The *n* will walk by its light.

NATURAL (NATURE)

Ro 6:19 you are weak in your *n* selves
1Co 15:44 If there is a *n* body, there is

NATURE (NATURAL)

Ro 8:4 do not live according to the sinful *n*
8:8 by the sinful *n* cannot please God
Gal 5:19 The acts of the sinful *n* are obvious
5:24 Jesus have crucified the sinful *n*

Php 2 6 What, being in very n God

NAZARENE

Mt 2 23 prophets, "He will be called a N."

NAZIRITE

Jdg 13 7 because the boy will be a N of God

NECESSARY

Ro 13 5 it is n to submit to the authorities,

NEED (NEEDS NEEDY)

Ps 116 6 when I was in great n he saved me

Mt 6 8 for your Father knows what you n

Ro 12 13 with God's people who are in n

1Co 12 21 say to the hand, "I don't n you!"

Jn 3 17 sees his brother in n but has no pity

NEEDLE

Mt 19 24 go through the eye of a n

NEEDS (NEED)

Isa 58 11 he will satisfy your n

Php 4 19 God will meet all your n according

NEEDY (NEED)

Pr 14 21 blessed is he who is kind to the n

14 31 to the n honors God

31 20 and extends her hands to the n

Mt 6 2 "So when you give to the n

NEGLECT (NEGLECTED)

Ne 10 19 We will not n the house of our God

Ps 119 16 I will not n your word

Ac 6 2 for us to n the ministry of the word

1Ti 4 14 Do not n your gift, which was

NEGLECTED (NEGLECT)

Mt 23 23 But you have n the more important

NEHEMIAH

Cupbearer of Artaxerxes (Ne 2 1), governor of Israel (Ne 8 9). Returned to Jerusalem to rebuild walls (Ne 2-6). With Ezra, reestablished worship (Ne 8). Prayer confessing nation's sin (Ne 9). Dedicated wall (Ne 12).

NEIGHBOR (NEIGHBOR'S)

Ex 20 16 give false testimony against your n

Lev 19 13 Do not defraud your n or rob him

19 18 but love your n as yourself

Pr 27 10 better a n nearby than a brother far

Mt 19 19 and 'love your n as yourself'

Lk 10 29 who is my n?" In reply Jesus said

Ro 13 10 Love does no harm to its n

NEIGHBOR'S (NEIGHBOR)

1Ti 20 17 You shall not covet your n wife

Dr 5 21 not set your desire on your n house

19 14 do not move your n boundary stone

Ec 25 17 Settle down set foot in your n house—

NEW

Ps 40 3 He put a n song in my mouth,

Ecc 1 9 there is nothing n under the sun

Isa 65 17 n heavens and a n earth

Jer 31 31 when I will make a n covenant

Eze 36 26 give you a n heart and put a n spirit

Mt 9 17 Neither do men pour a n wine

Lk 22 20 This cup is the n covenant

2Co 5 17 he is a n creation, the old has gone

Eph 4 24 and to put on the n self, created

2Pe 3 13 to a n heaven and a n earth,

1Jn 2 8 Yet I am writing you a n command.

NEWBORN (NEW)

1Pe 2 2 Like n babies, crave pure spiritual

NEWS

Isa 52 7 the feet of those who bring good n

Mt 1 15 Repent and believe the good n'

16 14 preach the good n to all creation

Lk 2 10 I bring you good n

Ac 5 42 proclaiming the good n that Jesus

10 40 preaching the good n about Jesus

R 10 1 feet of those who bring good n

NICODEMUS

Pharisee who visited Jesus at night (Jn 3). Argued for treatment of Jesus (Jn 7 50-52). With Joseph, prepared Jesus for burial (Jn 19 38-42).

NIGHT

Job 35 10 who gives songs to the n

Ps 1 2 on his law he meditates day and n

91 5 You will not fear the terror of n,

Jn 3 2 He came to Jesus at n and said,

1Th 5 2 Lord will come like a thief in the n

5 5 We do not belong to the n

Rev 21 25 for there will be no n there

NOAH

Righteous man (Eze 14 14, 20) called to build ark (Ge 6-8, Heb 11 7, 1Pe 3 20; 2Pe 2 5). God's covenant with (Ge 9 1-17). Drunkenness of (Ge 9 18-23). Blessed sons, cursed Canaan (Ge 9 24-27).

NOBLE

Ru 3 11 you are a woman of n character

Ps 45 1 My heart is stirred by a n theme

Pr 12 4 of n character is her husband's

31 10 A wife of n character who can find?

31 29 "Many women do n things

Isa 32 8 But the n man makes n plans,

Lk 8 15 good soil stands for those with a n

Ro 9 21 of clay some pottery for n purposes

Php 4 8 whatever is n, whatever is right,

2Ti 2 20 some are for n purposes

NOTHING

Ne 9 21 in the desert, they lacked n,

Jer 32 17 N is too hard for you

Jn 15 5 apart from me you can do n.

NULLIFY

Ro 3 31 Do we, then, n the law by this faith

OATH

Dt 7 8 and kept the o he swore

OBEEDIENCE (OBEY)

2Ch 31 21 in o to the law and the commands,

Pr 30 17 that scorns o to a mother,

Ro 1 5 to the o that comes from faith

6 16 to o, which leads to righteousness?

2Jn 6 that we walk in o to his commands

OBEY (OBEY)

Lk 2 51 with them and was o to them

Php 2 8 and became o to death—

1Pe 1 14 As o children, do not conform

OBEY (OBEY) OBEY (OBEY)

Ex 12 24 "O these instructions as a lasting

12 6 3 careful to o so that it may go well

13 4 Keep his commands and o him,

21 18 son who does not o his father

30 2 and o him with all your heart

32 46 children to o carefully all the words

1Sa 15 22 To o is better than sacrifice,

Ps 119 34 and o it with all my heart

Mt 28 20 to o everything I have commanded

Jn 14 23 loves me, he will o my teaching

Ac 5 29 "We must o God rather than men"

Ro 6 16 slaves to the one whom you o—

Gal 5 3 obligated to o the whole law

Eph 6 1 o your parents in the Lord

6 5 o your earthly masters with respect

Col 3 20 o your parents in everything,

1Ti 3 4 and see that his children o him

Heb 13 17 O your leaders and submit

1Jn 5 3 I love for God to o his commands

OBEYED (OBEY)

Ps 119 4 that are to be fully o

Jnh 3 3 Jonah o the word of the Lord

Jn 17 6 and they have o your word

Ro 6 17 you wholeheartedly o the form

Heb 11 8 o and went, even though he did not

1Pe 3 6 who o Abraham and called him her

OBLIGATION

Ro 1 14 I am o both to Greeks

Gal 5 3 himself he circumcised that he be o

OBSCENITY

Eph 5 4 Nor should there be n, foolish talk

OBSELETE

Heb 8 13 he has made the first one o,

OBTAINED

Ro 9 30 not pursue righteousness, have o it,

Php 3 12 Not that I have already o all this,

Heb 9 12 having o eternal redemption

OFFENDED (OFFENSE)

Pr 18 19 An o brother is more unyielding

OFFENSE (OFFENDED OFFENSIVE)

Pr 17 9 over an o promotes love,

19 11 it is to his glory to overlook an o.

OFFENSIVE (OFFENSE)

Ps 139 24 See if there is any o way in me,

OFFER (OFFERED OFFERING OFFERINGS)

Ro 12 1 to o your bodies as living sacrifices

Heb 13 15 therefore, let us continually o

OFFERED (OFFER)

Heb 7 27 once for all when he o himself

11 4 By faith Abel o (a) a better

OFFERING (OFFER)

Ge 22 8 provide the lamb for the burnt o,

Ps 40 6 Sacrifice and o you did not desire,

Isa 53 10 the Lord makes his life a guilt o,

Mt 5 23 if you are o your gift at the altar

Eph 5 2 as a fragrant o and sacrifice to God

Heb 10 5 "Sacrifice and o you did not desire,

OFFERINGS (OFFER)

Mal 3 8 do we rob you?" "In tithes and o,

Mk 12 33 is more important than all burnt o

OFFICER

2Ti 2 4 wants to please his commanding o

OFFSPRING

Ge 3 15 and between your o and hers;

12 7 "To your o I will give this land"

OH,

Ps 23 5 You anoint my head with o,

Isa 61 3 the o of gladness

Heb 1 9 by anointing you with the o of joy."

OLIVE (OLIVES)

Zec 4 3 Also there are two o trees by it,

Ro 11 17 and you, though a wild o shoot,

Rev 11 4 These are the two o trees

OLIVES (OLIVE)

Isa 3 12 a fig tree bear o, or a grapevine bear

OMEGA

Rev 1 8 "I am the Alpha and the O."

OMRI

King of Israel (1Ki 16 21-26)

OPINIONS

1Ki 18 21 will you waver between two o's

Pr 18 2 but delights in saying his own o

OPPORTUNITY

Ro 7 11 seizing the o afforded

Gal 6 10 as we have o, let us do good

1Ph 5 16 making the most of every o,

Col 4 5 make the most of every o

1Ti 5 14 to give the enemy no o for slander

OPPOSES

Isa 4 6 "God o the proud

1Pe 5 5 because God o the proud

OVERFLOW (OVERFLOWS)

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW (OVERFLOWS)

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW (OVERCOMES)

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW (OVERCOME)

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW (OVERFLOW)

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW (OVERFLOW)

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW (JOY)

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW (OVERFLOW)

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW (OVERFLOW)

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW (PAINFUL)

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW (PAIN)

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW (PARDONS)

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW (PARDON)

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW (PASSIONS)

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

OVERFLOW (PASSION)

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

PASSOVER

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

PASSOVER

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

PASTOR

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

PASTURE (PASTURE)

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

PASTURES (PASTURE)

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

PATCH

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

PATH (PATHS)

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

PATHS (PATH)

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

PATIENCE (PATIENT)

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

PATIENT (PATIENCE PATIENTLY)

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

PATIENTLY (PATIENT)

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

PATTERN

Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above
Isa 18: 2 and overflow as above as above

PAUL

Also called Saul (Ac 13:9) Pharisee from Tarsus (Ac 9:11) Apostle (Gal 1) At stoning of Stephen (Ac 8:1) Persecuted Church (Ac 9:1-2) Vision of Jesus on road to Damascus (Ac 9:4-9; 26:12-18) In Arabia (Gal 1:17) Preached in Damascus, escaped death through the wall in a basket (Ac 9:19-25) In Jerusalem, sent back to Tarsus (Ac 9:26-30) Brought to Antioch by Barnabas (Ac 11:22-26) First missionary journey to Cyprus and Galatia (Ac 13-14) Stoned at Lystra (Ac 14:19-20) At Jerusalem council (Ac 15) Split with Barnabas over Mark (Ac 15:36-41) Second missionary journey with Silas (Ac 16-20) Called to Macedonia (Ac 16:6-10) Freed from prison in Philippi (Ac 16:16-40) In Thessalonica (Ac 17:1-9) Speech in Athens (Ac 17:16-13) In Corinth (Ac 18) In Ephesus (Ac 19) Return to Jerusalem (Ac 20) Farewell to Eph-

san elders (Ac 20:13-38) Arrival in Jerusalem (Ac 21:1-26) Arrested (Ac 21:27-36) Addressed crowds (Ac 22), Sanhedrin (Ac 23:1-17) Transferred to Caesarea (Ac 23:12-35) Trial before Festus (Ac 24), Fessius (Ac 25:1-12) Before Agrippa (Ac 25:13-26:32) Voyage to Rome, shipwreck (Ac 27) Arrival in Rome (Ac 28)

PAY (REPAID REPAY)

Lev 26:43 They will *p* for their sins
Pr 22:17 *P* attention and listen
Mt 22:17 Is it right to *p* taxes to Caesar
Ro 13:6 This is also why you *p* taxes.
2Pe 1:19 you will do well to *p* attention to it,

PEACE (PEACEMAKERS)

Nu 6:26 and give you *p* ..
Ps 34:14 seek *p* and pursue it.
85:10 righteousness and *p* kiss each other
119:165 Great *p* have they who love you
122:6 Pray for the *p* of Jerusalem
Pr 14:30 A heart at *p* gives life to the body.
17:1 Better a dry crust with *p* and quiet
Isa 9:6 Everlasting Father, Prince of *P*
26:3 You will keep in perfect *p*
48:22 "There is no *p*," says the LORD,
Zec 9:10 He will proclaim *p* to the nations
Mt 10:34 I did not come to bring *p*.
Lk 2:14 on earth *p* to men on whom his
Jn 14:27 *P* I leave with you, my *p*.
16:33 so that in me you may have *p*.
Ro 5:1 we have *p* with God
1Co 7:15 God has called us to live in *p*
14:33 a God of disorder but of *p*
Gal 5:22 joy, *p*, patience, kindness,
Eph 2:14 he himself is our *p*, who has made
Php 4:7 the *p* of God, which transcends all
Col 1:20 by making *p* through his blood,
3:15 Let the *p* of Christ rule
1Th 5:3 While people are saying, "P"
2Th 3:16 the Lord of *p* himself give you *p*
2Ti 2:22 righteousness, faith, love and *p*
1Pe 3:11 he must seek *p* and pursue it
Rev 6:4 power to take *p* from the earth

PEACEMAKERS* (PEACE)

Mt 5:9 Blessed are the *p*.
Jas 3:18 *P* who sow in peace raise a harvest

PEARL* (PEARLS)

Rev 21:21 each gate made of a single *p*

PEARLS (PEARL)

Mt 7:6 do not throw your *p* to pigs
13:45 like a merchant looking for fine *p*
1Ti 2:9 or gold or *p* or expensive clothes.
Rev 21:21 The twelve gates were twelve *p*

PEKAH

King of Israel (2Ki 16:25-31, Isa 7:1)

PEKAHIAH*

Son of Menahem, king of Israel (2Ki 16:22-26)

PEN

Mt 5:18 letter, not the least stroke of a *p*.

PENTECOST

Ac 2:1 of *P* came, they were all together

PEOPLE (PEOPLES)

Dt 32:9 the LORD's portion is his *p*
Ru 1:16 Your *p* will be my *p*
2Ch 7:14 if my *p* who are called
Jer 24:7 They will be my *p*
Zec 2:11 and will become my *p*
Lk 2:10 joy that will be for all the *p*
A 15:14 from the Gentiles a *p*
2C 6:16 and they will be my *p*
Tit 2:14 a *p* that are his very own
1Pe 2:9 you are a chosen *p*
Rev 21:3 They will be his *p*

PEOPLES (PEOPLE)

Dt 7:14 all *p* nations and men
Mic 4:1 and *p* will stream to it

PERCEIVING

Isa 6:9 be ever seeing, but never *p*

PERFECT (PERFECTER PERFECTION)

SS 6:9 but my dove, my *p* one, is unique
Isa 26:3 You will keep in *p* peace
Mt 5:48 as your heavenly Father is *p*
Ro 12:2 his good, pleasing and *p* will
2Co 12:9 for my power is made *p*
Col 1:28 so that we may present everyone *p*
3:14 binds them all together in unity
Heb 9:11 and more *p* tabernacle that is not
10:14 he has made *p* forever those who
Jas 1:17 Every good and *p* gift is from above,
1:25 into the *p* law that gives freedom,
3:2 he is a *p* man, able
1Jn 4:18 But *p* love drives out fear

PERFECTER* (PERFECT)

Heb 12:2 the author and *p* of our faith.

PERFECTION (PERFECT)

Ps 119:96 To all *p* I see a limit,
2Co 13:11 Aim for *p*, listen to my appeal.
Heb 7:11 If *p* could have been attained

PERFORMS

Ps 77:14 You are the God who *p* miracles.

PERISH (PERISHABLE)

Ps 1:6 but the way of the wicked will *p*
102:26 They will *p*, but you remain,
Lk 13:3 unless you repent, you too will all *p*
Jn 10:28 eternal life, and they shall never *p*.
Col 2:22 These are all destined to *p* with use,
Heb 1:11 They will *p*, but you remain,
2Pe 3:9 not wanting anyone to *p*.

PERISHABLE (PERISH)

1Co 15:42 The body that is sown is *p*.

PERJURE

1Ti 1:10 for slave traders and liars and *p*—

PERMISSIBLE (PERMIT)

1Co 10:23 "Everything is *p*"—but not

PERMIT (PERMISSIBLE)

1Ti 2:12 I do not *p* a woman to teach

PERSECUTE (PERSECUTED PERSECUTION)

Mt 5:11 *p* you and falsely say all kinds
Jn 15:20 they persecuted me, they will *p* you
Ac 9:4 why do you *p* me? "Who are you,
Ro 12:14 Bless those who *p* you, bless

PERSECUTED (PERSECUTE)

1Co 4:12 when we are *p*, we endure it;
2Ti 3:12 life in Christ Jesus will be *p*.

PERSECUTION (PERSECUTE)

Ro 8:35 or hardship or *p* or famine

PERSEVERANCE (PERSEVERE)

Ro 5:3 we know that suffering produces *p*.
5:4 *p*, character, and character, hope
Heb 12:1 run with *p* the race marked out
Jas 1:3 the testing of your faith develops *p*.
2Pe 1:6 *p*, and to *p*, godliness.

PERSEVERE* (PERSEVERANCE PERSEVERED PERSEVERES)

1Ti 4:16 *P* in them, because if you do,
Heb 10:36 You need to *p* so that

PERSEVERED* (PERSEVERE)

Heb 11:27 he *p* because he saw him who is
Jas 5:11 consider blessed those who have *p*
Rev 2:3 You have *p* and have endured

PERSEVERES* (PERSEVERE)

1Co 13:7 trusts, always hopes, always *p*
Jas 1:12 Blessed is the man who *p*

PERSUADE

2Co 5:11 is to fear the Lord, we try to *p* men

PERVERSION (PERVERT)

Lev 18:23 sexual relations with a *p* that is a *p*
Jude 1:7 up to sexual immorality and *p*

PERVERT (PERVERSION PERVERTS)

Gal 1:7 are trying to *p* the gospel of Christ

PERVERTS* (PERVERT)

1Ti 1:10 for murderers, for adulterers and *p*

PESTILENCE

Ps 91:6 nor the *p* that stalks in the darkness

PETER

Apostle, brother of Andrew, also called Simon (Mt 10:2, Mk 3:16, Lk 6:14, Ac 1:13), and Cephas (Jn 1:42). Confession of Christ (Mt 16:13-20, Mk 8:27-30, Lk 9:18-27). At transfiguration (Mt 17:1-8, Mk 9:2-8, Lk 9:28-36, 2Pe 1:16-18). Caught fish with corn (Mt 17:24-27). Denial of Jesus predicted (Mt 26:31-35, Mk 14:27-31, Lk 22:31-34, Jn 13:31-38). Denied Jesus (Mt 26:69-75, Mk 14:66-72, Lk 22:54-62, Jn 18:15-27). Commissioned by Jesus to shepherd his flock (Jn 21:15-23).

Speech at Pentecost (Ac 2). Healed beggar (Ac 3:1-10). Speech at temple (Ac 3:11-26). before Sanhedrin (Ac 4:1-22). In Samaria (Ac 8:14-25). Sent by vision to Cornelius (Ac 10). Announced salvation of Gentiles in Jerusalem (Ac 11:15). Freed from prison (Ac 12). Inconsistency at Antioch (Gal 2:11-21). At Jerusalem Council (Ac 15).

PHARISEES

Mt 5:20 surpasses that of the *P*

PHILIP

1. Apostle (Mt 10:3, Mk 3:18, Lk 6:14, Jn 1:43-48, 14:8, Ac 1:13)
2. Deacon (Ac 6:1-7), evangelist in Samaria (Ac 8:4-25), to Ethiopian (Ac 8:26-40)

PHILOSOPHY*

Col 2:8 through hollow and deceptive *p*.

PHYLACTERIES*

Mt 23:5 They make their *p* wide

PHYSICAL

1Ti 4:8 For *p* training is of some value,
Jas 2:16 but does nothing about his *p* needs.

PIECES

Ge 15:17 and passed between the *p*
Jer 34:18 and then walked between its *p*

PIERCED

Ps 22:16 they have *p* my hands and my feet
Isa 53:5 But he was *p* for our transgressions,
Zec 12:10 look on me, the one they have *p*.
Jn 19:37 look on the one they have *p*

PIGS

Mt 7:6 do not throw your pearls to *p*

PILATE

Governor of Judea. Questioned Jesus (Mt 27:1-26, Mk 15:15, Lk 22:66-23:25, Jn 18:28-19:16), sent him to Herod (Lk 23:6-12); consented to his crucifixion when crowds chose Barabbas (Mt 27:15-26, Mk 15:6-15, Lk 23:13-25, Jn 19:1-10)

PILLAR

Ge 19:26 and she became a *p* of salt
Ex 13:21 ahead of them in a *p* of cloud
1Ti 3:15 the *p* and foundation of the truth

PLY

Ps 40:2 He lifted me out of the slimy *p*
103:4 who redeems your life from the *p*
Mt 15:14 a blind man, both will fall into a *p*

PITIED

1Co 15:19 we are to be *p* more than all men

PLAGUE

2Ch 6:28 "When famine or *p* comes

PLAN

Rm 1:10 what may be known about this *p*

PLAN (PLANNED PLANS)

Lk 4:22 *p* of yours can be thwarted
 1Th 4:4 *p* which *p* will have
 1Th 1:11 provisioned according to the *p*

PLANK

Mt 7:3 attention to the *p* in your own eye
 1A 6:41 attention to the *p* in your own eye

PLANNED (PLANS)

Ps 40:5 The things you *p* for us
 Isa 40:11 what I have *p* that will I do
 Heb 11:40 God had *p* something better for us

PLANS (PLANS)

Ps 20:4 and make all your *p* succeed
 11:11 *p* of the LORD stand firm forever
 Pr 20:18 Make *p* by seeking advice
 Isa 42:8 But the noble man makes noble *p*

PLANTED (PLANTS)

Ps 1:3 He is like a tree *p* by streams
 Mt 13:11 Father has not *p* will be pulled
 1Co 3:6 *p* the seed, Apollon watered it

PLANTS (PLANTED)

1Co 3:7 So neither he who *p* nor he who
 9:7 Who *p* vineyard and does not eat

PLATEAU

Mk 6:25 head of John the Baptist on a *p*

PLAYED

Lk 7:32 "We *p* the flute for you.
 1Co 14:7 anyone know what tune is being *p*

PLAIDED

2Co 12:8 Three times I *p* with the Lord

PLEASANT (PLEASE)

Ps 16:6 for me in *p* places.
 133:1 How good and *p* it is
 147:1 how *p* and fitting to praise him
 Heb 12:11 No discipline seems *p* at the time,

PLEASE (PLEASANT PLEASED PLEASES PLEASEING PLEASE RE PLEASE RES)

Pr 20:23 and dishonest scales do not *p* him
 Jer 6:20 your sacrifices do not *p* me
 Jn 9:30 for I seek not to *p* myself
 Ro 8:8 by the sinful nature cannot *p* God
 15:2 Each of us should *p* his neighbor
 1Co 7:32 affairs—how he can *p* the Lord
 10:33 I try to *p* everybody in every way
 2Co 5:9 So we make it our goal to *p* him.
 Gal 1:10 or of God? Or am I trying to *p* men
 1Th 4:1 how to live in order to *p* God.
 2Ti 2:4 wants to *p* his commanding officer
 Heb 11:6 faith it is impossible to *p* God.

PLEASED (PLEASE)

Mt 3:17 whom I love, with him I am well *p*
 1Co 1:21 God was *p* through the foolishness
 Col 1:19 For God was *p* to have all his
 Heb 11:5 commended as one who *p* God
 2Pe 1:17 whom I love, with him I am well *p*

PLEASES (PLEASE)

Ps 135:6 The LORD does whatever *p* him.
 Pr 15:8 but the prayer of the upright *p* him
 Jn 3:8 The wind blows wherever it *p*
 8:29 for I always do what *p* him
 Col 3:20 in everything, for this *p* the Lord
 1Ti 2:3 This is good, and *p* God our Savior.
 1Jn 3:22 his commands and do what *p* him

PLEASEING (PLEASE)

Ps 104:34 May my meditation be *p* to him
 Ro 12:1 *p* to God—which is your spiritual
 Php 4:18 an acceptable sacrifice, *p* to God
 Heb 13:21 may he work in us what is *p* to him.

PLEASURE (PLEASE)

Ps 5:4 You are not a God who takes *p*

Ps 11:10 He is not in the stronghold
 15:2 He who is not with them
 1Th 1:10 For look on us with faith
 1Th 1:5 in us, which is a kind of will
 1Th 1:9 They were not *p* by the gospel
 1Th 1:10 For we have other than *p*

PLEASURES (PLEASURES)

Ps 16:1 with pleasure at your right hand
 1Th 1:10 Father has *p* the *p* of him
 2Th 2:13 revealing to them *p* while they wait

PLETHORE

Mt 9:11 harvest is *p* but the workers are

PLEW (PLEWSTHANS)

1A 9:67 No one who puts his hand to the *p*

PLEWSTHANS (PLEW)

Isa 5:4 They will beat their swords into *p*
 Joel 4:10 Beat your *p* into swords

PLENDER

1A 3:22 And so you will *p* the Egyptians

POINT

Jas 2:10 yet stumbles at just one *p* is guilty

POISON

Mk 16:18 and when they drink deadly *p*
 Jas 3:8 It is a restless evil, full of deadly *p*

POLLUTE* (POLLUTED)

Nu 33:33 "Do not *p* the land where you are
 Jude 8 those dreamers *p* their own bodies

POLLUTED* (POLLUTE)

1A 9:11 entering to possess is a land *p*
 Pr 25:26 Like a washed spring or a *p* well
 Ac 15:20 to abstain from food *p* by idols
 Jas 1:27 oneself from being *p* by the world

PONDER

Ps 64:9 and *p* what he has done
 119:95 but I will *p* your statutes

POOR (POVERTY)

Di 15:4 there should be no *p* among you
 15:11 There will always be *p* people
 Ps 34:6 This *p* man called, and the LORD
 82:3 maintain the righteous *p*
 112:9 scattered abroad his gifts to the *p*
 Pr 10:4 Lazy hands make a man *p*
 13:7 to be *p* yet has great wealth
 14:31 oppresses the *p* shows contempt
 19:1 Better a *p* man whose walk is
 19:17 to the *p* lends to the LORD.
 22:2 Rich and *p* have this in common
 22:9 for he shares his food with the *p*
 28:6 Better a *p* man whose walk is
 31:20 She opens her arms to the *p*
 1A 61:1 me to preach good news to the *p*
 Mt 5:3 saying, "Blessed are the *p* in spirit
 11:5 the good news is preached to the *p*
 19:21 your possessions and give to the *p*.
 26:11 The *p* you will always have
 Mk 12:42 But a *p* widow came and put
 Ac 10:4 and gifts to the *p* have come up
 1Co 13:3 If I give all I possess to the *p*
 2Co 8:9 yet for your sakes he became *p*.
 Jas 2:2 and a *p* man in shabby clothes

PORTION

Di 32:9 For the LORD's *p* is his people
 2Ki 2:9 "Let me inherit a double *p*
 La 3:24 to myself, "The LORD is my *p*

POSSESS (POSSESSING POSSESSION POSSESSIONS)

No 33:53 for I have given you the land to *p*
 Jn 3:39 that by them you *p* eternal life

POSSESSING* (POSSESS)

2Co 6:10 nothing, and yet *p* everything

POSSESSION (POSSESS)

Ge 15:7 to give you this land to take *p* of it
 Nu 13:30 "We should go up and take *p*

Ps 114 of those who are not *p*

POTENTIAL (POTENTIAL)

1A 1:15 *p* in the all nations of the *p*
 2Th 1:14 who I want to *p* of you
 1Th 3:13 It says he has named *p*

POTENTIAL

Mt 19:26 but with God all things are *p*
 Mk 7:31 Everything is *p* to us
 10:27 all things are *p* with God
 Ro 1:18 If it is *p* as far as it is possible
 1Co 2:22 by this means I might save some

POTENTIAL (POTENTIAL)

2Th 1:40 there is death in the *p*

1A 18:4 But the *p* he was shaping

POTENTIAL (POT)

Isa 45:9 *p* among the passwords

POTTER (POT)

Isa 29:16 Can the pot say of the *p*
 45:9 Does the clay say to the *p*
 64:8 We are the clay, you are the *p*
 1A 18:6 The clay is the hand of the *p*
 Ro 9:21 Does not the *p* have the right

POTTERY (POT)

Ro 9:21 of clay some *p* for noble purposes

POUR (POUR)

Ps 62:8 pour your hearts to him
 Joel 2:28 I will *p* out my spirit on all people
 Mal 4:10 pour out much blessing that *p*
 Ac 2:17 I will pour my Spirit on all people

POURED (POUR)

Ac 10:45 of the Holy Spirit had been *p* out
 Ro 5:5 because God has *p* out his love

POVERTY (POOR)

Pr 14:24 but mere talk leads only to *p*
 21:5 as surely as a hawk leads to *p*
 30:8 give me neither *p* nor riches
 Mt 12:44 out of his *p*, put on everything
 2Co 8:2 and there extreme *p* led up
 8:9 through his *p* might become rich

POWER (POWERFUL, POWERS)

1Ch 29:11 LORD is the greatness and the *p*
 2Ch 12:7 for there is a greater *p* with us
 Job 36:22 God is exalted in his *p*
 Ps 63:2 and behold your *p* and your glory
 68:34 Proclaim the *p* of God
 147:5 Great is our Lord and mighty in *p*
 Pr 24:5 A wise man has great *p*
 Isa 40:10 The Sovereign LORD comes with *p*
 Zec 4:6 not by *p*, but by the Spirit
 Mt 22:29 do not know the Scriptures or the *p*
 24:30 on the clouds of the sky with *p*
 Ac 1:8 you will receive *p* when the Holy
 4:13 With great *p* the apostles
 10:38 with the Holy Spirit and *p*
 Ro 1:16 it is the *p* of God for the salvation
 1Co 1:18 for us who are being saved it is the *p*
 15:56 of death is vanquished by the *p*
 2Co 12:4 for my *p* is made perfect
 Eph 1:19 and his incomparable great *p*
 Php 3:10 and the *p* of his resurrection
 Col 1:11 strengthened with his *p* according
 2Ti 1:7 but a *p* of God
 Heb 7:16 of the *p* of an indestructible life
 Rev 4:11 to receive glory and honor and
 19:1 and power and to bring about the end
 20:6 The second death has no *p*

POWERFUL (POWER)

Ps 29:4 The voice of the LORD is *p*
 Lk 24:19 *p* in word and deed because God
 2Th 1:1 *p* in the life with his *p*
 Heb 1:3 significant *p* things to his own end
 Jas 5:16 The prayer of a righteous man is *p*

POWERLESS

Ro 4:6 when we were still *p* Christ died
 8:3 for what the law was *p* in

POWERS (POWER)

- Ro 8:38 not any p, neither height nor depth
 1Co 12:10 no another miraculous p
 1Pe 1:16 whether thrones or p or rulers
 1:15 And having dismissed the p

PRACTICE

- Lev 19:26 "Do not p divination or sorcery
 Mt 23:3 for they do not p what they preach
 Lk 8:21 hear God's word and put it into p
 Ro 12:13 P hospitality
 1Ti 5:4 to put their religion into p by caring

PRAISE (PRAISED PRAISES PRAISING)

- Ex 15:2 He is my God, and I will p him,
 Dt 32:3 Oh, p the greatness of our God!
 Ru 4:14 said to Naomi: "P be to the LORD,
 2Sa 22:47 The LORD lives! P be to my Rock.
 1Ch 16:25 is the LORD and most worthy of p
 2Ch 20:21 and to p him for the splendor
 Ps 8:2 you have ordained p
 33:1 it is fitting for the upright to p him
 34:1 his p will always be on my lips
 40:3 a hymn of p to our God
 48:1 the LORD and most worthy of p.
 68:19 P be to the Lord, to God our Savior
 99:5 The heavens p your wonders,
 100:4 and his courts with p
 105:2 Sing to him, sing p to him,
 136:1 P the LORD
 119:175 Let me live that I may p you,
 39:14 I p you because I am fearfully
 145:21 Let every creature p his holy name
 146:1 P the LORD, O my soul
 150:2 p him for his surpassing greatness
 150:6 that has breath p the LORD
 Pr 27:2 Let another p you, and not your
 27:21 man is tested by the p he receives
 31:31 let her works bring her p
 Mt 5:16 and p your Father in heaven
 21:16 you have ordained p "
 Jn 12:43 for they loved p from men more
 Eph 1:6 to the p of his glorious grace,
 1:12 might be for the p of his glory
 1:14 to the p of his glory
 Heb 13:15 offer to God a sacrifice of p—
 Jas 5:13 happy? Let him sing songs of p

PRAISED (PRAISE)

- 1Ch 29:10 David p the LORD in the presence
 Ne 8:6 Ezra p the LORD, the great God.
 Da 2:19 Then Daniel p the God of heaven
 Ro 9:5 who is God over all, forever p'
 1Pe 4:11 that in all things God may be p

PRAISES (PRAISE)

- 2Sa 22:50 I will sing p to your name
 Ps 4:6 Sing p to God, sing p
 1: How good it is to sing p to our God,
 Pr 11:28 her husband also, and he p her

PRAISING (PRAISE)

- 1:10 46 speaking in tongues and p God
 1Co 14:16 If you are p God with your spirit,

PRAY (PRAYED PRAYER PRAYERS PRAYING)

- Dt 4:7 is near us whenever we p to him?
 1Sa 12:23 the LORD by failing to p for you
 1Ch 7:14 will humble themselves and p
 1:4:8 My servant Job will p for you.
 1:2:6 P for the peace of Jerusalem
 Mt 5:44 and p for those who persecute you
 6:5 "And when you p, do not be like
 6:9 This, then, is how you should p
 26:36 Sit here while I go over there and p
 Lk 6:28 p for those who mistreat you
 18:1 them that they should always p
 22:40 "P that you will not fall
 Ro 8:26 do not know what we ought to p
 1Co 14:13 in a tongue should p that he may
 1Th 5:17 Be joyful always, p continually
 1:5:13 one of you in trouble? He should p
 1:1:10 whether so that you may be

PRAYED (PRAY)

- 1Sa 1:27 I p for this child, and the LORD
 Jnh 2:1 From inside the fish Jonah p
 Mk 14:35 p that if possible the hour might

PRAYER (PRAY)

- 2Ch 30:27 for their p reached heaven,
 Lzr 8:23 about this, and he answered our p
 Ps 6:9 the LORD accepts my p
 Rm 6:11 let us p the LORD
 Pr 15:8 but the p of the upright pleases him
 1Sa 56:7 a house of p for all nations
 Mt 21:13 house will be called a house of p
 Mk 11:24 whatever you ask for in p,
 Jn 17:15 My p is not that you take them out
 Ac 8:4 and will give our attention to p
 Php 4:6 but in everything, by p and petition
 Jas 5:15 p offered in faith will make the sick
 1Pe 3:12 and his ears are attentive to their p.

PRAYERS (PRAY)

- 1Ch 5:20 He answered their p, because they
 Mk 12:40 and for a show make lengthy p
 1Pe 3:7 so that nothing will hinder your p
 Rev 5:8 which are the p of the saints

PRAYING (PRAY)

- Mk 11:25 And when you stand p,
 Jn 17:9 I am not p for the world,
 Ac 16:25 and Silas were p and singing hymns
 Eph 6:18 always keep on p for all the saints

PREACH (PREACHED PREACHING)

- Mt 23:3 they do not practice what they p
 Mk 16:15 and p the good news to all creation
 Ac 9:20 At once he began to p
 Ro 10:15 how can they p unless they are sent
 15:20 to p the gospel where Christ was
 1Co 1:17 to p the gospel—not with words
 1:23 wisdom, but we p Christ crucified
 9:14 that those who p the gospel should
 9:16 Woe to me if I do not p the gospel!
 2Co 10:16 so that we can p the gospel
 Gal 1:8 from heaven should p a gospel
 2Ti 4:2 I give you this charge: P the Word,

PREACHED (PREACH)

- Mk 13:10 And the gospel must first be p
 Ac 8:4 had been scattered p the word
 1Co 9:27 so that after I have p to others,
 15:1 you of the gospel I p to you,
 2Co 11:4 other than the Jesus we p,
 Gal 1:8 other than the one we p to you,
 Php 1:18 false motives or true, Christ is p
 1Ti 3:16 was p among the nations,

PREACHING (PREACH)

- Ro 10:14 hear without someone p to them?
 1Co 9:18 in p the gospel I may offer it free
 1Ti 4:13 the public reading of Scripture, to p
 5:17 especially those whose work is p

PRECEPTS

- Ps 19:8 The p of the LORD are right,
 111:7 all his p are trustworthy
 111:10 who follow his p have good
 119:40 How I long for your p!
 119:69 I keep your p with all my heart
 119:104 I gain understanding from your p.
 119:159 See how I love your p.

PRECIOUS

- Ps 19:10 They are more p than gold,
 116:15 P in the sight of the LORD
 Pr 8:11 for wisdom is more p than rubies,
 1Sa 28:16 a p cornerstone for a sure
 1Pe 1:19 but with the p blood of Christ,
 2:6 a chosen and p cornerstone,
 2Pe 1:4 us his very great and p promises,

PREDESTINED* (DESTINY)

- Ru 8:29 p to be conformed to the likeness
 8:30 And those he p, he also called,
 Eph 1:5 In love he p us to be adopted
 1:11 having been p according

PREDICTION*

- Jer 28:9 only if his p comes true "

PREPARE (PREPARED)

- Ps 23:5 You p a table before me
 Am 4:12 p to meet your God, O Israel
 Jn 14:2 there to p a place for you
 Eph 4:12 to p God's people for works

PREPARED (PREPARE)

- Mt 25:34 the kingdom p for you
 1Co 2:9 what God has p for those who love
 1Ph 2:10 which God p in advance for us
 2Ti 4:2 be p in season and out of season
 1Pe 3:15 Always be p to give an answer

PRESENCE (PRESENT)

- Ex 25:30 Put the bread of the P on this table
 Lzr 9:15 one of us can stand in your p "
 Ps 31:20 the shelter of your p you hide them
 89:15 who walk in the light of your p,
 90:8 our secret sins in the light of your p
 139:7 Where can I flee from your p?
 Jer 5:22 "Should you not tremble in my p?
 Heb 9:24 now to appear for us in God's p
 Jude 24 before his glorious p without fault

PRESENT (PRESENCE)

- 2Co 11:2 so that I might p you as a pure
 Eph 5:27 and to p her to himself
 2Ti 2:15 Do your best to p yourself to God

PRESERVES

- Ps 119:50 Your promise p my life

PRESS (PRESSED PRESSURE)

- Php 3:14 I p on toward the goal

PRESSED (PRESS)

- Lk 6:38 p down, shaken together

PRESSURE (PRESS)

- 2Co 1:8 We were under great p, far
 11:28 I face daily the p of my concern

PREVAELS

- 1Sa 2:9 "It is not by strength that one p:

PRICE

- Job 28:18 the p of wisdom is beyond rubies
 1Co 6:20 your own, you were bought at a p
 7:23 bought at a p, do not become slaves

PRIDE (BOAST)

- Pr 8:13 I hate p and arrogance.
 16:18 P goes before destruction,
 Da 4:37 And those who walk in p he is able
 Gal 6:4 Then he can take p in himself.
 Jas 1:9 ought to take p in his high position.

PRIEST (PRIESTHOOD PRIESTS)

- Heb 4:14 have a great high p who has gone
 4:15 do not have a high p who is unable
 7:26 Such a high p meets our need—
 8:1 We do have such a high p,

PRIESTHOOD (PRIEST)

- Heb 7:24 lives forever, he has a permanent p
 1Pe 2:5 into a spiritual house to be a holy p,
 2:9 you are a chosen people, a royal p.

PRIESTS (PRIEST)

- Ex 19:6 you will be for me a kingdom of p
 Rev 5:10 to be a kingdom and p

PRINCE

- 1Sa 9:6 Everlasting Father, P of Peace
 Jn 12:31 now the p of this world will be
 Ac 5:31 as P and Savior that he might give

PRISON (PRISONER)

- 1Sa 42:7 to free captives from p
 Mt 25:36 I was in p and you came to visit me
 1Pe 3:19 spirits in p who disobeyed long ago
 Rev 20:7 Satan will be released from his p

PRISONER (PRISON)

- Ro 7:23 and making me a p of the law of sin

Gal 3:22 declares that the whole world is a p
Eph 3:1 the p of Christ Jesus for the sake

PRIVILEGE*

2Co 8:4 pleaded with us for the p of sharing

PRIZE

1Co 9:24 Run in such a way as to get the p
Php 3:14 on toward the goal to win the p

**PROCLAIM PROCLAIMED
PROCLAIMING**

1Ch 16:23 p his salvation day after day
Ps 19:1 the stars p the work of his hands
Isa 40:5 the Lord has done
Isa 40:10 He will p peace to the nations
Ac 20:27 testified to p to you the whole will
1Co 11:26 you p the Lord's death

PROCLAIMED (PROCLAIM)

Isa 55:19 I have fully p the gospel of Christ
Col 1:23 that has been p to every creature

PROCLAIMING (PROCLAIM)

Ro 10:8 the word of faith we are p

PRODUCE (PRODUCES)

Mt 3:8 p fruit as keeping with repentance
D tree that does not p good fruit will

PRODUCES (PRODUCE)

Ps 134:3 the Lord's name is p
Ps 134:3 the Lord's name is p
Ps 134:3 the Lord's name is p

PROFANE

Isa 57:8 the Lord's name is p

PROMISE*

Ti 2:10 for women who p to worship God
1Pe 1:10 set us on toward the faith we p
Isa 40:31 wait for the hope we p

PROMISE (PROMISED PROMISES)

Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made
Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made
Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made

PROMISED PROMISE

And I have p to bring you up out
Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made
Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made
Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made

PROMISES PROMISE

Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made
Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made
Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made

PROMISES

Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made
Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made
Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made

PROMISES (PROMISES)

Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made
Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made
Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made

PROMISES (PROMISES)

Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made
Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made
Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made

PROMISES (PROMISES) (PROMISES)

Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made
Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made
Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made

PROMISES (PROMISES) (PROMISES)

Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made
Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made
Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made

PROMISES (PROMISES) (PROMISES)

Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made
Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made
Isa 40:31 The Lord has kept the p he made

Am 7:14 I was neither a p nor a prophet
Mt 10:41 Anyone who receives a p
Lk 4:24 no p is accepted in his hometown

PROPHETS (PROPHESY)

Ps 119:15 do my p no harm
Mt 5:17 I came to abolish the Law and the p
Lk 24:24 false Christs and false p will appear
Lk 24:25 believe all that the p have spoken
Ac 10:43 All the p testify about him that
1Co 12:28 second p (third teachers) then
14:32 The spirits of p are subject
Eph 2:20 foundation of the apostles and p
Heb 1:1 through the p at many times
1Pe 1:10 Concerning this salvation, the p
2Pe 1:19 word of the p made more certain

PROSPER (PROSPERITY PROSPERS)

Pr 28:25 he who trusts in the Lord will p

PROSPERITY (PROSPER)

Ps 73:3 when I saw the p of the wicked
Pr 13:21 but p is the reward of the righteous

PROSPERS (PROSPER)

Ps 1:3 Whatever he does p

PROSTITUTE (PROSTITUTES)

1Co 6:15 of Christ and unite them with a p

PROSTITUTES (PROSTITUTE)

Lk 15:30 property with p comes home
1Co 6:9 male p nor homosexual offenders

PROSTRATE

Dn 9:18 again I fell p before the Lord

PROTECT (PROTECTS)

Ps 32:7 you will p me from trouble
Pr 2:11 Discretion will p you,
Jn 17:11 p them by the power of your name

PROTECTS (PROTECT)

1Co 13:7 It always p, always trusts,

PROUD (PRIDE)

Pr 16:5 The Lord detests all the p
Ro 12:16 Do not be p, but be willing
1Co 13:4 it does not boast, it is not p.

PROVE

Ac 26:20 p their repentance by their deeds.
1Co 4:2 been given a trust must p faithful.

PROVIDE (PROVIDED PROVIDES)

Ge 22:8 "God himself will p the lamb
Isa 43:20 because I p water in the desert
1Ti 5:8 If anyone does not p

PROVIDED (PROVIDE)

Job 1:17 But the Lord p a great fish
4:6 Then the Lord God p a vine
4:7 down the next day God p a worm,
4:8 God p a scorching east wind,

PROVIDES (PROVIDE)

1Ti 6:17 who richly p us with everything
1Pe 4:11 u with the strength God p,

PROVOKED

Ecc 7:9 Do not be quickly p in your spirit,

PRUDENT

Pr 14:15 a p man gives thought to his steps
19:14 but a p wife is from the Lord
Am 5:13 Therefore the p man keeps quiet

PRUNING

Isa 2:4 and their spears into p hooks
Joel 3:10 and your p hooks into spears

PSALMS

Eph 5:19 Speak to one another with p,
Col 3:16 and as you sing p, hymns

PUBLICLY

Ac 20:20 have taught you p and from house

1Ti 5:20 Those who sin are to be rebuked p

PURVEY

1Co 8:1 Knowledge p up but love builds up

PULING

2Co 10:8 building you up rather than p you

PUNISH (PUNISHED PUNISHES)

Lk 12:14 I will p them for their sin
Ph 2:13 if you p him with the rod, he will
Isa 13:11 I will p the world for its evil
1Pe 2:14 by him to p those who do wrong

PUNISHED (PUNISH)

La 4:19 complain when p for his sins
2Th 1:9 be p with everlasting destruction
Heb 10:29 to be p who has trampled the Son

PUNISHES (PUNISH)

Heb 12:6 and he p everyone he accepts

PURE (PURIFIES PURIFY PURITY)

2Sa 22:27 to the p you show yourself p
Ps 24:4 who has clean hands and a p heart
51:10 Create in me a p heart (1) (2)
119:9 can a young man keep his way p?
Pr 20:9 can say I have kept my heart p
Isa 52:11 Come out from it and be p
Hab 1:13 Your eyes are too p to look on evil
Mt 5:8 Blessed are the p in heart
2Co 11:2 I might present you as a p virgin
Php 4:8 whatever is p whatever is lovely
1Ti 5:22 Keep yourself p
Tit 1:15 To the p all things are p
2:5 to be self-controlled and p
Heb 13:4 and the marriage bed kept p
1Jn 3:3 him purifies himself, just as he is p

PURGE

Pr 20:30 and beatings p the inmost being

PURIFIES* (PURE)

1Jn 1:7 of Jesus, his Son p us from all sin
3:3 who has this hope in him p himself.

PURIFY (PURE)

Ti 2:14 to p for himself a people that are
1Jn 1:9 and p us from all unrighteousness

PURITY (PURE)

2Co 6:6 in p, understanding, patience
1Ti 4:12 in life, in love, in faith and in p

PURPOSE

Pr 19:21 but it is the Lord's p that prevails
Isa 55:11 and achieve the p for which I sent it
Ro 8:28 have been called according to his p
Php 2:2 love, being one in spirit and p

PURSES

Lk 12:33 Provide p for yourselves that will

PURSUE

Ps 34:14 seek peace and p it
2Ti 2:22 and p righteousness, faith,
1Pe 3:11 he must seek peace and p it

QUALITIES (QUALITY)

2Pe 1:8 For if you possess these q

QUALITY (QUALITIES)

1Co 3:13 and the fire will test the q

QUARREL (QUARRELSOME)

Pr 15:18 but a patient man calms a q
17:14 Starting a q is like breaking a dam,
17:19 He who loves a q loves sin
2Ti 2:24 And the Lord's servant must not q

QUARRELSOME (QUARREL)

Pr 19:13 a q wife is like a constant dripping
1Ti 3:3 not violent but gentle, not q

QUICK-TEMPERED

Ti 1:7 not q, not given to drunkenness

1Pe 4:7 and so that without pity
s in the s and aloft

SEEK INDULGENCE

Mt 13:25 made they are full of greed and s

SEEK SEEKING (SEEK)

Rc 1:17 s if it not s it is not easily angered.

SEEKSHIP

Is 1:19 s and not toward s gain

Pr 10:1 An unfriendly mouth pursues s ends

Gal 4:20 fits of rage s ambition, dissensions,

Php 1:17 preach t burst out of s ambition

1Pe 3:14 and s ambition in your hearts

1Pe 3:14 and s ambition in your hearts

SEND (SENDING SEND)

Is 40:6 s me He said, O and tell this

Mt 9:18 to s out worker(s) into his harvest

In 16:7 but if I go I will s him to you

SENDING (SEND)

In 20:21 s father has sent me, I am s you "

SENSES*

Lk 15:17 When he came to his s, he said

1Co 15:34 Come back to your s as you ought,

1Ti 2:26 and that they will come to their s

SENSUAL

Gal 2:23 value in restraining s indulgence

SENT (SEND)

Isa 55:11 achieve the purpose for which I s

Mt 10:40 me receives the one who s me

In 4:34 s is to do the will of him who s me

Ro 10:15 can they preach unless they are s?

Jn 4:10 but that he loved us and s his Son

SEPARATE (SEPARATED SEPARATES)

Mt 19:6 has joined together, let man not s

Ro 8:35 Who shall s us from the love

1Co 7:10 wife must not s from her husband

2Co 6:17 and he s says the Lord

SEPARATED (SEPARATE)

Isa 59:2 But your iniquities have s

SEPARATES (SEPARATE)

Pr 16:28 and a gossip s close friends

SERPENT

Ce 3:1 the s was more crafty than any

Rev 12:9 that ancient s called the devil

SERVANT (SERVANTS)

Isa 1:10 "Speak, for your s is listening

Mt 20:26 great among you must be your s,

15:21 Well done good and faithful s "

Lk 16:13 No s can serve two masters

Php 2:7 taking the very nature of a s

2Ti 2:24 And the Lord's s must not quarrel,

SERVANTS (SERVANT)

Lk 17:10 should say, "We are unworthy s

Jn 15:15 longer call you s, because a servant

SERVE (SERVICE SERVING)

Dt 10:12 to s the LORD your God

Isa 22:5 and to s him with all your heart

24:15 this day whom you will s,

Mt 4:10 Lord your God, and s him only. "

6:24 No one can s two masters

20:28 but to s and to give his life

Eph 6:7 s wholeheartedly,

SERVICE (SERVE)

1Co 12:5 There are different kinds of s,

Eph 4:12 God s people for works of s,

SERVING (SERVE)

Ro 12:11 your spiritual servr, s the Lord

Eph 6:7 as if you were s the Lord, not men,

Col 3:24 It is the Lord Christ you are s

2Ti 2:4 No one s as a soldier gets involved

SEVEN (SEVENTH)

Ce 4:4 Take with you of every kind

Jos 6:4 in no fear and the s s s s s s

1Ki 19:18 Yet I reserve s the ground s s s s s

Pr 6:16 s that are s s s s s s s s s s

24:16 a righteous man tells s stories

Isa 4:1 In that day s women

Da 9:25 comes, there will be s s s s s s

Mt 18:21 Up to s times? " Jesus answered,

Lk 11:20 takes s s s s s s s s s s s s s s s

Ro 11:4 for myself s thousand who have not

Rev 1:4 To the s churches in the province

6:1 opened the first of the s seals

8:2 and to them were given s trumpets

10:4 And when the s thunders spoke,

15:7 to the s angels s golden bowls filled

SEVENTH (SEVEN)

Ce 2:2 By the s day God had finished

Isa 23:12 but on the s day do not work,

SEXUAL (SEXUALLY)

1Co 6:13 body is not meant for s immorality,

6:18 Flee from s immorality

10:8 should not commit s immorality,

Lph 5:3 even a hint of s immorality,

1Th 4:3 that you should avoid s immorality

SEXUALLY (SEXUAL)

1Co 5:9 to associate with s immoral people

6:18 he who sins s s s s s s s s s s

SHADOW

Ps 23:4 through the valley of the s of death,

36:7 find refuge in the s of your wings

Heb 10:1 The law is only s s

SHALLUM

King of Israel (2Ki 15 10 16)

SHAME (ASHAMED)

Ps 34:5 their faces are never covered with s

Pr 13:18 discipline comes to poverty and s,

Heb 12:2 endured the cross, scorning its s,

SHARE (SHARED)

Ge 21:10 that slave woman's son will never s

Lk 3:11 "The man with two tunics should s

Gal 4:30 the slave woman's son will never s

6:6 in the word must s all good things

Eph 4:28 something to s with those in need

1Ti 6:18 and to be generous and willing to s

Heb 12:10 that we may s in his holiness

13:16 to do good and to s with others,

SHARED (SHARE)

Heb 2:14 he too s in their humanity so that

SHARON

SS 2:1 I am a rose of S,

SHARPER*

Heb 4:12 s than any double-edged sword,

SHED (SHEDDING)

Ge 9:6 by man shall his blood be s,

Col 1:20 through his blood, s on the cross

SHEDDING (SHED)

Heb 9:22 without the s of blood there is no

SHEEP

Ps 100:3 we are his people, the s

119:176 I have strayed like a lost s,

Isa 53:6 We all, like s, have gone astray,

Jer 50:6 "My people have been lost s,

Eze 34:11 I myself will search for my s

Mt 9:36 helpless, like s without a shepherd,

Jn 10:3 He calls his own s by name

10:15 and I lay down my life for the s,

10:27 My s listen to my voice; I know

21:17 Jesus said, "Feed my s,

1Pe 2:25 For you were like s going astray,

SHELTER

Ps 61:4 take refuge in the s of your wings

91:1 in the s of the Most High

SHIP

son of Noah (Ge 1:1, 6-10) 11:1-9:2

2Pe 1:6 s s s s s s s s s s s s s s s s

SHEPHERD (SHEPHERDS)

Ps 23:1 LORD is my s, I shall not be in want

Isa 60:11 He leads his flock like a s

Jer 31:10 will watch over his flock like a s

Isa 34:12 As a s looks after his scattered

Zec 11:17 Woe to the worthless s

Mt 9:36 and helpless, like sheep without a s

Jn 10:11 The good s lays down his life

10:16 there shall be one flock and one s

1Pe 5:4 And when the Chief s appears

SHEPHERDS (SHEPHERD)

Jer 23:1 Woe to the s who are destroy up

Lk 2:8 there were s living out in the s s s

Ac 20:28 Be s of the church of God,

1Pe 5:2 Be s of God's flock that is

SHIELD

Ps 28:7 LORD is my strength and my s

1Pe 6:16 to all this take up the s of faith

SHINE (SHONE)

Ps 4:6 Let the light of your face s upon us,

80:1 between the cherubim s forth

Isa 60:1 "Arise, s for your light has come

Da 12:3 are wise will s like the brightness

Mt 5:16 let your light s before men,

13:43 the righteous will s like the sun

2Co 4:6 made his light s in our hearts

Eph 5:14 and Christ will s on you "

SHIPWRECKED*

2Co 11:25 I was stoned, three times I was s

1Ti 1:19 and so have s their faith

SHONE (SHINE)

Mt 17:2 His face s like the sun,

Lk 2:9 glory of the Lord s around them,

Rev 21:11 It s with the glory of God,

SHORT

Isa 59:1 of the LORD is not too s to save,

Ro 3:23 and fall s of the glory of God,

SHOULDERS

Isa 9:6 and the government will be on his s

Lk 15:5 he joyfully puts it on his s

SHOWED

1Jn 4:9 This is how God s his love

SHREWD

Mt 10:16 Therefore be as s as snakes and

SHUN*

Job 28:28 and to s evil is under standing "

Pr 3:7 fear the LORD and s evil

SICK

Pr 13:12 Hope deferred makes the heart s,

Mt 9:12 who need a doctor but the s

25:36 I was s and you looked after me,

Jas 5:14 of you s? He should call the elders

SICKLE

Joel 3:13 Swing the s,

SIDE

Ps 91:7 A thousand may fall at your s,

124:1 If the LORD had not been on our s

2Ti 4:17 But the Lord stood at my s

SIGHT

Ps 90:4 For a thousand years in your s

116:15 Precious in the s of the LORD

2Co 5:7 We live by faith, not by s

1Pe 3:4 which is of great worth in God's s

SIGN (SIGNS)

Isa 7:14 the Lord himself will give you a s

SIGNS (SIGN)

Mk 16:17 these s will accompany those who

Jn 20:30 Jesus did many other miraculous s

Queen of Sheba (1Ks 10:23-41) Wives turned his heart from God (1Ks 11:1-13) Jeroboam's rebellion against (1Ks 11:26-40) Death (1Ks 11:41-43) 2Ch 9:29-31)

Proverbs of (1Ks 4:32) Pr 1:1 10:1 25:1) psalms of (Ps 72:127) song of (Ps 131)

SON (SONS)

De 22:2 Take your s, your only s Isaac
Ex 11:5 Every firstborn s in Egypt will die
17:18 rebellious s who does not obey his
Is 2:7 He said to me "You are my S

2:12 Kiss the S lest he be angry

Pr 10:1 A wise s brings joy to his father

19:24 He who spares the rod hates his s

29:17 Discipline your s and he will give

Isa 7:14 with child and will give birth to a s

How 11:1 and out of Egypt I called my s

Mt 2:15 Out of Egypt I called my s

1:17 "This is my S, whom I love,

11:27 one knows the S except the Father

16:16 You are the Christ the S

17:5 This is my S, whom I love

20:18 and the S of Man will be betrayed

24:40 They will see the S of Man coming

24:44 the Son of Man will come at an hour

27:34 "Surely he was the S of God!"

28:19 and of the S and of the Holy Spirit

Mt 10:45 even the S of Man did not come

14:62 you will see the S of Man sitting

Lk 9:58 but the S of Man has no place

18:8 when the S of Man comes

19:10 For the S of Man came to seek

In 3:14 so the S of Man must be lifted up

3:16 that he gave his one and only S

17:1 Glorify your S that your S may

Ro 8:29 conformed to the likeness of his S

8:32 He who did not spare his own S

1Co 15:28 then the S himself will be made

Gal 4:30 rid of the slave woman and her s

1Th 1:10 and to wait for his S from heaven

Heb 1:2 days he has spoken to us by his S

10:29 punished who has trampled the S

1Jn 1:7 his S purifies us from all sin

4:9 only S into the world that we might

5:5 he who believes that Jesus is the S

5:11 eternal life and this life is in his S

SONG (SING)

Ps 40:3 He put a new s in my mouth,

96:1 Sing to the LORD a new s

149:1 Sing to the LORD a new s,

Isa 49:13 burst into s, O mountains!

45:12 will burst into s before you,

Rev 5:9 And they sang a new s

15:3 and sang the s of Moses the servant

SONGS (SING)

Job 35:10 who gives s in the night,

Ps 100:2 come before him with joyful s

Eph 5:19 with psalms, hymns and spiritual s

Jas 5:13 Is anyone happy? Let him sing s

SONS (SON)

Joel 2:28 Your s and daughters will prophesy

Ro 12:36 so that you may become s of light

Jn 8:14 by the Spirit of God are s of God

2Co 6:18 and you will be my s and daughters

Gal 4:5 we might receive the full rights of s

Heb 12:7 discipline, God is treating you as s

SORROW (SORROWS)

Jer 31:12 and they will s no more

Ro 9:2 I have great s and uneasing

2Co 7:10 Godly r brings repentance that

SORROWS (SORROW)

Isa 53:3 a man of s and familiar

SOUL (SOULS)

Dr 6:5 with all your s and with all your

10:12 all your heart and with all your s

Jos 22:5 with all your heart and all your s

Ps 23:3 he restores my s

42:1 so my s pants for you, O God

42:11 Why are you downcast, O my s?

103:1 Praise the LORD, O my s,

Pr 11:14 A longing fulfilled is sweet to the s

Lk 15:2 s who will delight in the s of the

Mt 12:4 s of the temple, the s of the

12:4 s of the temple, the s of the

22:17 with s and with s and with s

Heb 4:12 even s of living and of spirit

SOULS (SOUL)

Pr 21:30 and he who wins s is wise

Jer 6:16 and you will find rest for your s

Mt 11:29 and you will find rest for your s

SOUND

1Co 14:8 if the trumpet does not s a clear call

15:52 the trumpet will s the dead will

2Ti 4:3 men will not put up with a doctrine

SOVEREIGN

Da 4:25 that the Most High is s

SOW (SOWS)

Job 4:8 and those who s trouble reap it

Mt 6:26 they do not s or reap or store away

2Pe 2:22 and "A sower is washed goes back

SOWS (SOW)

Pr 11:18 he who s righteousness reaps a sure

22:8 He who s wickedness reaps trouble

2Co 9:6 Whoever s sparingly will

Gal 6:7 A man reaps what he s

SPARE (SPARES)

Ro 8:32 He who did not s his own Son

11:21 natural branches he will not s you

SPARES (SPARE)

Pr 13:24 He who s the rod hates his son,

SPEARS

Isa 2:4 and threw s into pruning hooks

Joel 3:10 and your pruning hooks into s

Mic 4:3 and their s into pruning hooks

SPECTACLE

1Co 4:9 We have been made a s

Col 2:15 he made a public s of them,

SPIN

Mt 6:28 They do not labor or s

SPIRIT (SPIRIT'S SPIRITS SPIRITUAL SPIRITUALLY)

Ge 1:2 and the S of God was hovering

6:3 "My S will not contend

2Ki 2:9 inherit a double portion of your s,"

Job 33:4 The S of God has made me,

Ps 31:5 Into your hands I commit my s,

51:10 and renew a steadfast s within me

51:11 or take your Holy S from me

51:17 sacrifices of God are a broken s

139:7 Where can I go from your S?

Isa 57:15 him who is contrite and lowly in s,

63:10 and grieved his Holy S

Eze 11:19 an undivided heart and put a new s

36:26 you a new heart and put a new s

Joel 2:28 I will pour out my S on all people

Zec 4:6 but by my S," says the LORD

Mt 1:18 to be with child through the Holy S

3:11 will baptize you with the Holy S

3:16 he saw the S of God descending

4:1 led by the S into the desert

5:3 saying "Blessed are the poor in s,

26:41 s is willing, but the body is weak"

28:19 and of the Son and of the Holy S,

Lk 1:80 child grew and became strong in s

11:13 Father in heaven give the Holy S

Jn 4:24 God is s, and his worshippers must

7:39 Up to that time the S had not been

14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy S,

16:13 But when he, the S of truth, comes,

20:22 and said, "Receive the Holy S"

Ac 1:5 will be baptized with the Holy S

2:4 of them were filled with the Holy S

2:38 will receive the gift of the Holy S

6:3 who are known to be full of the S

19:2 "Did you receive the Holy S"

Ro 8:9 And if anyone does not have the S

Rm 8:26 the Spirit helps us in our weakness

1Co 12:13 and the Spirit of God is in you

2:4 and without the Spirit you are dead

7:19 and is a temple of the Holy S

12:1 baptize you with the Holy S and water

2Co 1:6 the Spirit of God is in you

5:5 you have the Spirit of God in you

Gal 3:14 the Spirit of God is in you

4:2 But the Spirit of God is in you

5:25 set your spirit at rest with the S

Eph 1:13 with a seal, the promised Holy S

4:30 do not grieve the Holy S of God

5:18 and be filled with the S

6:17 the sanctifying work of the S

Heb 4:12 even s of living and of dead

1Pe 1:4 heavenly s, gentle and quiet s

2Pe 1:21 arise, saying to the Holy S

1Jo 4:1 Dear friends, do not be deceived every

SPIRIT'S (SPIRIT)

1Th 5:19 not put out the Spirit, do not treat

SPIRITS (SPIRIT)

1Co 12:10 to admit anything between s

14:32 The s of prophets are subject

1Jo 4:1 test the s to see whether they are

SPIRITUAL (SPIRIT)

Rm 12:1 this is what s act of worship

12:11 let keep your s from serving

1Co 2:13 expressing truths in words

3:1 I would not address you as s but

12:1 Now about s gifts, brothers

14:1 of love and eagerly desire s gifts

15:44 a natural body is raised a s body

Gal 6:1 you who are s should restrain him

Eph 1:3 with every blessing in Christ

5:14 with psalms, hymns and s songs

6:12 and against the s forces of evil

1Pe 2:2 new born babies crave pure s milk

2:5 are being built into a s house

SPIRITUALLY (SPIRIT)

1Co 2:14 because they are s discerned

SPLENDOR

1Ch 16:29 the LORD in the s of his holiness

29:11 the glory and the majesty and the s

Job 37:22 of the north he voices to golden s

Ps 29:2 in the s of his holiness

45:3 clothe yourself with s and majesty

96:5 and majesty are before him,

96:9 in the s of his holiness

104:1 you are clothed with s and majesty

135:5 of the glorious s of your majesty

Isa 61:3 the LORD for the display of his s

63:1 Who is this robed in s?

Lk 9:31 appeared in glorious s talking

2Th 2:8 and destroy by the s of his coming

SPOIL

Ps 119:162 like one who finds great s

SPOTLESS

2Pe 3:14 make every effort to be found s

SPREAD (SPREADING)

Ac 12:24 of God continued to increase and s

19:20 the word of the Lord s widely

SPREADING (SPREAD)

1Th 3:2 God s fellow worker in s the gospel

SPRING

Jer 2:13 the s of living water,

Jn 4:14 in him is a well of water welling up

Jas 3:12 can a salt s produce fresh water

SPUR

Heb 10:24 how we may s one another

SPURNS

Pr 15:3 A fool s his father's discipline,

STAFF

Ps 23:4 your rod and staff s

STAKES

Isa 46: 2 strengthen your s

STAND / STANDING / STANDS

Ex 14: 13 Stand up and fight
 2Co 12: 17 I have not stood for the destruction
 1Pe 2: 13 Stand up to the wicked
 1Pe 2: 14 Stand up to the devil
 1Pe 2: 15 Stand up to the world
 1Pe 2: 16 Stand up to the flesh
 1Pe 2: 17 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 18 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 19 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 20 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 21 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 22 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 23 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 24 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 25 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 26 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 27 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 28 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 29 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 30 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 31 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 32 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 33 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 34 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 35 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 36 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 37 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 38 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 39 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 40 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 41 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 42 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 43 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 44 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 45 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 46 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 47 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 48 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 49 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 50 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 51 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 52 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 53 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 54 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 55 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 56 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 57 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 58 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 59 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 60 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 61 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 62 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 63 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 64 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 65 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 66 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 67 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 68 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 69 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 70 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 71 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 72 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 73 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 74 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 75 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 76 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 77 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 78 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 79 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 80 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 81 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 82 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 83 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 84 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 85 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 86 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 87 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 88 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 89 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 90 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 91 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 92 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 93 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 94 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 95 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 96 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 97 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 98 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh
 1Pe 2: 99 Stand up to the devil, the world, and the flesh

STANDING STAND

Ex 15: 5 where you are s in holy ground
 1Pe 2: 15 the place where you are s is holy
 1Pe 2: 16 - Place them, s firm in the faith

STANDS / STAND

Ps 99: 2 that were above s firm forever
 1Pe 2: 15 the place where you are s is holy
 1Pe 2: 16 - Place them, s firm in the faith

STAR / STARS

Isa 46: 2 strengthen your s
 1Pe 2: 13 Stand up to the wicked

STARS / STAR

Isa 46: 2 strengthen your s
 1Pe 2: 13 Stand up to the wicked

STATURE

Isa 46: 2 strengthen your s

STEADFAST

Isa 46: 2 strengthen your s
 1Pe 2: 13 Stand up to the wicked

STEAL

Isa 46: 2 strengthen your s
 1Pe 2: 13 Stand up to the wicked

STEP / STEPS

Isa 46: 2 strengthen your s

STEPS / STEP

Isa 46: 2 strengthen your s
 1Pe 2: 13 Stand up to the wicked

STIRKS

Isa 46: 2 strengthen your s

STIFF / NES / KED

Isa 46: 2 strengthen your s

STILL

Isa 46: 2 strengthen your s
 1Pe 2: 13 Stand up to the wicked

STIRKS

Isa 46: 2 strengthen your s
 1Pe 2: 13 Stand up to the wicked

STONE / CAPSTONE / CORNERSTONE / MILLSTONE

Isa 17: 30 For this stone will be a sign and a s
 Isa 46: 2 strengthen your s
 1Pe 2: 13 Stand up to the wicked

Isa 46: 2 strengthen your s
 1Pe 2: 13 Stand up to the wicked

STOOP

Isa 46: 2 strengthen your s

STORE

Ps 10: 14 When men s up know ledge
 Mt 6: 19 not s up for yourselves treasures

STOREHOUSE (HOUSE)

Mt 3: 10 Bring the whole tribe into the s

STRAIGHT

Ps 119: 6 and he will make your paths s
 4: 25 Let your eyes look s ahead
 15: 21 of understanding keeps a s course
 Jo 1: 23 Make s the way for the Lord

STRAIN

Mt 23: 24 You s out a gnat but swallow

STRANGER (STRANGERS)

Mt 25: 15 I was a s and you invited me in
 Jo 10: 5 But they will never know a s

STRANGERS (STRANGER)

1Pe 2: 11 as aliens and s in the world

STREAMS

Ps 1: 3 He is like a tree planted by s
 46: 4 is a river whose s make glad
 Ecc 1: 7 All s flow into the sea
 Isa 38: 10 s of living water will flow

STRENGTH (STRONG)

Ex 15: 2 The Lord is my s and my song
 Dt 6: 5 all your soul and with all your s
 2Sa 22: 33 It is God who arms me with s
 Ne 8: 10 for the joy of the Lord is your s
 Ps 28: 7 The Lord is my s and my shield
 46: 1 God is our refuge and s
 96: 7 ascribe to the Lord glory and s
 118: 14 The Lord is my s and my song
 147: 10 not in the s of the horse
 Isa 40: 31 will renew their s
 Mt 12: 40 all your mind and with all your s
 1Co 1: 25 of God is stronger than man s s
 Php 4: 13 through him who gives me s
 1Pe 4: 11 it with the s God provides

STRENGTHEN (STRONG)

2Co 16: 9 to s those whose hearts are fully
 Ps 119: 28 s me according to your word
 Isa 35: 3 S the feeble hands
 41: 10 I will s you and heap you
 Eph 3: 16 of his glorious riches he may s you
 2Th 2: 17 and s you in every good deed
 Heb 12: 12 s your feeble arms and weak knees

STRENGTHENING (STRONG)

1Co 14: 26 done for the s of the church

STRIFE

Pr 20: 3 It is to a man's honor to avoid s
 22: 10 out the mocker, and out goes s

STRIKE (STRIKES)

Ge 3: 15 and you will s his heel
 Zec 13: 7 "S the shepherd
 Mt 26: 31 "I will s the shepherd

STRIKES (STRIKE)

Mt 5: 39 If someone s you on the right

STRONG (STRENGTH STRENGTHEN STRENGTHENING)

Dt 31: 6 Be s and courageous
 1Ki 2: 2 So be s show yourself a man
 Pr 18: 19 The name of the Lord is a s tower
 1: 17 her arms are s for her task
 5: 6 for know s as s as death
 Lk 2: 40 And the child grew and became s
 Ro 15: 1 We who are s ought to bear
 1Co 1: 27 things of the world to shame the s
 16: 13 in the faith, be men of courage, be s
 2Co 12: 10 For when I am weak, then I am s
 Eph 6: 10 be s in the Lord and in his mighty

STRUGGLE

Ro 14: 10 me in my s by praying to God
 Eph 6: 12 For our s is not against flesh
 Heb 12: 4 In your s against sin you have not

STUDY

Ezr 7: 10 Ezra had devoted himself to the s
 Eccl 12: 12 and much s wears the body
 Jo 5: 39 You diligently s the Scriptures

STUMBLE (STUMBLING)

Ps 37: 24 though he s he will not fall
 119: 165 and nothing can make them s
 Isa 8: 14 a stone that causes men to s
 Jer 31: 9 a level path where they will not s
 Eze 7: 19 for it has made them s into sin
 1Co 10: 32 Do not cause anyone to s
 1Pe 2: 8 and, A stone that causes men to s

STUMBLING (STUMBLE)

Ro 14: 13 up your mind not to put any s block
 1Co 8: 9 freedom does not become a s block
 2Co 6: 3 We put no s block in anyone's path

SUBDU

Ge 1: 28 in number, fill the earth and s it

SUBJECT (SUBJECTED)

1Co 14: 32 of prophets are s to the control
 15: 28 then the Son himself will be made s
 Ti 2: 5 and to be s to their husbands
 2: 9 slaves to be s to their masters
 3: 1 Remind the people to be s to rulers

SUBJECTED (SUBJECT)

Ro 8: 20 For the creation was s

SUBMISSION (SUBMIT)

1Co 14: 34 but must be in s, as the Law says
 1Ti 2: 11 learn in quietness and full s

SUBMISSIVE (SUBMIT)

Jas 3: 17 then peace-loving, considerate, s
 1Pe 3: 1 in the same way be s
 5: 5 in the same way be s

SUBMIT (SUBMISSION SUBMISSIVE SUBMITS)

Ro 13: 1 Everyone must s himself
 13: 5 necessary to s to the authorities
 1Co 16: 16 to s to such as these
 Eph 5: 21 S to one another out of reverence
 Col 3: 18 Wives, s to your husbands
 Heb 12: 9 How much more should we s
 13: 17 Obey your leaders and s
 Jas 4: 7 S yourselves, then, to God
 1Pe 2: 18 s yourselves to your masters

SUBMITS* (SUBMIT)

Eph 5: 24 Now as the church s to Christ

SUCCESSFUL

Jos 1: 7 that you may be s wherever you go
 2Ki 18: 7 he was s in whatever he undertook
 2Ch 20: 20 in his prophets and you will be s

SUFFER (SUFFERED SUFFERING SUFFERINGS SUFFERS)

Isa 53: 10 to crush him and cause him to s
 Mk 8: 31 the Son of Man must s many things
 Lk 24: 26 the Christ have to s these things
 24: 46 The Christ will s and rise
 Php 1: 29 to s for him, since you are going
 1Pe 4: 16 However, if you s as a Christian

SUFFERED (SUFFER)

Heb 2: 9 and honor because he s death
 2: 18 Because he himself s
 1Pe 2: 21 Christ s for you, leaving you

SUFFERING (SUFFER)

Isa 53: 3 of sorrows, and familiar with s
 Ac 5: 41 worthy of s disgrace for the Name
 2Ti 1: 8 But join with me in s for the gospel
 Heb 2: 10 of their salvation perfect through s

SUFFERINGS (SUFFER)

Ro 8:17 share in his s in order that we may
 11:18 that our present s are not worth
 2Co 1:5 as the s of Christ flow
 Php 3:10 the fellowship of sharing in his s.

SUFFERS (SUFFER)

Pr 13:20 but a companion of fools s harm
 1Co 12:26 if one part s, every part s with it.

SUFFER (NT)

2Co 12:9 said to me, "My grace is s for you."

SUFFERABLE

Ge 2:18 I will make a helper s for him.

SUN

Bec 1:9 there is nothing new under the s
 Mal 4:2 the s of righteousness will rise
 Mt 5:45 He causes his s to rise on the evil
 17:2 His face shone like the s
 Rev 1:16 His face was like the s shining
 21:23 The city does not need the s

SUPERIOR

Heb 1:4 he became as much s to the angels
 6: ministry Jesus has received is as s

SUPERVISION

Gal 3:25 longer under the s of the law

SUPREMACY* (SUPREME)

Col 1:18 in everything he might have the s

SUPREME (SUPREMACY)

Pr 4:7 Wisdom is s; therefore get wisdom

SURE

Nu 32:23 you may be s that your sin will find
 Dt 6:17 Be s to keep the commands
 14:22 Be s to set aside a tenth
 Isa 28:16 cornerstone for a s foundation
 Heb 11:1 faith is being s of what we hope for
 2Pe 1:10 to make your calling and election s

SURPASS* (SURPASSES SURPASSING)

Pr 31:29 but you s them all.

SURPASSES (SURPASS)

Mt 5:20 unless your righteousness s that
 Eph 3:19 to know this love that s knowledge

SURPASSING* (SURPASS)

Ps 150:2 praise him for his s greatness
 2Co 3:10 in comparison with the s glory
 9:14 of the s grace God has given you
 Php 3:8 the s greatness of knowing Christ

SURROUNDED

Heb 12:1 since we are s by such a great cloud

SUSPENDS*

Job 26:7 he s the earth over nothing

SUSTAINING* (SUSTAINS)

Heb 1:3 s all things by his powerful word

SUSTAINS (SUSTAINING)

Ps 18:35 and your right hand s me.
 146:9 and s the fatherless and the widow.
 147:6 The LORD s the humble
 Isa 50:4 to know the word that s the weary

SWALLOWED

1Co 15:54 "Death has been s up in victory."
 2Co 5:4 so that what is mortal may be s up

SWEAR

Mt 5:34 Do not s at all, either by heaven,

SWORD (SWORDS)

Ps 45:3 Gird your s upon your side.
 Pr 12:18 Reckless words pierce like a s
 Mt 10:34 come to bring peace, but a s
 26:52 all who draw the s will die by the s
 Lk 2:35 a s will pierce your own soul too.
 Ro 13:4 for he does not bear the s
 Eph 6:17 of salvation and the s of the Spirit

Heb 4:12 Sharper than any double edged s.
 Rev 1:16 came a sharp double edged s

SWORING (SWORD)

Isa 2:4 They will beat their s
 Joel 3:10 Beat your plowshares into s

SYMPATHETIC*

1Pe 3:8 in harmony with one another, be s

SYNAGOGUE

Lk 4:16 the sabbath day he went into the s.
 Ac 17:2 custom was, Paul went into the s.

TABERNACLE

Ex 40:34 the glory of the LORD filled the s

TABLE (TABLES)

Ps 23:5 You prepare a s before me

TABLES (TABLE)

Ac 6:2 word of God in order to wait on s.

TABLET (TABLETS)

Pr 3:3 write them on the s of your heart
 7:3 write them on the s of your heart

TABLETS (TABLET)

Ex 31:18 he gave him the two s
 Dt 10:5 and put the s in the ark I had made.
 2Co 3:3 not on s of stone but on s

TAKE (TAKEN TAKES TAKING TOOK)

Dt 12:32 do not add to it or s away from it.
 31:26 "This Book of the Law
 Job 23:10 But he knows the way that I s.
 Ps 49:17 for he will s nothing with him
 51:11 or your Holy Spirit from me
 Mt 10:38 anyone who does not s his cross
 11:29 "My yoke upon you and learn
 16:24 deny himself and s up his cross

TAKEN (TAKE)

Lev 6:4 must return what he has stolen or s
 Isa 6:7 your guilt is s away and your sin
 Mt 24:40 one will be s and the other left
 Mk 16:19 he was s up into heaven
 1Ti 3:16 was s up in glory

TAKES (TAKE)

1Ki 20:11 should not boast like one who s it
 Ps 5:4 You are not a God who s pleasure
 Jn 1:29 who s away the sin of the world
 Rev 22:19 And if anyone s words away

TAKING (TAKE)

Ac 15:14 by s from the Gentiles a people
 Php 2:7 the very nature of a servant,

TALENT

Mt 25:15 to another one t, each according

TAME*

Jas 3:8 but no man can t the tongue

TASK

Mk 13:34 each with his assigned t.
 Ac 20:24 complete the t the Lord Jesus has
 1Co 3:5 the Lord has assigned to each his t
 2Co 2:16 And who is equal to such a t?

TASTE (TASTED)

Ps 34:8 T and see that the LORD is good.
 Col 2:21 Do not t. Do not touch!
 Heb 2:9 the grace of God he might t death

TASTED (TASTE)

1Pe 2:3 now that you have t that the Lord

TAUGHT (TEACH)

Mt 7:29 he t as one who had authority.
 1Co 2:13 but in words t by the Spirit.
 Gal 1:12 not was I t it, rather, I received it

TAXES

Mt 22:17 Is it right to pay t to Caesar or not
 Ro 13:7 If you owe t, pay t, if revenue.

TEACH (TAUGHT TEACHER TEACHING TEACHES TEACHING)

1a 11:13 I will show you ways so I may know you
 1a 4:9 t them in your Father's
 8:4 t you that man does not see
 11:19 t them as our Father is talking
 18a 12:21 I will show the way that is good
 Pa 12:8 t you the way you should go
 51:13 I will t things as to your ways
 90:12 t us to number our days aright
 144:10 t me to do your will
 Jer 31:14 No longer will a man t his neighbor
 Lk 11:1 I will t them to pray
 Jn 14:26 will t you all things and will remind
 1Ti 2:12 I do not permit a woman to t
 3:2 respectable hospitable able to t
 Tit 2:1 You must t what is correct
 Heb 8:11 No longer will a man t his neighbor
 Jas 3:1 know that we who t will be judged
 1Jn 2:27 you do not need anyone to t you

TEACHER (TEACH)

Mt 10:24 "A student is not above his t,
 Jn 13:14 and 7, have washed your feet,

TEACHERS (TEACH)

1Co 12:28 third t, then workers of miracles,
 Eph 4:11 and some to be pastors and t
 Heb 5:12 by this time you ought to be t

TEACHES (TEACH)

1Ti 6:3 If anyone t false doctrines

TEACHING (TEACH)

Pr 1:8 and do not forsake your mother's t
 Mt 28:20 t them to obey everything I have
 Jn 7:17 whether my t comes from God or
 14:21 loves me, he will obey my t
 1Ti 4:13 of Scripture to preach and to t
 2Ti 3:16 is God breathed and is useful for t
 Tit 2:7 In your t show integrity,

TEAR (TEARS)

Rev 7:17 God will wipe away every t

TEARS (TEAR)

Ps 126:5 Those who now in t
 Php 3:18 and now say again even with t,

TEETH (TOOTH)

Mt 8:12 will be weeping and gnashing of t."

TEMPERATE*

1Ti 3:2 t, self-controlled, respectable,
 3:11 not malicious talkers but t
 Tit 2:2 Teach the older men to be t,

TEMPEST

Ps 55:8 far from the t and storm."

TEMPLE (TEMPLES)

1Ki 8:27 How much less this t I have built!
 Hab 2:20 But the LORD is in his holy t;
 1Co 3:16 that you yourselves are God's t
 6:19 you do not know that your body is a t
 2Co 6:16 For we are the t of the living God

TEMPLES (TEMPLE)

Ac 17:24 does not live in t built by hands

TEMPT (TEMPTATION TEMPTED)

1Co 7:5 again so that Satan will not t you

TEMPTATION (TEMPT)

Mt 6:13 And lead us not into t
 26:41 pray so that you will not fall into t
 1Co 10:13 No t has seized you except what is

TEMPTED (TEMPT)

Mt 4:1 into the desert to be t by the devil
 1Co 10:13 he will not let you be t
 Heb 2:18 he himself suffered when he was t,
 4:15 but we have one who has been t
 Jas 1:13 For God cannot be t by evil.

Mt 14:16 and all who have been healed

TOWER

Col 1:10 with a church that reaches to the heavens
Ps 18:10 of the tower is a strong tower

TOWNS

Nu 35:2 to give the Levites the five
Is 19:15 There will be a place of refuge

TRACKING

Ro 11:33 and his paths beyond our track

TRAINING

Mt 15:6 word of God for the sake of your church
Col 2:8 which depends on human training

TRAIN (TRAINING)

Pr 22:6 Father, hold in the way he should go,
1 Ph 4:8 he led captives in his train

TRAINING (TRAIN)

ICo 9:25 in the games given into strict training
2 Ti 3:16 correcting and training in righteousness

TRANSPIED

Lk 21:24 Jerusalem will be transpired
Heb 10:29 to be punished who has transpired the Son

TRANSE

Mt 10:10 was being prepared, he fell into a trance

TRANSCENDS

Php 4:7 which transcends all understanding

TRANSFIGURED

Mt 17:2 There he was transfigured before them

TRANSFORM* (TRANSFORMED)

1 Ph 3:21 will our lowly bodies be transformed

TRANSFORMED (TRANSFORM)

Ro 12:2 be transformed by the renewing of your mind
2 Co 3:18 are being transformed into his likeness

TRANSGRESSION (TRANSGRESSIONS TRANSGRESSORS)

Isa 53:8 for the transgression of my people he was
Ro 4:15 where there is no law there is no transgression

TRANSGRESSIONS (TRANSGRESSION)

Ps 103:1 whose transgressions are forgiven
5:1 blot out my transgressions
103:12 so far has he removed our transgressions from us
Isa 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions
Eph 2:1 you were dead in your transgressions and sins

TRANSGRESSORS (TRANSGRESSION)

Ps 51:1 Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
Isa 53:2 and made intercession for the transgressors
53:2 and was numbered with the transgressors

TREADING

Dt 25:4 an ox while it is treading out the grain
1 Co 9:9 an ox while it is treading out the grain

TREASURE (TREASURED TREASURES)

Isa 33:6 of the LORD is the key to this treasure
Mt 6:21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also
2 Co 4:7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay

TREASURED (TREASURE)

Dt 7:6 to be his people, his treasured possession
Lk 2:19 But Mary treasured up all these things

TREASURES (TREASURE)

Mt 6:19 up for yourselves treasures on earth,
Col 2:3 in whom are hidden all the treasures
Heb 11:26 of greater value than the treasures of Egypt

TREAT

Lev 22:2 sons to treat with respect the sacred
1 Th 5:11 younger men as brothers,
1 Pe 3:7 and treat them with respect

TREATY

Dt 7:2 Make no treaty with them, and show

TRIBE

Lev 24:10 of the tribe of the knowledge of good and evil
1 Th 2:14 of the tribe of the knowledge of good and evil
Ps 137:1 He is like a tribe planted by streams
Mt 1:10 every tribe that does not produce ground
12:33 for it is recognized by its fruit
Gal 3:13 is everyone who is hung on a cross
Rev 22:14 they may have the right to the tree of life

TRIBE (TRIBING)

1 Ch 16:30 Before him, all the earth
Ps 114:7-9, O earth, at the presence of the LORD

TRIBING (TRIBING)

Ps 2:11 and rejoice with the tribe
Php 2:12 out your salvation with fear and trembling

TRISS

Ro 5:17 For if, by the trespass of the one man,

TRIALS

1 Th 3:1 one would be unsettled by these trials
Jas 1:2 whenever you face trials of many kinds,
2 Pe 2:9 how to rescue godly men from trials

TRIBES

Ge 49:28 All these are the twelve tribes of Israel,
Mt 19:28 judging the twelve tribes of Israel

TRIBULATION*

Rev 7:14 who have come out of the great tribulation

TRIUMPHAL* (TRIUMPHING)

Isa 60:11 their kings led in triumph procession
2 Co 2:14 us in triumph procession in Christ

TRIUMPHING* (TRIUMPHAL)

Col 2:15 of them, to overcome them by the cross

TROUBLE (TROUBLED TROUBLES)

Job 14:1 I am of few days and full of trouble
Ps 46:1 an ever-present help in trouble
107:13 they cried to the LORD in their trouble
Pr 11:29 He who brings trouble on his family will
24:10 If you falter in times of trouble,
Mt 6:34 Each day has enough trouble of its own
Jn 16:33 In this world you will have trouble
Ro 8:35 Shall I or hardship or persecution

TROUBLED (TROUBLE)

Jn 14:1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled
14:27 Do not let your hearts be troubled

TROUBLES (TROUBLE)

1 Co 7:28 those who marry will face many troubles
2 Co 1:4 who comforts us in all our troubles
4:17 and momentary troubles are achieving

TRUE (TRUTH)

Dt 18:22 does not take place or come true
1 Sa 9:6 and everything he says comes true
Ps 119:160 All your words are true
Jn 17:3 the only true God, and Jesus Christ,
Ro 3:4 Let God be true, and every man a liar
Php 4:8 whatever is true, whatever is noble,
Rev 22:6 These words are trustworthy and true

TRUMPET

1 Co 14:8 if the trumpet does not sound a clear call,
15:52 For the trumpet will sound, the dead will

TRUST (ENTRUSTED TRUSTED TRUSTS TRUSTWORTHY)

Ps 20:7 we trust in the name of the LORD our God
37:37 in the LORD and do good,
56:4 in God I trust, I will not be afraid.
119:42 for I trust in your word
Pr 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart
Isa 30:15 in quietness and trust is your strength,
Jn 14:1 Trust in God, I also in me
1 Co 4:2 been given a trust must prove faithful

TRUSTED (TRUST)

Ps 26:1 I have trusted in the LORD
Isa 25:9 we trust in him, and he saved us
Da 3:28 They trusted in him and defied the king's

1 Th 1:10 (with very little) and also by trust

TRUST (TRUST)

Ps 34:10 trust in the LORD who is faithful
1 Th 1:8 Who ever trust in him will fall
2 Th 1:10 He who ever trust in him will fall
Ro 9:31 one who trust in him will never be put

TRUSTWORTHY (TRUST)

Ps 119:108 they are trustworthy
Pr 11:13 but a man keeps a secret
Rev 22:6 These words are true and trustworthy

TRUTH (TRUTHFUL TRUTHS TRUTHS)

Ps 51:6 Surely you desire truth
Jn 4:19 I the truth speak the truth
Jas 3:10 are false. Speak the truth to each other
Jn 4:24 worship the Father in spirit and truth
8:12 Then you will know the truth
8:12 and the truth will set you free
14:6 I am the way and the truth and the life
16:13 comfort he will guide you into all truth
18:38 "What is truth?" Pilate asked
Ro 1:25 They exchanged the truth of God
1 Co 13:6 in evil but rejoice with the truth
2 Co 13:8 against the truth but only for the truth
1 Ph 4:15 Instead speaking the truth in love
6:14 with the belt of truth buckled
2 Th 2:10 because they refused to love the truth
1 Th 2:14 to come to a knowledge of the truth
3:15 the pillar and foundation of the truth
2 Ti 2:15 correctly handles the word of truth
3:7 never able to acknowledge the truth
Heb 10:26 received the knowledge of the truth
1 Pe 1:22 by obeying the truth so that you have
2 Pe 2:2 the way of truth into disrepute
1 Jn 1:6 we lie and do not live by the truth
1:8 deceive ourselves and the truth is not

TRUTHFUL (TRUTH)

Pr 12:22 but he delights in men who are truthful
Jn 3:33 it has testified that God is truth

TRUTHS (TRUTH)

1 Co 2:13 expressing spiritual truths
1 Th 3:9 hold of the deep truths of the faith
Heb 5:12 to teach you the elementary truths

TRY (TRYING)

Ps 26:2 Test me, O LORD, and I will
Isa 7:13 enough to test the patience of men
1 Co 14:12 to excel in gifts that build up
2 Co 5:11 is to fear the LORD, we try
1 Th 5:15 always try to be kind to each other

TRYING (TRY)

2 Co 5:12 We are not trying to commend ourselves
1 Th 2:4 We are not trying to please men but God

TUNIC

Lk 6:29 do not stop him from taking your tunic

TURN (TURNED TURNS)

Ex 32:12 Turn from your fierce anger, relent
Dt 5:32 do not turn aside to the right
28:14 Do not turn aside from any of the words
Jos 1:7 do not turn from it to the right
2 Ch 7:14 and turn from their wicked ways
30:9 He will not turn his face from you
Ps 78:6 they in turn would tell their children
Pr 22:6 When he is old he will not turn from it
Isa 29:16 You turn things upside down,
30:21 Whether you turn to the right or to the left
45:22 Turn to me and be saved,
55:7 Let him turn to the LORD,
33:11 Turn from your evil ways
Mal 4:6 He will turn the hearts of the fathers
Mi 5:39 you on the right cheek, I will turn the other
10:35 For I have come to turn
Jn 12:40 nor turn—and I would heal them
Ac 3:19 Repent, then, and turn to God,
26:18 and turn them from darkness to light,
1 Th 6:20 Turn away from godless chatter
1 Pe 3:11 He must turn from evil and do good;
TURNED (TURN)
Ps 30:11 You turn my weeping into dancing

VICTORY (VICTORIES VICTORIOUSLY)

Ps 60 12 With God we will gain the v.
 1Co 15 54 "Death has been swallowed up in v"
 15:57 He gives us the v through our Lord
 1Jn 5 4 This is the v that has overcome

VINDICATED

1Ti 3 16 was v by the Spirit,

VINIF

Jn 15 1 "I am the true v, and my Father is

VINEGAR

Mk 15 36 filled a sponge with wine v

VIOLATION

Heb 2 2 every v and disobedience received

VIOLENCE

Isa 60 18 No longer will v be heard
 Eze 45 9 Give up your v and oppression

VIPERS

Ro 3 13 "The poison of v is on their lips "

VIRGIN

Isa 7 14 The v will be with child
 Mt 1 23 "The v will be with child
 2Co 11 2 that I might present you as a pure v

VIRTUES*

Col 3 14 And over all these v put on love,

VISION

Ac 26 19 disobedient to the v from heaven

VOICE

Ps 95 7 Today, if you hear his v,
 Isa 30 21 your ears will hear a v behind you,
 Jn 5 28 are in their graves will hear his v
 10: 3 and the sheep listen to his v
 Heb 3 7 "Today, if you hear his v
 Rev 1 20 If anyone hears my v and opens

VOMIT

Pr 26 11 As a dog returns to its v,
 2Pe 2 22 "A dog returns to its v and,

VOW

Nu 30 2 When a man makes a v

WAGES

Lk 10 7 for the worker deserves his w
 Ro 4 4 his w are not credited to him
 6 23 For the w of sin is death,

WAILING

Ps 30 11 You turn'd my w into dancing

WAIST

2Ki 1 8 with a leather belt around his w."
 Mt 3 4 he had a leather belt around his w

WAIT (WAITED WAITS)

Ps 27 14 W for the LORD,
 130: 5 I w for the LORD, my soul waits,
 Isa 40 18 Blessed are all who w for him!
 Ac 1 4 w for the gift my Father promised,
 Ro 8 23 as we w eagerly for our adoption
 1Th 1 10 and to w for his Son from heaven.
 Tit 2 13 while we w for the blessed hope—

WAITED (WAIT)

Ps 40: 1 I w patiently for the LORD,

WAITS (WAIT)

Ro 8 19 creation w in eager expectation

WALK (WALKED WALKS)

Dr 11 19 and when you w along the road,
 Ps 1 1 who does not w in the counsel
 23 4 Even though I w
 89 15 who w in the light of your presence
 Isa 2 5 let us w in the light of the LORD
 30 21 saying, "This is the way, w in it "
 40 31 they will w and not be faint
 Jer 6 16 ask where the good way is, and w

Da 4 37 And those who w in pride he is able
 Am 3 3 Do two w together
 Mic 6 8 and to w humbly with your God
 Mk 2 9 Get up take your mat and w
 Jn 8 12 Whoever follows me will never w
 1Jn 1 7 But if we w in the light,
 2Jn 6 his command is that you w in love.

WALKED (WALK)

Ge 5 24 Enoch w with God, then he was no
 Jos 14 9 which your feet have w will be your
 Mt 14 29 w on the water and came toward

WALKS (WALK)

Pr 13 20 He who w with the wise grows wise

WALL

Jos 6 20 w collapsed so every man charged
 Ne 2 17 let us rebuild the w of Jerusalem,
 Rev 21 12 It had a great, high w

WALLOWING

2Pe 2 22 back to her w in the mud "

WANT (WANTED WANTING WANTS)

1Sa 8 19 "We w a king over us
 Ps 23 1 Is my shepherd, I shall not be in w
 Lk 19 14 "We don't w this man to be our king
 Ro 7 15 For what I w to do I do not do,
 Php 3 10 I w to know Christ and the power

WANTED (WANT)

1Co 12 18 of them, just as he w them to be,

WANTING (WANT)

Da 5 27 weighed on the scales and found w,
 2Pe 3 9 w with you, not w anyone to perish,

WANTS (WANT)

Mt 20 26 whoever w to become great
 Mk 8 35 For whoever w to save his life will
 Ro 9 18 he hardens whom he w to harden,
 1Ti 2 4 who w all men to be saved

WAR (WARS)

Isa 2 4 nor will they train for w anymore
 Da 9 26 W will continue until the end,
 2Co 10 3 we do not wage w as the world does
 Rev 19 11 With justice he judges and makes w

WARN (WARNED WARNINGS)

Eze 3 19 But if you do w the wicked man
 33 9 if you do w the wicked man to turn

WARNED (WARN)

Ps 19 11 By them is your servant w,

WARNINGS (WARN)

1Co 10 11 and were written down as w for us,

WARS (WAR)

Ps 46 9 He makes w cease to the ends
 Mt 24 6 You will hear of w and rumors of w,

WASH (WASHED WASHING)

Ps 51 7 w me, and I will be whiter
 Jn 13 5 and began to w his disciples' feet,
 Ac 22 16 be baptized and w your sins away,
 Rev 22 14 Blessed are those who w their robes

WASHED (WASH)

1Co 6 11 you were w you were sanctified,
 Rev 7 14 they have w their robes

WASHING (WASH)

Eph 5 26 cleansing her by the w with water
 Tit 3 5 us through the w of rebirth

WATCH (WATCHES WATCHING WATCHMAN)

Ge 31 49 "May the LORD keep w
 Jer 31 10 will w over his flock like a shepherd
 Mt 24 42 "Therefore keep w, because you do
 26 41 W and pray so that you will not fall
 Lk 2 8 keeping w over their flocks at night
 1Ti 4 16 W your life and doctrine closely

WEAKNESS

WATCHES (WATCH)

Ps 1 6 For the LORD w over the way
 121 1 he who w over you will not slumber

WATCHING (WATCH)

Lk 12 37 whose master finds them w

WATCHMAN (WATCH)

Eze 3 17 I have made you a w for the house

WATER (WATERED WATERS)

Ps 1 3 like a tree planted by streams of w
 22 14 I am poured out like w
 Pr 25 21 if he is thirsty give him w to drink
 Isa 49 10 and lead them beside springs of w
 Jer 2 13 broken cisterns that cannot hold w,
 Zec 14 8 On that day living w will flow out
 Mk 9 41 anyone who gives you a cup of w
 Jn 4 10 he would have given you living w,
 7 38 streams of living w will flow
 Eph 5 26 washing with w through the word,
 1Pe 3 21 this w symbolizes baptism that now
 Rev 21 6 cost from the spring of the w of life,

WATERED (WATER)

1Co 3 6 I planted the seed, Apollos w it,

WATERS (WATER)

Ps 23 2 he leads me beside quiet w,
 Ecc 11 1 Cast your bread upon the w
 Isa 58 11 like a spring whose w never fail
 1Co 3 7 plants nor he who w is anything,

WAVE (WAVES)

Jas 1 6 he who doubts is like a w of the sea,

WAVES (WAVE)

Isa 57 20 whose w cast up mire and mud,
 Mt 8 27 Even the winds and the w obey him
 Eph 4 14 tossed back and forth by the w,

WAY (WAYS)

Dr 1 33 to show you the w you should go.
 2Sa 22 31 "As for God his w is perfect,
 Job 23 10 But he knows the w that I take,
 Ps 1 1 or stand in the w of sinners
 37 5 Commit your w to the LORD,
 119 9 can a young man keep his w pure?
 139 24 See if there is any offensive w in me
 Pr 14 12 There is a w that seems right
 16 17 he who guards his w guards his life
 22 6 Train a child in the w he should go,
 Isa 30 21 saying, "This is the w walk in it "
 53 6 each of us has turned to his own w,
 55 7 Let the wicked forsake his w
 Mt 3 3 Prepare the w for the Lord,
 Jn 14 6 "I am the w and the truth
 1Co 10 13 also provide a w out so that you can
 12 31 will show you the most excellent w
 Heb 4 15 who has been tempted in every w,
 9 8 was showing by this that the w
 10 20 and living w opened for us

WAYS (WAY)

Ex 33 13 teach me your w so I may know
 Ps 25 10 All the w of the LORD are loving
 51 13 I will teach transgressors your w,
 Pr 3 6 in all your w acknowledge him,
 Isa 55 8 neither are your w my w,"
 Jas 3 2 We all stumble in many w,

WEAK (WEAKER WEAKNESS)

Mt 26 41 spirit is willing, but the body is w
 Ro 14 1 Accept him whose faith is w
 1Co 1 27 God chose the w things
 8 9 become a stumbling block to the w
 9 22 To the w I became w, to win the w
 2Co 12 10 For when I am w then I am strong
 Heb 12 12 your feeble arms and w knees

WEAKER (WEAK)

1Co 12 22 seem to be w are indispensable,
 1Pe 3 7 them with respect as the w partner

WEAKNESS (WEAK)

Ro 8 26 the Spirit helps us in our w
 1Co 1 25 and the w of God is stronger

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the integrity of the financial system and for the ability to detect and prevent fraud.

2. The second part of the document outlines the specific procedures for recording transactions. It details the steps involved in the accounting cycle, from identifying the transaction to posting it to the appropriate ledger account.

3. The third part of the document discusses the role of the auditor in verifying the accuracy of the records. It describes the various audit procedures used to test the reliability of the accounting system and to ensure that the financial statements are presented fairly.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the importance of internal controls in preventing errors and fraud. It describes the various types of internal controls, such as segregation of duties and authorization requirements, and explains how they can be used to reduce the risk of misstatement.

5. The fifth part of the document discusses the role of the management in ensuring the integrity of the financial system. It describes the various responsibilities of management, such as establishing a strong control environment and promoting a culture of honesty and integrity.

6. The sixth part of the document discusses the importance of transparency in financial reporting. It describes the various ways in which companies can improve the transparency of their financial statements, such as by providing more detailed disclosures and by using clear and concise language.

7. The seventh part of the document discusses the role of the regulatory bodies in overseeing the financial system. It describes the various responsibilities of these bodies, such as setting standards and enforcing the rules, and explains how they can be used to protect the interests of investors and the public.

8. The eighth part of the document discusses the importance of ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the financial system. It describes the various ways in which companies can monitor their financial performance and identify areas for improvement, such as by conducting regular audits and reviews.

9. The ninth part of the document discusses the role of the public in ensuring the integrity of the financial system. It describes the various ways in which the public can get involved, such as by providing feedback and participating in public consultations.

10. The tenth part of the document discusses the importance of education and training in promoting financial integrity. It describes the various ways in which companies and regulatory bodies can provide education and training to their employees and the public, such as by offering courses and seminars.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. J. H. Smith, 123 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. A. B. Jones, 456 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

2. The second part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. C. D. Brown, 789 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. E. F. Green, 101 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

3. The third part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. G. H. White, 234 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. I. J. Black, 567 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

4. The fourth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. K. L. Gray, 890 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. M. N. Blue, 123 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

5. The fifth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. O. P. Red, 456 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. Q. R. Yellow, 789 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

6. The sixth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. S. T. Purple, 101 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. U. V. Green, 234 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

7. The seventh part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. W. X. Blue, 567 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. Y. Z. Red, 890 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

8. The eighth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. A. B. Yellow, 123 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. C. D. Purple, 456 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

9. The ninth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. E. F. Green, 789 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. G. H. Blue, 101 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

10. The tenth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. I. J. Black, 234 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. K. L. Gray, 567 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

11. The eleventh part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. M. N. Blue, 890 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. O. P. Red, 123 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

12. The twelfth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. Q. R. Yellow, 456 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. S. T. Purple, 789 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

13. The thirteenth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. U. V. Green, 101 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. W. X. Blue, 234 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

14. The fourteenth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. Y. Z. Red, 567 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. A. B. Yellow, 890 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

15. The fifteenth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. C. D. Purple, 123 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. E. F. Green, 456 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

16. The sixteenth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. G. H. Blue, 789 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. I. J. Black, 101 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

17. The seventeenth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. K. L. Gray, 234 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. M. N. Blue, 567 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

18. The eighteenth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. O. P. Red, 890 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. Q. R. Yellow, 123 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

19. The nineteenth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. S. T. Purple, 456 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. U. V. Green, 789 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

20. The twentieth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. W. X. Blue, 101 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. Y. Z. Red, 234 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

21. The twenty-first part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. A. B. Yellow, 567 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. C. D. Purple, 890 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

22. The twenty-second part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. E. F. Green, 123 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. G. H. Blue, 456 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

23. The twenty-third part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. I. J. Black, 789 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. K. L. Gray, 101 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

24. The twenty-fourth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. M. N. Blue, 234 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. O. P. Red, 567 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

25. The twenty-fifth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. Q. R. Yellow, 890 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. S. T. Purple, 123 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

26. The twenty-sixth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. U. V. Green, 456 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. W. X. Blue, 789 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

27. The twenty-seventh part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. Y. Z. Red, 101 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. A. B. Yellow, 234 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

28. The twenty-eighth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. C. D. Purple, 567 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. E. F. Green, 890 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

29. The twenty-ninth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. G. H. Blue, 123 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. I. J. Black, 456 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

30. The thirtieth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. K. L. Gray, 789 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. M. N. Blue, 101 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

31. The thirty-first part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. O. P. Red, 234 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. Q. R. Yellow, 567 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

32. The thirty-second part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. S. T. Purple, 890 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. U. V. Green, 123 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

33. The thirty-third part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. W. X. Blue, 456 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. Y. Z. Red, 789 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

34. The thirty-fourth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. A. B. Yellow, 101 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. C. D. Purple, 234 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

35. The thirty-fifth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. E. F. Green, 567 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. G. H. Blue, 890 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

36. The thirty-sixth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. I. J. Black, 123 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. K. L. Gray, 456 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

37. The thirty-seventh part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. M. N. Blue, 789 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. O. P. Red, 101 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

38. The thirty-eighth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. Q. R. Yellow, 234 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. S. T. Purple, 567 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

39. The thirty-ninth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. U. V. Green, 890 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. W. X. Blue, 123 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

40. The fortieth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. Y. Z. Red, 456 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. A. B. Yellow, 789 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

41. The forty-first part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. C. D. Purple, 101 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. E. F. Green, 234 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

42. The forty-second part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. G. H. Blue, 567 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. I. J. Black, 890 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

43. The forty-third part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. K. L. Gray, 123 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. M. N. Blue, 456 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

44. The forty-fourth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. O. P. Red, 789 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. Q. R. Yellow, 101 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

45. The forty-fifth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. S. T. Purple, 234 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. U. V. Green, 567 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

46. The forty-sixth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. W. X. Blue, 890 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. Y. Z. Red, 123 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

47. The forty-seventh part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. A. B. Yellow, 456 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. C. D. Purple, 789 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

48. The forty-eighth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. E. F. Green, 101 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. G. H. Blue, 234 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

49. The forty-ninth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. I. J. Black, 567 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. K. L. Gray, 890 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

50. The fiftieth part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. M. N. Blue, 123 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. O. P. Red, 456 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

51. The fifty-first part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. Q. R. Yellow, 789 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. S. T. Purple, 101 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

52. The fifty-second part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. U. V. Green, 234 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. W. X. Blue, 567 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

53. The fifty-third part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. Y. Z. Red, 890 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mrs. A. B. Yellow, 123 Elm St., New York, N. Y."

54. The fifty-fourth part of

[illegible]

1. The first of the two is the

second of the two is the

third of the two is the

fourth of the two is the

fifth of the two is the

sixth of the two is the

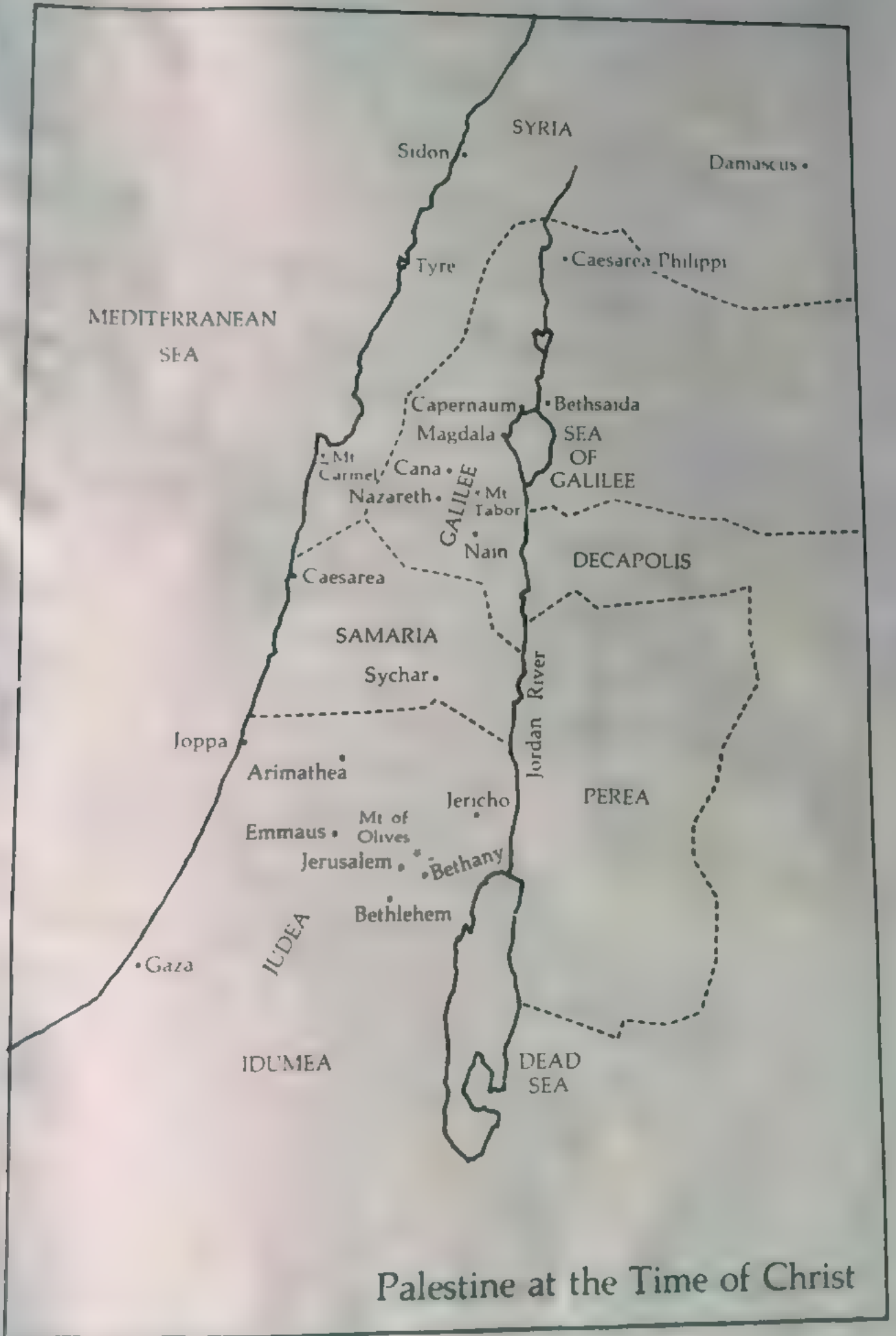
seventh of the two is the

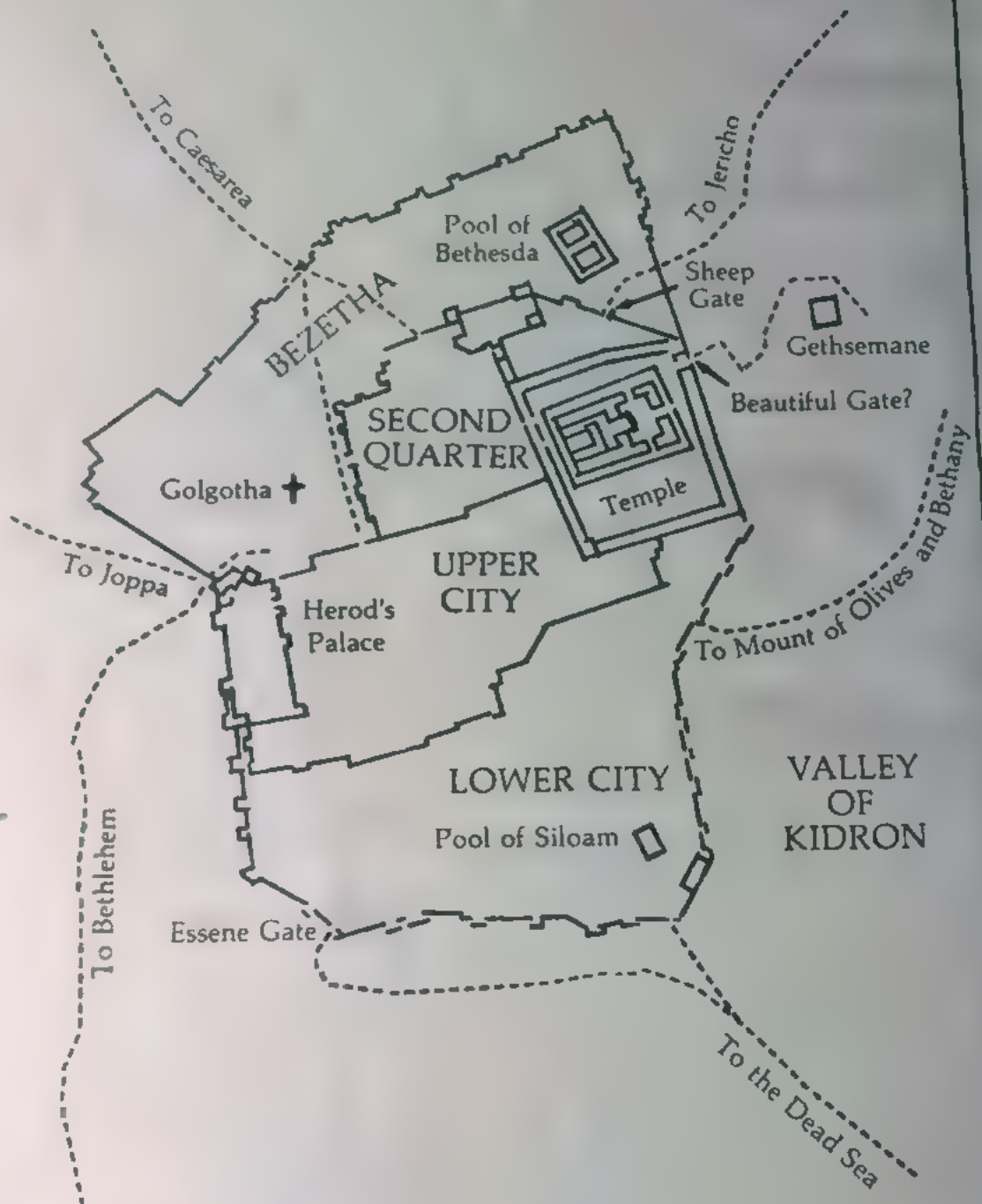
eighth of the two is the

ninth of the two is the

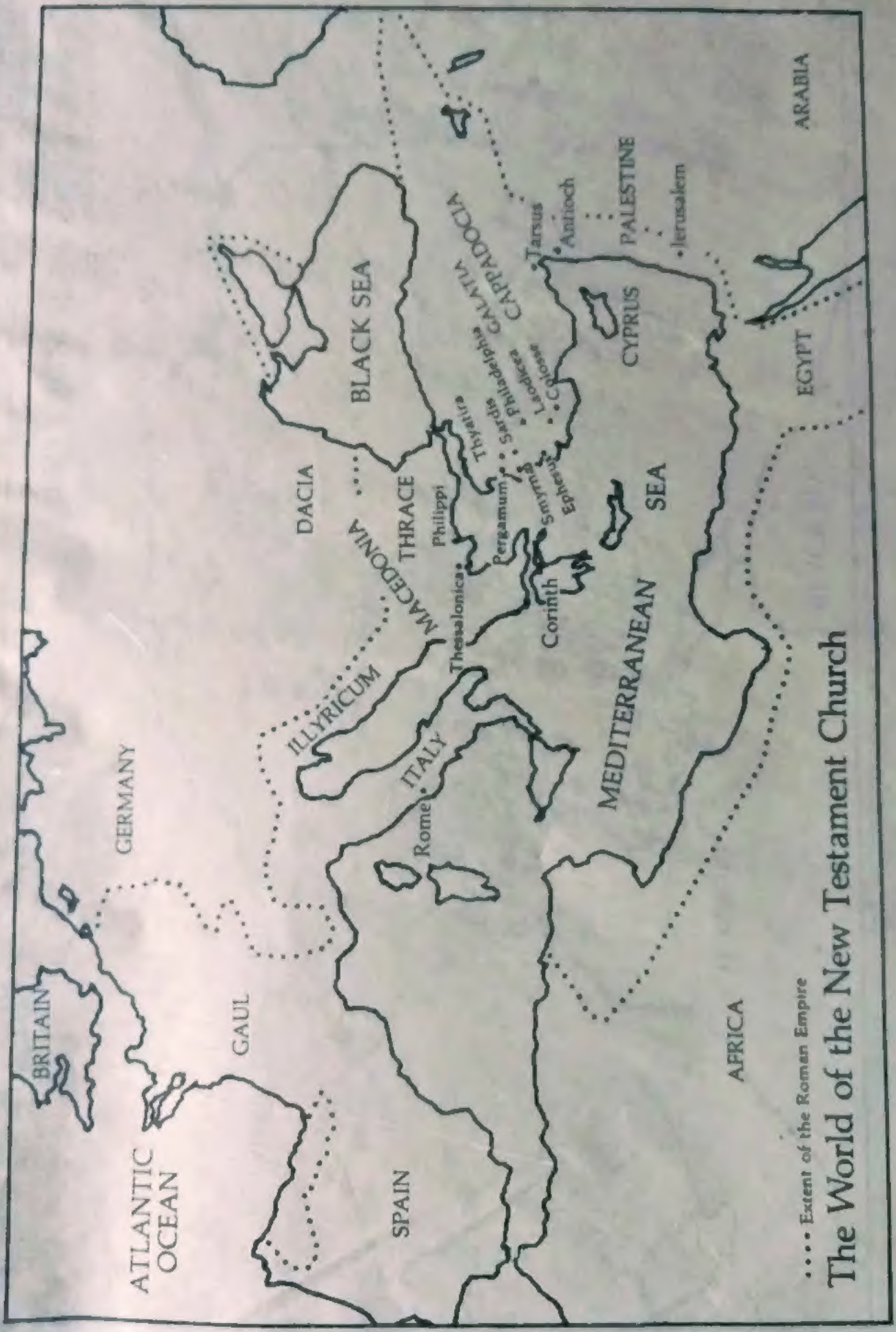
tenth of the two is the

Maps



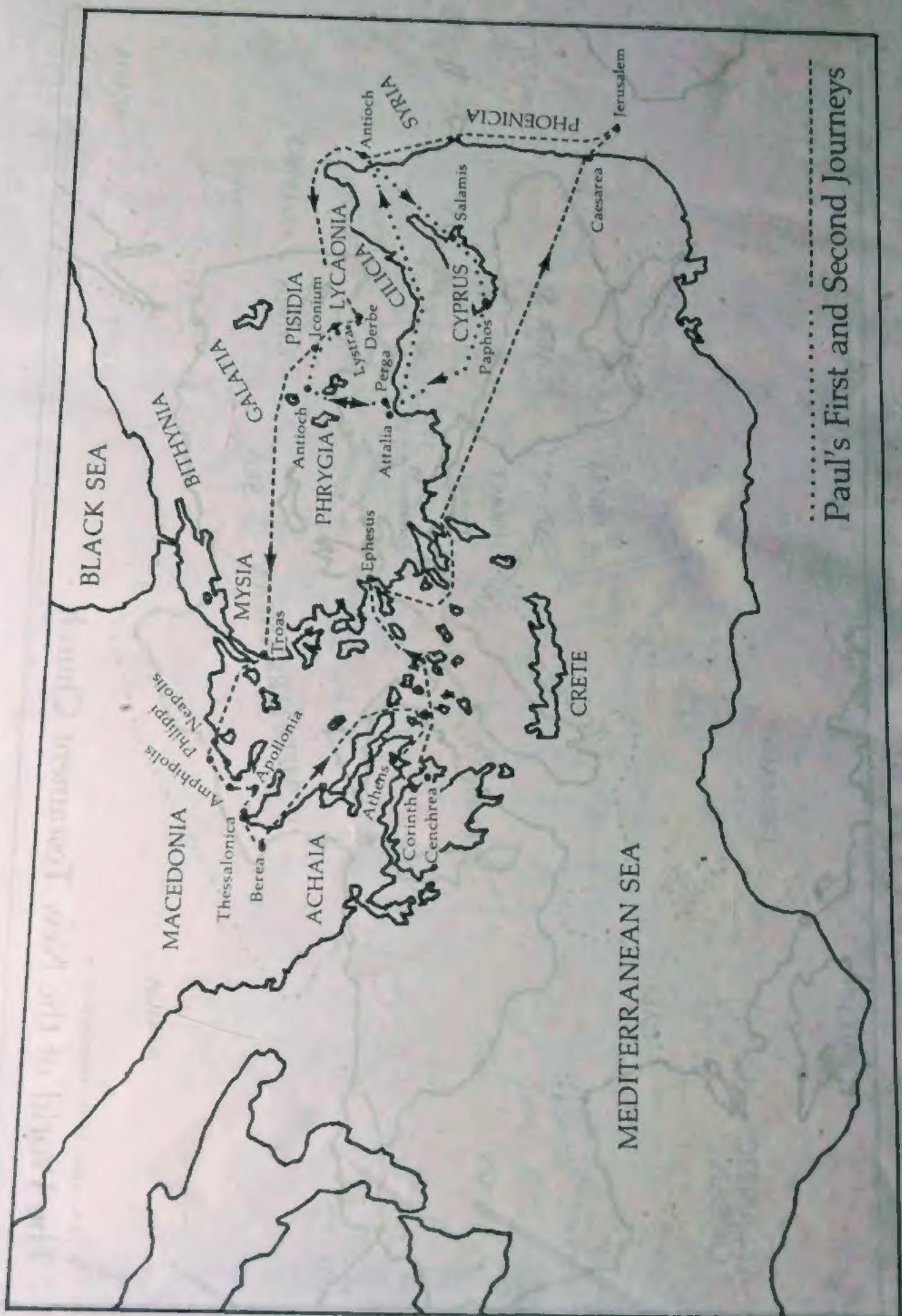


Jerusalem and Its Surroundings



..... Extent of the Roman Empire

The World of the New Testament Church



..... Paul's First and Second Journeys

Paul's Third Journey and His Voyage to Rome



